



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report



Skipper Training NZ Limited

Date of report: 14 January 2025

About Skipper Training NZ Limited

Skipper Training provides maritime training to equip students with the skills and knowledge to become a deckhand, skipper or mate on a fishing vessel. Training includes NZQA-approved micro-credentials and qualifications to level 6 on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	24a Harley Street, Nelson
Eligible to enrol international students:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: mid-2024, 219 (54.124 equivalent full-time students – EFTS) of whom 26 identify as Māori (12 per cent), seven as Pasifika (3 per cent), and 13 as disabled (6 per cent) International: two students enrolled
Number of staff:	Three full-time equivalents, two part-time, one casual
TEO profile:	Skipper Training (TEO profile on NZQA website)
Last EER outcome:	This is Skipper Training's first EER ¹
Scope of evaluation:	One focus area informed the EER: the New Zealand Certificate in Domestic Maritime Operations (Restricted Limits) (Level 4) [reference 2505]. This programme receives the highest enrolments of each of the PTE's NZQA-approved programmes. It has two modes of delivery: a five-week block version comprising on-site practical training; and the newer 'hybrid' version for more experienced students, which includes 10 days of on-site practical training.
MoE number:	6035

¹ Skipper Training was registered as a PTE in July 2021.

NZQA reference:	C56656
Dates of EER visit:	8, 9 and 16 October 2024

Summary of results

Skipper Training provides high quality, relevant training resulting in excellent achievement and value for students and employers. Self-assessment processes are effective, with insights continually used to improve delivery.

Highly Confident in Educational Performance

Skipper Training comprehensively meets the most important needs of students and employers. Programmes are designed based on in-depth understanding of the sector and what works to support student success. There is a high commitment to relevant practical training and removing barriers to learning.

Confident in Capability in Self-Assessment

Excellent student achievement is supported by close monitoring of student progress and individualised engagement and support. Teaching staff are highly experienced and qualified. The level 4 focus area programme results in excellent valued outcomes for graduates and employers.

The PTE is managing most key compliance activities very well. It has effectively managed one process issue recently identified relating to responsibility for student credit reporting under an MoU.²

The owner/manager has extensive maritime experience, including as a skipper and in maritime training. Processes and decision-making are robust and informed by expert advice. Growth has been managed well. There is very strong evidence that performance will continue to be exceptional.

Self-assessment is generally of high quality to inform understanding of educational performance across key areas. The PTE uses self-assessment findings to make a range of improvements which are swiftly actioned, demonstrating a commitment to quality. Skipper Training is developing processes to better capture and collate graduate and employer insights on the outcomes of the training.

² Memorandum of understanding

Key evaluation question findings³

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>High completion rates have been achieved across all delivery since 2022.⁴ While the number of priority students enrolled is small, there is equity of achievement for Māori, Pasifika and disabled students.</p> <p>High completion of the level 4 focus area programme⁵ is validated not just through the PTE's internal moderation process, but also by the end-of-programme external examination undertaken by Maritime New Zealand. Students gain extensive knowledge through the programme.</p> <p>Skipper Training attributes high achievement to its unique and practical delivery, expert tutors, dedicated student support, strong industry links and the active role of the owner in engaging the students. These attributes were strongly evidenced through the EER.</p> <p>The PTE's collation of achievement data shows close understanding of the reasons for what is a very small number of non-completions.</p> <p>Data is collated to show achievement for Māori and Pasifika students. While the PTE confirmed the successful completion of each student who self-identified as disabled at enrolment, completion data for these students was not (but should have been) reported in collated self-assessment data.</p> <p>Staff understanding of student achievement is well supported by student management system data,</p>

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

⁴ All course completions: 2022: 98.1 per cent, 2023: 99 per cent, 2024 year to date: 99.6 per cent (source Skipper Training self-assessment data).

⁵ Completions are 96 per cent for the first hybrid delivery in 2024; for block delivery: 86 per cent in 2022, 100 per cent in both 2023 and 2024 year to date.

	purposeful engagement with students to check progress, staff meetings, and collective review and discussion.
Conclusion:	High student achievement and completions are supported by excellent contributing processes, close understanding of student progress, and responsiveness to needs.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Achieving the level 4 qualification gives credibility to students' existing knowledge and experience (as does the validation of the Maritime New Zealand final exam). The qualification has enabled graduates to attain higher-level job opportunities. Qualifying and becoming a skipper has improved graduates' (and their families') financial situations.</p> <p>Even for students with lots of prior practical knowledge and experience, the additional growth in knowledge is a valued outcome of the qualification. Graduates have grown their credibility with colleagues because of the knowledge they take back to their workplaces.</p> <p>This is the first time that many of the students have gained a qualification. Graduates include students who were unable to previously achieve their skipper licence through less-practically designed and supported training options. Students spoke of being scared to enrol due to past schooling experiences and a lack of confidence. Gaining the qualification has been empowering and life changing.</p> <p>Building student confidence is a key focus for the PTE and an understood outcome of the training. This was confirmed through graduate conversations. However, overall, there was limited independent self-assessment evidence documented to demonstrate attributes gained.</p> <p>The PTE has been challenged by a low graduate survey response rate. It has more effectively gained targeted feedback about the value-add of the programme from a series of graduate phone calls – an emerging approach to self-assessment that Skipper Training intends to embed.</p>

