

# **QUALITY AUDIT SUMMARY**

**on**

**ACTS Institute of New Zealand**

Audit Date: 22 April 2009

Web Report Date: 23 June 2009

Provider ID: 8885

## **1 Objectives**

The audit aimed to obtain reasonable assurance that ACTS Institute of New Zealand (ACTS) is a sound and stable provider, has effective quality management systems in place, and is substantially achieving its goals and objectives as required by Quality Assurance Standard for Private Training Establishments, Government Training Establishments and Wānanga (QA Standard One).

The results of this audit will contribute to the decisions made by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to confirm ongoing registration and accreditation, and the length of time until the next audit.

An audit is a snapshot of the organisation's performance at a particular time. As such, it is not a guarantee of ongoing compliance and effectiveness. An audit is based on sampling and instances of non-compliance may remain undetected.

## **2 Scope**

The audit covered all elements of QA Standard One except 1.2.8 *Research*. Research was excluded because ACTS does not offer degree courses.

## **3 Responsibilities**

ACTS is responsible for meeting all requirements of QA Standard One by ensuring the quality of its management systems and the achievement of its goals and objectives.

Under the Education Act 1989, NZQA is responsible for registering private training establishments and granting accreditation to organisations offering approved courses.

## **4 Background**

This was a scheduled audit at Dudley Street, Lower Hutt. At this site ACTS offers learners courses leading to qualifications in employment and computer skills. The organisation has accreditation to offer the following:

- National Certificate in Employment Skills (Level 1)
- National Certificate in Computing (Level 2).

Learners on these programmes are referred to ACTS from Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ).

The organisation also works on a one-to-one basis, as and when required, in the WINZ offices in Porirua and Wellington, providing employment and life skills coaching to WINZ clients. This coaching is also provided at the Dudley Street site for WINZ referrals from the Hutt Valley.

ACTS was previously audited in 2007 and met all but two requirements of QA Standard One. The requirements not met related to programme review and external moderation.

## **5 Summary**

At this 2009 audit ACTS met all requirements of QA Standard One. The requirements not met at the previous audit have been addressed.

Over the period 2007-2008, the organisation had carried out an in-depth organisational review, in which not only were the previous non-compliances addressed, but ACTS also self-identified possible weaknesses in its systems and introduced improvements to address these potential areas at risk. Staff interviewed confirmed that management and the systems were much improved.

It was noted at the audit that tukutuku panels, with supporting explanations, decorated the premises. ACTS explained that a learner had suggested the idea of these panels. The learner, encouraged by the tutor, had engaged the whole class in making a presentation to the management and trustees. The tukutuku panels were developed by the learners under the direction of the originator. The engagement in this activity and the beauty of the panels has made a positive impact on the whole organisation.

ACTS encourages and endorses ideas that will promote positive learning experiences and a sense of community within the organisation. Learners and staff interviewed spoke highly of this sense of community and the positive learning experiences experienced at ACTS.

### **Goals and objectives**

ACTS states its educational goals and objectives within its investment plan with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and WINZ. The objectives are stated in measurable terms and include required outcomes such as learner achievement, entering further study and employment.

### **Governance and management**

ACTS is a registered charitable trust and also has charitable status with the Charities Commission. The organisation is governed by a board of trustees, one of whom has a defined role within the new management structure. Governance and management relationships and responsibilities are clearly stated in the quality management system (QMS). Governance is further defined in the trust's constitution and trust deed. Job descriptions explain the roles and responsibilities of all staff members.

The required Private Training Establishment Attestation, Form A, was available. The required financial attestations had been reviewed by TEC as part of the funding contracts. ACTS had also provided the audited financial statements and an unqualified audit opinion for the year ended 31 March 2008, and has also provided the Chartered Accountant Profession Attestation for budgeted spending for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2011. Student fee protection arrangements are not required because all courses are fully funded by either TEC or WINZ.

