



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report



Mission Ready HQ Limited

Date of report: 16 August 2023

About Mission Ready HQ Limited

Mission Ready HQ (Mission Ready) develops the capability of its 'candidates' (students) and supports them to gain entry-level, technology-based work. Mission Ready aims for a more diverse and inclusive information technology ("tech") workforce.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Level 5, 115 Queen Street, Auckland
Eligible to enrol international students:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 649 (191 equivalent full-time students in 2022 year) Female 365 (56 per cent), Māori 82 (13 per cent), Pasifika 73 (11 per cent), Disabled 18 (3 per cent)
Number of staff:	23 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	NZQA profile Mission Ready gained NZQA registration in December 2021. For the previous two years, the PTE delivered similar training as a subcontractor to Otago Polytechnic.
Last EER outcome:	This is the first EER of Mission Ready.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 127261 Certificate in Applied Digital Technology Product Solutions (Level 6) Training Scheme¹• Achievement and outcomes for Māori and Pasifika
MoE number:	6039
NZQA reference:	C53094
Dates of EER visit:	24-26 May 2023

¹ This training scheme became a micro-credential in May 2023.

Summary of results

Mission Ready is fulfilling its core purpose: providing an effective training pathway for many students (candidates) to gain entry-level tech roles. Industry is gaining work-ready graduates. The PTE has many highly effective processes. Self-assessment is typically rich and nuanced, supporting high performance, improvements, and innovations.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Completions are generally strong and mostly improving. Māori candidates typically complete on par with all candidates. Pasifika rates vary at level 4 but are on par at higher levels. Candidates with a disability complete at a lower rate. Females complete at rates close to par with male candidates.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Mission Ready is providing entry-level, work-ready graduates that the tech sector needs. Candidates develop and apply the technical and professional capabilities they acquire. Three-quarters of the level 6 graduates are hired in the sector within six months. It is highly probable that graduates from key priority groups are being hired.
- The PTE has designed condensed, hands-on, industry-focused training delivered through team projects and industry internships. The training matches well the needs of candidates and industry. Mission Ready effectively supports many candidates to complete their studies and find work.
- Mission Ready has capable leadership, a clear purpose, well-articulated strategic direction, and coherent values. The leadership has recruited and enables its staff to perform well.
- Mission Ready effectively manages its important compliance accountabilities. Its review of the pastoral Code of Practice is mostly sound.
- This PTE authentically and systematically reflects on its performance, enabling improvements and innovations. Monitoring, reporting, and reviews are typically high quality and used insightfully to guide robust decision-making.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Candidates typically enrol on three training schemes that progressively develop the capabilities needed for entry-level IT work. Candidates are learning hands-on, industry-relevant technical and professional knowledge, skills and attributes. Overall training scheme completions are generally strong.³ Completions mostly meet internally set targets. A high proportion of candidates complete the level 6 training scheme. There is a generally high level of progression between the training schemes.</p> <p>Māori candidates have completed at near parity with all candidates, except the first level 4 cohort. Pasifika rates vary at level 4, but are near parity for level 5 and 6. Females complete at close to parity with male candidates. Candidates with a disability complete at a lower rate. Assessment and moderation practice gives overall confidence that these results are valid.</p> <p>Mission Ready has a very strong understanding of achievement. There is detailed and regular reporting on achievement against key targets. The PTE took prompt and effective action to address the lower completions of the first level 4 cohort. This contributed to completions mostly trending up since then. Individual candidate's progress is closely monitored and the reasons for withdrawal are analysed. There are a few minor gaps: Mission Ready has not compared Māori and Pasifika completions with non-Māori and non-Pasifika, while reporting on disability is evolving. Completions have not been benchmarked against similar providers.</p>
Conclusion:	The overall achievement of candidates is generally strong and mostly improving. Self-assessment of achievement is high quality, informing robust decision-making.