	<p>The EER identified that self-assessment could also be enhanced by adding specific questions to end-of-course evaluations to ask students about the attributes, skills and knowledge gained from the training (the PTE enacted this suggestion during the EER).</p> <p>Feedback from employers participating in the EER positively confirmed the high value of the training, including the training quality, practical on-water component, and hybrid delivery option. They confirmed that the PTE is in regular contact to ensure that the training is meeting their needs and for any feedback. Collation, analysis and reporting of employer feedback was not part of self-assessment evidence, but is an area that the PTE is addressing through developing and streamlining its employer consultation log.</p> <p>The PTE acknowledges that it could better capture and collate the many insights and anecdotes that it receives in different ways from graduates and employers.</p>
Conclusion:	Despite some self-assessment limitations, which are being addressed, excellent valued outcomes were confirmed through self-assessment and anecdotal information and EER key stakeholder conversations.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Skipper Training is driven by wanting to provide the best maritime training to meet industry and diverse students' needs. Programmes have been developed with in-depth understanding of students' and employers' needs and are of relevance to stakeholders. The training is in high demand, as seen in the rapid take-up of all TEC⁶-funded places, and students on waitlists.</p> <p>From past observations, long experience of maritime training and sector understanding, the PTE purposefully</p>

⁶ Tertiary Education Commission

	<p>designed the level 4 programme differently to most other providers. This was in response to a need for on-site practical learning and assessment, including on the water. A unique design feature includes students completing the Maritime New Zealand training and record book during the practical component and alongside the tutor, as opposed to students completing this on their own off-site.</p> <p>Furthermore, a hybrid version of the programme was created in response to industry feedback and to cater for students with extensive maritime experience, who are adept, confident, self-motivated students. The hybrid version is valued both by students and employers for requiring less time away from home and employment, while still maintaining the practical on-site component.</p> <p>Skipper Training is closely connected to industry, including the owner's membership of a Hanga Aro Rau Workforce Development Council (WDC) advisory group, and as an executive of the New Zealand Marine Transport Association. It also regularly engages with employers about their needs and for feedback. This supports the PTE's ongoing and current understanding of sector needs.</p> <p>Learning activities and resources are effective in engaging the students. The PTE owns its own vessel which is used for the on-site practical learning and assessment. Student feedback highlighted tutors' extensive knowledge and how this is effectively imparted. They appreciated the sharing of real-life incidents and the depth of hands-on learning.</p> <p>Programmes are regularly reviewed and improved using a range of self-assessment evidence (including findings from internal moderation).</p> <p>Maritime New Zealand conducts an end-of-programme oral examination of each student, including their workbook. In effect, this quality assures Skipper's training and assessment through independently determining that the students have the required attributes and competencies. The Maritime New Zealand examiner also provides the PTE with feedback on improvement opportunities. Skipper Training provided evidence from a Maritime New Zealand external examiner attesting to the high quality of its training.</p>
Conclusion:	Programme design and delivery are matching the needs of students and industry stakeholders to a high degree. This

	is supported by excellent understanding of industry needs. The quality of delivery and assessment is reviewed internally and is validated by Maritime New Zealand's quality controls and positive feedback.
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1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students' initial engagement with the PTE includes an individual interview to understand their circumstances, goals and needs. Following review of the first delivery of the hybrid programme, the PTE has added a second interview by the hybrid tutor as a further opportunity to ensure each student's suitability for this option.</p> <p>Student feedback identified high responsiveness from the PTE's administrator to ensure provision of comprehensive and timely study information and advice.</p> <p>Skipper Training has a strong commitment to minimising barriers and empowering students who have not previously been well served through past education experiences.</p> <p>For the five-week, block-delivery version of the level 4 programme, the PTE engages with the students individually and tailors the learning to individual needs. This approach recognises that students may not be familiar or confident with academic learning, and supports their growth in confidence and as independent students.</p> <p>For the hybrid delivery, a WhatsApp group forum and an optional once a week tutor-facilitated online session supports students to become a crew before they come together for the 10-day practical training. These forums provide a safe space for questions and discussion, the sharing of students' different knowledge and experience, and for the tutor to identify and respond to aspects that students are finding challenging. Students are supported to establish social and academic networks.</p> <p>Recent graduates of the five-week block delivery said they highly valued how the tutor facilitated a shared and inclusive learning experience. The practical learning aimed</p>

