

Report of External Evaluation and Review

The Electrical Training Company
Limited trading as ETCO Training

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 26 September 2012

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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

Name of TEO:	The Electrical Training Company Limited trading as ETCO Training
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Allright Place, Mt Wellington, Auckland
Delivery sites:	Regional centres in Rotorua, Wellington, and Dunedin. Approximately 30 additional teaching sites throughout New Zealand. The TEO also owns Martynsfield, a residential training facility located in Ramarama, South Auckland.
First registered:	1 December 1996
Courses currently delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Electrical Engineering (Levels 2, 3, and 4)• Various short courses for industry
Code of Practice signatory?	ETCO does not teach international students and is not a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students
Number of students:	Approximately 1,000 part-time students
Number of staff:	20 full-time staff (teaching, management, and administration), 12 apprenticeship coordinators, and approximately 70 part-time teaching staff.
Scope of active accreditation:	ETCO Training holds consents to assess in a variety of sub-fields, domains, and unit standards in the areas of electrical engineering, electronics, and telecommunications up to level 5.

Distinctive characteristics:	This TEO is unique in that Electrical Training Company Limited (ETCO Ltd) is wholly owned by the Electrical Contractors Association of New Zealand. The ETCO parent company employs approximately 500 apprentices who are placed for on-job training with 'host employers'. These apprentices are all signed into training agreements with the ElectroTechnology Industry Training Organisation (ETITO). ETCO Training, a division within ETCO Ltd, contracts to ETITO to provide the off-job training components of the apprentices' national certificates. Additionally, ETCO Training contracts to ETITO to provide off-job training for approximately 450 trainees who are employed independently.
Previous quality assurance history:	No history of non-compliance. At the last quality assurance visit by NZQA, an audit in 2008, and at the previous audit (2005), the provider was compliant.
Other:	All students are employed and attend ETCO Training block courses and/or night classes.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope for the external evaluation and review (EER) consisted of the mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management, and strategy.

In addition, the following focus areas were selected

- National Certificate in Electrical Engineering (this is the core and largest programme)
- Short course delivery

These two programme focus areas constitute the total of ETCO Training's delivery.

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 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.

The EER was conducted in July 2012. Prior to the EER visit, the lead evaluator visited the Mt Wellington site of ETCO Training and met with the national training manager. The evaluation team consisted of the lead evaluator and two other evaluators. The lead evaluator and one other evaluator also visited the Wellington regional campus. A two-day EER visit was made to the ETCO Training site in Auckland, where the evaluation team reviewed a range of documentation and met with management staff, teaching staff, administration staff, students, and external representatives.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **The Electrical Training Company Limited, trading as ETCO Training**.

ETCO Training's students are achieving outstanding results. ETCO Training has set a target of 80 per cent completion of the national qualification and the Electrical Workers Registration Board registration examinations. All ETCO Training students who have passed the national certificate in the past year have also passed the Electrical Workers Registration Board registration examinations. Data collected by the TEO shows that over the last three years, completion rates have regularly exceeded national averages. For instance, in 2011, 82 per cent of ETCO Training's students completed their national certificate and registration within a three and a half-year period. The national average for 2011 was 66 per cent completed within four years.

ETCO Training is highly committed to providing quality training to the electrical industry and is valued for the work it does. Both the organisation and its staff have a strong focus on student achievement and are well supported by management and governance. ETCO Training keeps in close contact with graduates. All but two graduates from 2011 continue to work in the electrical industry.

Students at ETCO Training are well supported. The 'wrap-around' support provided for ETCO-employed trainees includes both on and off-job training and plays a significant part in the high levels of achievement of the students.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **The Electrical Training Company Limited trading as ETCO Training**.

ETCO Training has established a reflective organisation and a 'no-blame' culture which encourages staff to put forward ideas for improvement. Opportunities for part-time staff to participate in these processes are limited, however. The TEO is expansive in its thinking and closely attuned to the needs of industry.

