

Report of External Evaluation and Review

MITA Consulting Ltd

Confident in educational performance

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 31 December 2014

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Final Report

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:	MITA Consulting Ltd (MITA)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	45 Keeling Road, Henderson, Auckland
Delivery sites:	The permanent training site is in Henderson; MITA uses temporary sites in Hamilton, Napier, Christchurch and Dunedin.
First registered:	6 September 2012
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Zealand Certificate in Electricity Supply (Introductory) (Level 2) replacing the National Certificate in Electricity Supply (Level 2)• National Certificate in Electricity Supply (Line Mechanic) (Level 3)• National Certificate in Electricity Supply (Line Mechanic) (Level 4)• National Certificate in Electricity Supply (Cable Jointing – Low Voltage) (Level 3)• National Certificate in Electricity Supply (Cable Jointing – High Voltage) (Level 4)• National Certificate in Electricity Supply (Live Line) (Level 4)• National Certificate in Electricity Supply (Glove and Barrier) (Level 5)

Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 270 (estimated 160 equivalent full-time students); 60 per cent European/Pākehā, 23 per cent Māori, 8 per cent Pasifika, 8 per cent other ethnicities
Number of staff:	Two full-time staff and four contracted trainers (three full-time equivalent staff)
Scope of active accreditation:	Consent to assess for domain of Electricity Supply - Distribution Networks up to level 4 Programme approval received for the New Zealand Certificate in Electricity Supply (Introductory) (Level 2)
Distinctive characteristics:	MITA offers five block courses for trainees working in technical roles in the electricity distribution sector. MITA is an Electricity Workers Registration Board approved course work provider. Key clients are electricity distribution companies who pay the trainee fees (they receive no funding from the industry training organisation (ITO)).
Recent significant changes:	The PTE has in the last year begun to deliver Live Line (Glove and Barrier- (Level 5) training.
Previous quality assurance history:	This is the first quality audit or evaluation since the PTE's registration. A 2013 validation visit identified some issues, which have been addressed. NZQA has just approved an introductory Line Mechanic block course: New Zealand Certificate in Electricity Supply (Introductory) (Level 2). The Connexis ITO workplace assessor audit of MITA in 2014 found that the PTE met the required industry standards. NZQA external moderation concluded in 2013 (1 unit) and again in 2014 (2 units) that the level 2 communication skills units did not meet national external moderation requirements. The ITO-developed materials were not pre-moderated by MITA.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

To discuss the scope of the evaluation, the lead evaluator met, via Skype, with MITA management and reviewed their self-assessment summary, other supplied documents as well as NZQA-held data. The Line Mechanic programme was selected as the focus area because it is the PTE's core business, with 80 per cent (218) of students currently enrolled on this programme. The programme includes three national certificates: National Certificate in Electricity Supply (Level 2), and National Certificates in Electricity Supply (Line Mechanic) (Levels 3 and 4). The New Zealand Certificate in Electricity Supply (Introductory) (Level 2) will replace the level 2 national certificate.

The Line Mechanic programme consists of five block courses comprising thirty days of theoretical and hands-on applied learning. This is typical of the type of training MITA delivers. The level 5 diploma Live Line programme was excluded because trainee numbers are small, and the programme has been delivered for only around one year and so produced few graduates. The Cable Jointing programme was excluded for similar reasons.

Governance, management and strategy is a mandatory focus area for all external evaluations.

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 team of two evaluators visited for 1½ days, the Auckland office and delivery site as well as the Hamilton site, where a Line Mechanic training block course was taking place. The team interviewed the two co-owners of the company, who are respectively the technical training manager/lead trainer and the operations and administration manager. Also interviewed were one other trainer, two business clients, an ITO representative, two graduates and six current Line Mechanic trainees.

The team also reviewed a range of documentation and data including: a self-assessment summary, external moderation reports, NZQA validation report, ITO audit report, various memorandums of understanding, summaries of employer and student feedback, course materials and the company website.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **MITA Consulting Ltd.**

NZQA has reached this judgement because:

- The PTE is embedded in the electricity distribution industry, with the personnel having long-standing relationships with key industry players. They meet well the most important needs of their trainees, business clients and the industry training organisation. The Line Mechanic programme fulfils the sector's compliance and regulatory requirements. Client companies and trainees value training tailored to individual workplace requirements.
- Nearly all (95.8 per cent) of the trainees achieved their qualifications over the past three years and went on to become certified workers in the industry. The reasons for non-completion were beyond the control of the PTE. Māori, Pasifika and new migrants are achieving qualifications at similar rates to other groups.
- Graduates of the largest training programme (Line Mechanic) have acquired the knowledge, skills and attitudes to work safely and effectively in the industry. Capable and experienced trainers have thoroughly drilled them in the core competencies of following procedures, working as a team, and team communication. Application of this learning in the workplace is systematically monitored.
- Support and guidance has been sound and sufficient to ensure all participating trainees, from diverse backgrounds, gain their qualifications. MITA management, training and administration staff work collaboratively to provide effective teaching and ensure that the needs of the trainees and employers are being met.
- The purpose of the organisation is clear. There is strong leadership and a range of processes that support strong educational achievement over time.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Not Yet Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **MITA Consulting Ltd.**

MITA Consulting has presented good evidence of review processes that support educational performance. These processes include:

- Student surveys at the end of each block course, which have led to improvements such as course materials provided in advance of each block session, and the purchase of a crane truck.
- Visiting business clients and a feedback survey (although it has produced limited value).
- The development of a logbook for recording workplace practice, and the 'trainee tracker' spreadsheet to strengthen and validate the learning that is occurring.
- Responding to business client demand such as developing and now delivering the level 5 Live Line programme.