	<p>to build on students' different strengths and knowledge for the benefit of the collective, creating a team approach to learning, replicating that of a crew.</p> <p>Several examples demonstrated the high level of individualised support provided to minimise barriers to learning. This has included connecting students to external learning professionals, who have provided advice and resources to support learning. The PTE also connects with students' whānau to encourage their involvement.</p> <p>High quality self-assessment ensures a depth of relevant insight to inform performance, including about individual progress and needs. Student evaluations elicit valuable feedback, including on tutors' knowledge, support and assessment. Feedback is used for improvement purposes.</p>
Conclusion:	A high level of individualised engagement supports and involves students in their learning (particularly for five-week block students). The collective learning environment is valued for recognising and using the students' experience and knowledge. Self-assessment is highly effective to ensure responsiveness to students' needs.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The organisation's purpose and direction are clear and well demonstrated in practice. Skipper Training is driven by wanting to provide the best training it can to serve its industry, and to meet diverse students' needs – particularly those who have not previously been well served by other training approaches. This commitment stems from past observations and long experience of different training delivery. This mission drove the establishment of the PTE.</p> <p>The owner/manager has long involvement in the industry and in maritime training. He is well embedded in industry, including as a member of national advisory groups. This provides excellent insights into sector needs, and Skipper Training uses these insights to shape programme offerings and design.</p>

	<p>There is high demand for the training. The PTE was successful in receiving TEC funding for the first time for 49.34 EFTS in 2024, followed by further funding for an additional 14 EFTS due to demand. Growth is appropriately managed, including through robust scrutiny and advice provided by external advisors, and a carefully managed increase in staffing.</p> <p>All aspects of the organisation are supported by staff with high levels of professionalism, commitment and relevant knowledge and expertise in their respective areas.</p> <p>Staff recruitment and development is effective. Skipper Training employs staff who are recommended by trusted people and are highly qualified and experienced in their fields. All tutors hold, or are completing, adult educator qualifications. Skipper Training financially supports staff professional and personal development. Tutor observation and student evaluation feedback information contributes to the identification of staff development needs, which the PTE appropriately responds to.</p> <p>Skipper Training strongly believes in the effectiveness of its training to meet the needs of priority students. It remains committed to pursuing TEC funding (unsuccessfully to date) to provide training in Northland where it identifies high need and demand, and to serve a high Māori population.</p> <p>Self-assessment insights and processes comprehensively inform academic leadership and an understanding of educational performance and quality improvement. Management meets fortnightly to review performance and works closely with tutors to review delivery. Achievement data and tutor and student evaluations are regularly reviewed. Close industry connections ensure the relevance of programmes.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Educational achievement is effectively supported by a highly experienced and knowledgeable governance and management team driven by a shared commitment to providing high quality, relevant training.</p>

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The PTE has effectively managed most education sector compliance accountabilities across the last three years, including as it has grown its NZQA programme portfolio and gained TEC funding for the first time.</p> <p>Skipper Training's collaborative approach to accessing and internally integrating expert external advice has supported comprehensive understanding of key compliance accountabilities and effective processes to ensure requirements are met. Staffing has been increased to provide appropriate oversight and compliance management as the PTE has grown. Supporting evidence includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a track record of successful NZQA programme approval applications, and approval to become an international signatory to the Code of Practice • meeting TEC financial viability requirements for 2023 and as forecasted for 2024 • no complaints or critical incidences • meeting NZQA validation visit requirements in 2023, which confirmed that Skipper Training is meeting PTE registration requirements • meeting NZQA regulatory requirements. <p>One process gap identified was a lapse in the PTE's timely renewal of a MoU with a provider for delivery of first aid unit standards that form part of the level 4 programme. This was addressed with the renewal of the MoU in March 2024. However, the PTE did not realise until 14 October, that the terms of the MoU had been changed to place responsibility for the reporting of credits to NZQA onto the PTE. As a result, credits for a small number of students had not been reported. The MoU has now been amended and the PTE has confirmed that all student credits have been reported. Skipper Training has also confirmed that it has implemented a strengthened process of self-review.</p>

	<p>Health and safety is closely monitored through a health and safety log and as a focus of every fortnightly staff meeting. All maritime training incorporates health and safety regulations. The PTE advised that no injuries or accidents have occurred during the training. Students interviewed for the EER commented positively on the quality of safety gear and processes followed on the training vessel.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Skipper Training is effectively managing most of its important compliance activities. It has appropriately responded to address one process issue identified.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 New Zealand Certificate in Domestic Maritime Operations (Restricted Limits) (Level 4) [Ref: 2505]

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good

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.

NZQA recommends that Skipper Training NZ Limited:

- Continue to build on and review self-assessment processes to understand and provide evidence for the value of outcomes for graduates and employers.
- Ensure that self-assessment evidence of achievement specifically includes achievement information for students with a disability.

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

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 fraud⁷*
- 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.*

⁷ 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 2022, 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 excluding universities, and*
- maintaining micro-credential approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022, the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022 and the Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2022 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, micro-credentials 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 2022. 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). 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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