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

³ See Appendix 1, Table 1 for details.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Mission Ready was established to address a significant skills shortage in the information technology (tech) sector. The PTE also aims to increase diversity and inclusion in this sector. In its first year, Mission Ready has performed well, in achieving these key objectives. First, candidates have been able to acquire and apply technical and professional capabilities through projects and industry internships. A sample of 42 employers rated 32 interns (76 per cent) as Competent, Proficient or Exemplary, and a further eight (19 per cent) as Developing. Candidates have developed portfolios of work, industry networks and job search skills. Candidates also reported that the training contributed to important personal change.</p> <p>Secondly, many graduates are gaining tech work. Six months after graduation, 75 per cent of the level 6 graduates had been hired in the sector. While 88 per cent of those level 6 graduates actively seeking work, have been hired. Candidates and graduates rate the PTE strongly, and many refer others to the training.</p> <p>Mission Ready has predominantly high quality self-assessment. It has ongoing, multiple, and close linkages with industry partners, including sponsors offering internships and work to graduates. Stakeholder feedback has led to a greater focus on professional skills. The PTE tracks and reports progress against key targets, including live tracking of its employment placement rate. However, this was not tracked for under-represented/priority groups. There was significant but only indirect evidence of a positive impact for these groups. Given its goal to make the tech workforce more diverse and inclusive, this is a key self-assessment gap.</p>
Conclusion:	Mission Ready is fulfilling its purpose through creating high-value outcomes for its candidates and industry. Self-assessment is rich and nuanced, mostly supporting high performance. As noted, there is one key gap.

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>Mission Ready has designed accelerated training options that suit the career objectives of its candidates. The training scheme design (short duration, timing of sessions, remote/face-to-face/in workplaces) supports candidates to engage. The PTE's applied learning training model is team and project-based and uses workplace language, mirroring the tech workplace environment.</p> <p>Training is flexible and 'agile', preparing candidates for different roles. The staircased training schemes support candidates to become more independent and meet industry expectations. Candidates both value and are challenged by the condensed real-world approach. Industry stakeholders agree that the content and approach is fit for purpose. Formative and summative assessments are well suited to the context.</p> <p>A range of processes effectively support educational quality and improvements. Moderation of assessment practice is mostly robust. The cohort reviews after one year are substantive, though not yet consistent. The first annual reviews are detailed and data-informed, leading to coherent actions such as extending the duration of the level 5 training scheme. The newly formed academic board provides a sound oversight system.</p>
Conclusion:	Mission Ready has designed and is delivering training and related activities that match the needs of its candidates and industry stakeholders well. A range of self-review processes effectively support educational quality and improvements.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Mission Ready has a coherent, systematic, layered and values-based approach to supporting its candidates to reach their goals. Accessibility is enabled by scholarships, fees-free options (in 2022) and provision of laptops. This approach has attracted and supported groups traditionally under-represented in the tech sector.⁴ Mission Ready has hired recruiters wishing to make a difference, who match applicants with training options and identify and address barriers to candidate success. Collaborative learning projects and placement of candidates together in internships enable them to support one other.</p> <p>Other key supports include trainers/coaches who are IT professionals with a passion for mentoring candidates. At levels 5 and 6, a coaching model is used. Candidate advisors also systematically monitor candidate engagement and intervene as required. Formal extensions and opportunities to re-enrol in a later cohort are available for those unable to complete. A job search coach supports level 6 graduates to find work after completion.</p> <p>Graduates have been employed as support staff. Level 6 candidates are used as assistant trainers to support level 4 candidates. This provides a candidate voice inside the organisation. Candidates provide detailed and mostly positive feedback, rating their trainers, the support received and their overall experience. Areas for improvement are identified. This data informs cohort reviews and decision-making, such as the introduction of assistant trainers and buddy groups. This has proved an effective support mechanism. The most recent improvement is a candidate success and engagement strategy with a new lead role established. One area for improvement is clearly analysing feedback response rates.</p>

⁴ Groups include Māori, Pasifika, females and those from a low income background. See Appendix 1, Table 1 for details.