However, the review of performance varies in quality in the following areas:

- insufficient response to identified core skills moderation issues,
- the absence of a substantive meeting of trainers to date in 2014, to review performance and develop improvement plans
- lack of external benchmarking for the level 5 programme

A comprehensive and coherent self-assessment approach is evolving within this new PTE. MITA identified some of these gaps and plans to establish a quality assurance/administrative role and fill this position in early 2015.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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**.

The trainees at MITA Consulting achieve consistently strong results. All of the trainees, who are employed by electricity distribution companies, need their qualifications and resulting certification to work without supervision in the industry. Of the 480 trainees enrolled between 2011 between 2014, 460 (95.8 per cent) achieved their qualifications. Factors beyond the control of the PTE resulted in 20 trainees not achieving their qualification. The primary reasons were leaving the job or their employer removing them from training for disciplinary reasons. All who completed the training achieved their qualifications, including trainees of Māori or Pasifika ethnicity. The Live Line training achievement rate is similar but is not benchmarked against a comparable programme being offered.

The second related achievement is that trainees, in a high-risk role, learn to be both safe and competent workers. Line mechanics gain knowledge of the theory and procedures and practical skills to safely carry out their workplace tasks. Critical competencies include a 'safety comes first' attitude, clear communication skills, working as a team, and consistently following procedures. Competency is demonstrated on the 'rigs' at the block courses and through supervised and monitored 'exposure' in the workplace. The health and well-being of the graduates is maintained and enhanced through their increased on-the-job safety.

MITA comprehensively reviews the educational achievements of individual trainees throughout the training process. Trainees gain timely and useful feedback about their theory-based course work while on the block courses. The trainers observe and provide live feedback on individual and trainee team performance while they carry out the required hands-on tasks. The trainee and client company, after each block course, receive updates on the achievement to date and what workplace practice is required to gain the unit standard. A logbook has been introduced with one student cohort to better record their on-the-job exposure, which is signed off by a certified line mechanic. A 'trainee tracker' spreadsheet is being explored with one client to better track learner achievement. The impact of these initiatives will be assessed in December, with a view to rolling them out across the organisation.

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

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 **Good** .

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

The value of the MITA training outcomes is high for the trainees and industry stakeholders. The high completion rates for the NZQA qualifications offered enable the trainees to become certified workers in the New Zealand or Australian electricity distribution industry, with improved financial benefits. Feedback from trainees is consistently positive about the value and quality of the training. Another highly valued training outcome, for the industry, MITA and for most graduates, is the graduates being able to work safely through their career. There is an opportunity to gather better data on this key outcome.

Industry stakeholders strongly value the outcomes from their training. The industry receives certified workers to carry out a range of roles for their operations. Business clients interviewed (and other feedback) rated the quality of the graduates produced and the flexibility of the PTE to their business requirements. The Connexis ITO representative rated MITA's outcomes at the highest level, when compared with the ITO's own expectations and similar tertiary education organisations providing industry training. MITA is the sole external education provider of level 4 Line Mechanic training. An indicator of the value offered is being invited by a few clients to deliver refresher and the more advanced level 5 live line training

MITA has developed strong ongoing relationships with key stakeholders which provides useful feedback on the value of the training. Business clients and ITO representatives regularly visit and observe first-hand the block course training and graduations. They speak with the trainers and trainees, providing informal feedback to MITA on the training. Similarly, MITA gains feedback via an active long-term role in the annual industry line mechanics competition. These feedback mechanisms could be more focused or systematic to gain better quality information. MITA trialled an employer survey in 2014 which had a response rate of around 33 per cent and affirmed the value of the training. Similarly, the technical director visited the South Island distribution companies in 2014 and got positive but limited useful data. Students are surveyed on each block course and this data has been used to enhance the training provided. There was limited direct evidence presented of the progression of graduates to more advanced training and senior roles within the industry.

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 **Good**.

The MITA training programmes meet strongly the key needs of trainees and industry stakeholders, and any gaps are minor and being well managed. MITA Consulting is embedded within and highly responsive to the needs of the industry.