ETCO Training has comprehensive systems to gather and collate feedback from learners and employers. This information could be used more systematically to inform improvements to teaching practice and course delivery.

The TEO has good systems to record student progress, and the achievement data is regularly discussed and analysed to identify ways to further improve performance.

The evaluation team believes that as self-assessment processes continue to be implemented at ETCO Training, and staff engage with the key evaluation questions, significant and meaningful ongoing improvements will result. ETCO Training is aware that self-assessment processes need to be organised into a planned and

coordinated approach across the organisation, including at regional campuses and night class delivery sites.

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**.

ETCO Training's students are achieving outstanding results. ETCO Training has set a target of 80 per cent completion of the national qualification and the Electrical Workers Registration Board registration examinations. Data collected by the TEO shows that over the last three years, completion rates have regularly exceeded national averages. For instance, in 2011, 82 per cent of ETCO Training's students completed their national certificate and registration within a three and a half-year period. The national average for 2011 was 66 per cent completed within four years. The pass rates for the students who are employed by ETCO Ltd are consistently 5-10 per cent higher than the students, also taught by ETCO Training, who are employed independently. This difference is attributed to the selection criteria applied in the ETCO Ltd employment process and the wrap-around support provided by the ETCO apprenticeship coordinators (refer section 1.5 for further discussion). On average, all ETCO Training students, both ETCO Ltd-employed and independent, consistently achieve results 10-15 per cent above the national average. ETCO has met all external moderation requirements, confirming that assessment is at the national standard.

All ETCO Training students who have passed the national certificate in the last year have also passed the Electrical Workers Registration Board registration examinations.

ETCO Training has a strong belief in the positive correlation between student attendance and achievement and therefore monitors student attendance closely. The TEO has established a very effective process whereby tutors throughout the country enter attendance data into a national online database by 10 am of the morning after night classes. The system automatically produces an email or letter for the employers of those students who did not attend, advising them of their employees' absence and inviting them to discuss the non-attendance with their employee and/or ETCO Training staff. The emails/letters are first 'commonsense' checked by a staff member and despatched by midday. ETCO Training believes that this system is ideally suited to its student demographic (predominantly teenage males) and has a positive effect on attendance and subsequent achievement. Students also reported that they appreciated this system as it helped them to make positive choices about their training.

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

Students reported that they received timely, accurate, and supportive feedback on their progress from ETCO Training staff. All students meet with a staff member at least once every 12 weeks for one-to-one discussions around progression, achievement, and goal-setting. Students are focussed on the national qualification and highly motivated to achieve it.

ETCO could improve the way it analyses its completion data – for instance, by developing a better understanding of data (over time, by region, by site etc). Students taught in the Wellington region are currently achieving at a noticeably higher rate than other regions, probably attributable to the teaching and support approaches noted in sections 1.4 and 1.5 of this report.

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**.

All of the students attending ETCO Training courses are in employment and the courses are directly related to that employment. Through the courses, students acquire useful skills and knowledge which enable them to make a more valuable contribution in their own workplace and to the electrical engineering industry. The qualifications that students obtain are recognised internationally and many graduates use them to gain employment throughout the world.

ETITO and ECANZ representatives spoken to during the EER were very satisfied with the value they received from the training provided by ETCO Training. ETCO Training currently trains approximately 40 per cent of New Zealand's electrical apprentices.

ETCO Training is unique in that its parent, ETCO Ltd, is wholly owned by ECANZ. The parent company employs approximately 500 apprentices who are then placed with 'host employers'. ETCO Ltd employs 12 apprenticeship coordinators who manage the apprentices and conduct assessments of their on-job training. This structure ensures that ETCO Training is integrally connected with its industry. Apprenticeship coordinators and ETCO Training tutors see each other on a daily basis and regularly discuss and debate the progress and the effectiveness of aspects of the training. Staff were able to cite several examples of how this had led to improvements, for instance when coordinating on-job assessments with off-job training.