Conclusion:	Mission Ready effectively supports many candidates to complete their studies and progress to paid work. Commitment, systems and data inform the evolving support offered.
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1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Mission Ready has a clear purpose, well-articulated strategic direction and coherent values. Monitoring and reporting are high quality and inform decision-making. The PTE has capable directors and an advisory board with a range of expertise. Academic leadership is robust, with the new academic board offering additional oversight. Trainers receive well-rounded training on facilitation, assessment and moderation, and leadership expectations.</p> <p>Resources have been thoughtfully invested as Mission Ready has evolved and grown, moving beyond its start-up phase. The leadership has established new roles. The PTE recruits and develops managers, trainers and staff with the capabilities and attributes to further the core mission. Team culture is strong; staff have ranked the workplace culture highly in an independent survey.</p> <p>Mission Ready has an authentic and systematic approach to self-assessment, focused on quality and improvement. The leadership is reflective and supports all staff to be the same. Rich data is used insightfully to guide decision-making. There is a wide range of detailed periodic reporting and monitoring, informing regular operational and review meetings across the organisation. This includes typically robust academic review of each training cohort and more substantive annual reviews. The purpose, quality and impact of the self-review undertaken is mostly clear. High-quality self-review has contributed to key improvements and ongoing innovations.</p>
Conclusion:	The leadership has overseen strong completions, high progression, candidates with improved capability, and many graduates placed into related work. It has put in place highly effective processes. Self-assessment is robust and comprehensive supporting high performance and improvements.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Mission Ready is focused on ensuring its compliance as a training organisation. It has in place an academic quality management system that guides key activities. The PTE has people with a tertiary education background at governance and management levels. The advisory and academic board members understand that their role is to provide scrutiny and manage risk. Management meetings include a regular compliance focus. Signs of effective compliance management include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attestations and key documentation have been completed as required. The NZQA Validation report (May 2022) had no recommendations for action. • The training schemes have been delivered as approved. • There is sound assessment and moderation practice in place. • Trainers have appropriate experience and training credentials. • The PTE undertakes robust cohort and annual reviews. <p>Mission Ready completed a generally sound gap analysis of the Code of Practice⁵ in June 2022. This analysis found Mission Ready in full compliance and did not identify any actions to be taken. Since then, Mission Ready has made some substantive improvements to support candidate wellbeing.⁶</p>
Conclusion:	Mission Ready has systems and people in place to effectively manage its important compliance accountabilities. The review of compliance has been mostly effective.

⁵ [Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners\) Code of Practice 2021](#)

⁶ For further details, see Section 1.4 and EER Focus Area: Achievement and outcomes for Māori and Pasifika.

Focus areas

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

2.1 127261 Certificate in Applied Digital Technology Product Solutions (Level 6) (Training Scheme)

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Nearly all level 6 candidates complete the training scheme.⁷ There is parity in achievement for all key priority groups. The predominant focus of the training scheme is a structured industry internship. A mentor/coach effectively supports the candidates. The level 6 internships educate the candidate and build industry sponsor awareness. Sponsor pitching for interns is an innovative illustration. Industry stakeholders agree the overall approach is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Graduates become work-ready. Industry sponsors have rated most candidates as having entry-level capability. Six months after graduation, 75 per cent of the graduates were hired in the sector. Overall, 88 per cent of those graduates seeking work, have been hired. There are robust ongoing and periodic self-review processes. Detailed monitoring and reporting inform thoughtful decision-making.</p>
Conclusion:	Mission Ready is meeting well the important needs of candidates and industry. Self-assessment is high quality, supporting a well-performing training scheme.

2.2 Achievement and outcomes for Māori and Pasifika

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	Mission Ready has a strategic focus on making a positive social impact for Māori, Pasifika and other groups under-represented in the tech workforce. It has attracted significant enrolments

⁷ See Appendix 1, Table 1 for details. Also this training scheme has been replaced by a micro-credential in May 2023.