It was noted at the audit that ACTS had carried out an in-depth review of its governance and management structures, identifying possible weaknesses. The governance and management structure was strengthened with the appointment of a new trustee to the board, and this member has a clearly defined management role within the organisation. The introduction of "trigger points meetings" was an example of good practice initiated to address identified weaknesses.

Staff interviewed spoke highly of the changes, which had led to significant improvements in communications and in systems such as the provision of resources.

## **Personnel**

Tutors have not only appropriate qualifications in their teaching areas and for adult teaching, but also relevant practical experience in working with at-risk young people and adults needing support and encouragement. Administrative staff are also appropriately qualified and experienced. ACTS carries out annual performance appraisals and provides in-house professional development and support for external professional development. This is provided to both teaching and administrative staff, which strengthens the organisation as a whole.

## **Physical and learning resources**

ACTS had recently moved to new premises. Staff spoke highly of the quality of the premises, and also appreciated management listening and responding to staff suggestions relating to changes in room usage. Learners and staff confirmed that resources were sufficient,

The organisation has a well-documented system for meeting health and safety requirements. It was noted at the audit that all staff on induction are taken through the organisation's health and safety manual, and early in their programmes learners complete unit standard 497 *Demonstrate knowledge of workplace health and safety requirements*.

## **Learner information, entry and support**

Learners are referred to ACTS by WINZ case managers. ACTS also provides learners and WINZ staff with course-related brochures. All learners are interviewed by ACTS and provided with handbooks that include all relevant information. Learners confirmed that they received appropriate and sufficient information, and that they received help as and when needed.

## **Development, delivery and review of programmes**

Courses have been developed to meet agreed contract-for-service provisions with the funding organisations. ACTS has developed course outlines, and tutors develop appropriate lesson plans to support the delivery of the courses.

ACTS has a rigorous system of course and tutor reviews based on learner evaluations. The organisation develops reports and graphs for analysis to support the review process. It was noted at the audit that in the learner evaluations for course and tutor questions, all learners gave the organisation either a four or five grade for excellence, with the majority giving a five.

Learners interviewed all spoke highly and enthusiastically of the quality of the tutors' competence and the positive learning experiences they were receiving at ACTS. They also spoke highly of the quick response by ACTS to learning difficulties identified during the course.

## **Assessment and moderation**

Learners interviewed said they had been advised of assessment requirements. They spoke highly of the learning experiences involved with the assessment process and “being encouraged to think more”. They considered that the assessment process was building their confidence and they were learning to work for their achievements.

ACTS has a rigorous system of internal moderation and was exempted from meeting NZQA’s national external moderation for 2008.

## **Notification and reporting on learner achievement**

Learners confirmed that they received prompt and constructive feedback which supported their learning. ACTS has maintained learner personal records and assessments in hard copy and uses an electronic system to record learner achievement. As part of the management changes introduced in 2008 the organisation has moved to reporting credits as they are gained by learners. This is an improvement on the previous system.

## **Achievement of goals and objectives**

In 2008 ACTS had not achieved the educational goals it had set for itself and was required to meet to maintain funding. However, it was noted at this April 2009 audit that ACTS had already achieved the TEC-specified outcomes in some instances and was exceeding them in others. There were no results that were below specified outcomes.

ACTS’ management was of the opinion that the changes introduced in 2008 and being continuously monitored as part of the new processes have not only improved the culture within the organisation but were instrumental in achieving these outstanding results. The monitoring process is also leading to continuous improvements in systems. This was verified by staff interviewed.

The organisation maintains strong links with WINZ, a major stakeholder, and is extending its services to WINZ outside ACTS’ immediate geographic base, at WINZ request.

As stated above, learners and staff interviewed spoke highly of a sense of community and the positive learning experiences experienced at ACTS.

## **Closing statement**

ACTS is meeting or exceeding its educational goals and objectives, and meeting NZQA and legislative requirements. The quality management system, with the continuous improvements being implemented, gives high confidence that ACTS will continue to provide sound educational outcomes to learners seeking employment and related skills, in a well-managed environment.