In the past year, ETCO Training has delivered several week-long residential Gateway programmes for school students to promote the industry as a viable career choice for school leavers. It is too early to know whether this initiative has made a difference, but ETCO Training is pleased with the results to date and is

planning to monitor the application rates and achievements of Gateway students over the next few years.

As an outcome of the Prime Minister's Employment Task Force set up in 2009, ETCO Training entered into an arrangement with the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) to enable ETCO Training students to take time out from their studies to complete Limited Service Volunteer (LSV) training. At the end of applicable LSV courses, an ETCO Training tutor spends a full week at Waiouru Military Camp with the ETCO/LSV students. ETCO Training and NZDF see the value of this arrangement in the character building and motivation for the students, but also because it means that there will be an increased number of electricians in the NZDF reserve forces. NZDF had identified that when reserve forces are called up to assist with natural disasters etc, there is a high demand for electrical skills.

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**.

ETCO Training's regular and ongoing interaction with its stakeholders is a stand-out feature of the organisation. As previously discussed, the ownership model and the connection with the ETCO Ltd apprenticeship scheme are integral to this engagement. The ongoing engagement through the apprenticeship coordinators enables staff to continually improve the relevance of the training and also to tailor training to the individual needs of students or employers. ETCO Training has recently been offering residential Gateway courses to lift the profile of electrical engineering as a career choice.

ETCO Training staff also participate in professional bodies and industry fora. All teaching staff hold a current electrical practising certificate. The TEO has had close involvement with the recent national review of electrical qualifications.

Block course training is normally delivered at the regional campuses in Auckland, Rotorua, Wellington, or Dunedin. Additionally, depending on demand, ETCO Training offers weekly night classes at up to 30 venues throughout the country. All night classes are taught 'in parallel' which enables students who move regions, temporarily or permanently, to seamlessly pick up their training at the nearest night class venue. Several students reported that this feature had been very helpful to them. ETCO Training has effective systems and processes which have ensured that all premises used for training are fit for purpose and the learning environments are suited to the needs of students. The multiple site delivery (further discussed in section 1.5) helps ensure that graduates are well prepared for meeting the variable needs of different electrical employers/organisations.

ETCO Training's short course delivery is centred around the professional development that electricians require in order to retain their registration. Although ETCO Training has identified possible useful additions to the courses, the organisation is operating in a very competitive environment and the commercial reality is such that clients prefer not to have to pay for more than the training essential for certification.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Although ETCO Training's teaching staff have extensive industry and professional experience, and most full-time staff have a teaching qualification, the evaluation team believes that ongoing professional development for teaching staff will assist them to keep their teaching current and to better engage students. ETCO Training brings all full-time tutors from throughout New Zealand together once a year. At these meetings, much of the discussion is centred on content rather than teaching practice.

ETCO Training contracts the services of about 70 part-time teaching staff to teach night classes throughout New Zealand. These staff are monitored on a regular basis by regional training managers (RTMs). The national training manager reported that RTMs had made 105 monitoring visits to regional classes in the first half of 2012. While RTMs provide support and mentoring for new, part-time staff, the part-time staff receive no formal training, have no teaching qualifications, and are to a large extent teaching in relative isolation. ETITO also noted variability in the quality of delivery between regions. A more proactive approach to training for the part-time tutors, and providing services such as a virtual community of practice, may improve delivery in the regions.

Students obviously respect the teaching staff, but the students spoken to at the Auckland campus did not appear excited or inspired by their learning experience. Most Auckland students seemed to accept that coming to class was a means to an end. On the other hand, the Wellington campus was characterised by passionate staff and enthusiastic students.

Students reported receiving clear information about assessment tasks and receiving good, timely feedback about their learning progress. There was some complaint, however, that students receive little or no feedback on end-of-term tests.