	<p>from Māori and Pasifika candidates.⁸ Mission Ready has hired staff motivated to make a social difference and put in place effective support and monitoring systems.</p> <p>Some of the key support mechanisms used are fees scholarships, fees free (in 2022) and loaned laptops. Completions were at parity for Māori, after the first level 4 cohort in 2022. Pasifika level 4 rates are more variable. Level 5 and 6 rates were at parity. Progression improved after the first level 4 cohort. The addition of assistant trainers and buddy systems supported Māori, Pasifika and other level 4 candidates. However, Mission Ready has not tracked and reported on how many graduates hired in the sector are Māori and Pasifika.⁹</p> <p>Mission Ready has recently developed a coherent candidate success and engagement strategy and established a new lead support role. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these significant changes.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Mission Ready is meeting many of the important needs of Māori and Pasifika candidates. Self-assessment is generally strong and improving. It is too early to evaluate the impact of some significant changes.</p>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Or graduates from other under-represented groups.

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 Mission Ready HQ Limited:

- Evaluate to what extent Mission Ready is contributing to a more diverse tech workforce by:
 - Reporting on the outcomes for key priority groups
 - Considering the merits of placement targets for candidates from priority groups
 - Considering the merits of an advisor with social entrepreneurship expertise on the advisory board (and/or other approaches).
- Clarify the purpose and key attributes of Mission Ready's self-assessment approach to better reflect the mission and values of the organisation.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

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

Appendix 1

Table 1. Training scheme¹⁰ completion rates 2022 and 2023 first quarter (percentage)

	2022		2023 – 1st intake	
All training schemes	Total enrolled (number (percentage))	Completion rate (percentage)	Total enrolled (number)	Completion rate (percentage)
All candidates	648	74	84	78
Pasifika	49 (8%)	54	13	54
Māori	74 (11%)	69	13	85
Women	283 (43%)	73	NA	NA
Disabled	18 (3%)	61	NA	NA
Level 4	Total enrolled (number (percentage))	Completion rate (percentage)	Total enrolled (number)	Completion rate (percentage)
All candidates	136	59	34	62
Pasifika	24 (17%)	38	11	45
Māori	23 (17%)	48	5	60
Women	51 (38%)	53	NA	NA
Level 5	Total enrolled (number (percentage))	Completion rate (percentage)	Total enrolled (number)	Completion rate (percentage)
All candidates	325	73	19	89
Pasifika	17 (5%)	70	-	-
Māori	31 (10%)	79	3	100
Women	147 (45%)	74	NA	NA
Level 6	Total enrolled (number (percentage))	Completion rate (percentage)	Total enrolled (number)	Completion rate (percentage)
All candidates	187	87	31	97
Pasifika	8 (4%)	88	2	100
Māori	20 (11%)	84	5	100
Women	85 (45%)	85	NA	NA

Source: Mission Ready HQ achievement data

¹⁰ These training schemes were replaced by micro-credentials in the second quarter of 2023.

Table 2. Training scheme progression rates 2022 (number/percentage)

Training scheme	Jan/Feb intake		Apr/May intake		July/Aug intake	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Level 4 - Full Stack Accelerator	11	91	32	86	24	77
Level 5 - UX Design Accelerator ¹¹	16	100	21	100	22	96
Level 5 - Adv Dev Accelerator	21	100	12	100	28	85
Level 5 - Salesforce Dev Accelerator	-	-	13	76	13	65
Subgroup						
Level 4 Māori and Pasifika candidates	3	75	8	89	9	82

¹¹ The level 5 Training Scheme prepares candidates for three different IT roles.

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud¹²*
- *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.*

¹² NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2021, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2021, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2021 and the Training Scheme Rules 2021 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2021 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, training schemes and consents to assess and registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2021. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

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

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). 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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