ETCO Training management closely monitors student and client feedback and takes immediate action where there is indication of less than satisfactory delivery. Students however, reported discomfort that feedback forms were handed out 'stapled to the back of their end-of-term tests' and collected by the tutor with their test papers. This approach brings into question the authenticity of the information

gained. A more reliable and systematic approach to gathering genuine student feedback may better inform improvements to teaching practice.

As well as the formal student feedback process, teaching and management staff have an open-door policy to enable staff and students to approach them with problems and issues.

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**.

ETCO Ltd has developed comprehensive and rigorous guidance and selection processes for employing apprentices. Through the experience of employing several thousand apprentices over the past decade, the organisation has built up a clear picture of the type of person who is likely to succeed in their study and employment. Because of its reputation and ongoing promotion, ETCO Ltd receives large numbers of applications each year. Prospective apprentices are vetted, tested, and interviewed prior to initial selection. They are then put through a ten-day residential induction programme before their employment is confirmed. As a result, ETCO Ltd apprentices are well guided, motivated, and prepared for study at ETCO Training. The other half of ETCO Training's students are referred by ETITO and ETCO has no involvement in their selection.

The ETCO Ltd employment structure, whereby students are placed with 'host employers' for periods normally of between three months and two years, provides a good context for training. Apprenticeship coordinators often rotate apprentices to provide them with exposure to different parts of the industry, which in turn strengthens their training. ETITO reported that the ETCO model, particularly in larger centres where employers may be quite specialised, works well for students. The apprenticeship coordinators, working closely with teaching staff, make for a very effective 'wrap-around' support system for students. ETCO Training staff also communicate regularly with the employers and families of their students.

Students have online access to their results and several students commented on how helpful this was. Students and staff also commented on the high quality of their training booklets, which were considered to be particularly useful for students studying through night classes.

Students have access to ETCO Training tutors outside of class hours. Wellington tutors visit students in their workplace to provide additional coaching and support, which was appreciated by Wellington students and helps them to contextualise their learning and motivates them to achieve. However, this practice does not appear to be universal across other campuses.

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

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

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

ETCO Training is an industry-owned and operated training provider with a clear set of goals and objectives. The organisation has developed and embedded very effective systems for monitoring student achievement and for supporting staff to improve educational outcomes. An increased commitment by management to support ongoing teacher development for full and part-time staff will help improve the student experience and ultimately student outcomes. Likewise, including part-time staff in improvement discussions would be beneficial.

ETCO Training's management recognises that the key to success of its business lies in the success of the students and the value they gain from their training. ETCO Training actively supports strategies to increase student achievement and to support students to meet their industry goals. The evaluation team hopes that in time, ETCO Ltd will broaden its selection processes to encourage a wider demographic in its student population, for instance to encourage more women into the industry.

Management monitors organisational and individual performance at all levels of the organisation in a regular, transparent, and open manner. The evaluation team observed coherence across all staff in their focus on giving students the best experience possible to equip them to perform and achieve. The workshops and teaching spaces are generally well resourced. The organisation has begun to engage with new technologies, and a comprehensive technology upgrade is planned for later this year.

While the focus of ETCO Training's self-assessment has centred around identifying and responding to industry needs, which has resulted in an outstanding accomplishment, the next challenge for ETCO Training is to focus its efforts towards developing a greater level of understanding of 21st century educational delivery to enable it to sustain and improve current performance. This will necessitate a more systematic, whole-of-organisation analysis and ensuing action from self-assessment activities. The evaluation team strongly recommends a greater level of ongoing engagement with the NZQA key evaluation questions.

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 **Good**.

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

2.2 Focus area: National Certificate in Electrical Engineering (Levels 2,3, and 4)

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

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

2.3 Focus area: Short courses

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

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

Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those expressed or implied within the report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of programme approval and accreditation (under sections 249 and 250 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Programmes established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act and published in the Gazette of 28 July 2011 at page 3207. These policies and criteria are deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under the new section 253.

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 programmes they own or provide. These criteria and policies are also deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under section 253. Section 233B(1) of the Act requires registered PTEs to comply with these rules.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or 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 EER process 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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