Trainees are typically non-academic, hands-on, practical people. The programme has a mix of classroom theory and hands-on learning on 'non-live' and then 'live' rigs. The programmes have been well designed to meet regulatory, industry, client and trainee requirements. ITO materials are used where available and are regularly updated to remain current. The programme content prepares trainees for both NZQA assessment and the Electricity Workers Registration Board examination. Graduates are then competent and certified to work in the industry. Training is delivered at times and locations across New Zealand to accommodate clients' needs. Business clients can have the course tailored to their requirements. For example, one company has extended the Line Mechanic block course by two weeks, as they want a higher standard of competency.

Trainee feedback is consistently and strongly positive. For instance, a group of Line Mechanic trainees interviewed by the evaluation team described how the trainers made the learning accessible as 'they know them [the trainees]' and have been where 'they have been there [in the role and the industry]'. The trainee feedback sighted from different block courses supports this view. Business clients and an ITO representative who observe the training are positive and highly complementary about the quality of the training. The business clients are satisfied or more than satisfied with the competency of the graduates.

There is sound evidence of MITA responding to the changing needs of stakeholders, particularly in the last 12 months. Examples include student feedback resulting in a crane truck being bought, and in another case facilities and equipment being modified. MITA has responded to a business client and begun offering level 5 Live Line programmes. The ITO has now printed the MITA logbook and offered that resource to other PTEs. It is too early to make clear judgements about the impact of these initiatives on MITA's educational performance.

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**.

The effectiveness of the teaching is generally strong, and in some aspects is to a very high standard, although there are also some gaps that have not been well managed.

High-quality trainers are at the heart of MITA. The five trainers, led by the technical manager, are experienced and respected electricity distribution technicians. The trainees, business clients and the industry training representative rated the trainers highly. The trainees valued both their experience and teaching approach.

The training delivered for this industry context is generally of a high standard. Three out of the five trainers have completed the National Certificate in Adult Education and Training, and the others are currently enrolled. The delivery approach is relevant and effective for this industry. A team of two trainers deliver all block courses. Theory and practice are delivered in a way that suits the learners who are generally non-academic. There is evidence from a range of stakeholders that the trainees are engaged in their learning and achieving in their training goals. The critical need of being safe in the workplace and on the training site is demonstrated by repeated drilling of the key requirements: follow procedures; work as a team; communicate clearly. Each training team remains engaged until the last team member has completed their task. The trainers convey these fundamental work values by how they act and teach. They provide live feedback and guidance to trainees on their performance on the rigs and at the end of the block course.

Feedback is generally given openly in the group, reflecting the team environment of the trainees' workplace. The trainees viewed the feedback as valuable, credible, fair and given without favour. Business clients receive a progress update on the trainees after the block course. One business client, who had observed a number of block courses, simply stated, 'they do things right'. The trial of a logbook is a promising initiative. It seeks to record the required workplace practice of the trainees. It might also track the application of their newly acquired competency and consolidate their block course learning. How it is actually used in the workplace needs to be thoroughly assessed.

There are a range of other review processes in place, although the quality is varied, and some gaps in management and processes have had an impact on teaching delivery and assessment. Working in teams of two, there is ongoing peer observation, although it was unclear whether this is a systematic process used to identify gaps for possible individual or group professional development. MITA disclosed that there had not been a substantive staff meeting to date in 2014, which are generally held quarterly, as the PTE has been managing a period of considerable growth in 2014. There are meetings booked for December 2014 and four meetings for 2015.

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The technical manager reviews all assessments to encourage consistency. The ITO has identified no moderation issues with MITA. However, NZQA moderation for both 2013 and 2014 of the ITO pre-moderated assessment materials for communication level 2 unit standards did not meet the required standard. After discussion with the ITO, MITA did not make the required changes to these assessment materials. However, MITA is responsible for its assessments. An independent external moderator has been appointed, but no evidence was presented of this moderator's feedback.

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 support and guidance wrapped around the trainees is highly effective. The personable trainers have the major role in providing this guidance and support. MITA generally keeps the same trainers with the same student group for the two-year duration of the training. The trainees interviewed stated how much they appreciated the support offered, valuing both the serious advice and the banter of the trainers, typical in this industry. They saw the trainers as just like them, echoing the important focus on being and feeling part of a cohesive team. The trainee feedback similarly rated highly the support they received.

Trainees see the support of fellow team members to achieve training success as important. The trainers and the programme encourage a strong team culture. Requests for individual support that have an impact on the team are discussed with the team. It may be valuable to identify the various ways team members support each other's learning and consider how this mechanism could be strengthened.

Non-European/Pākehā trainees currently make up 40 per cent of the total enrolled students. Their support needs are identified during the induction process. Significant support offered includes: requests to the Electricity Workers Registration Board for an examination time extension (no data was presented or analysed), a re-sit of the examination (16 of 217 trainees – disproportionately Māori and Filipino – accessed this option), and language support. All students can and some do come in early or during lunchtime to get individual support; again this activity is not tracked.

Electricity distribution companies select trainees they think will succeed, and work with MITA to ensure they complete. For example, MITA liaises with ITOs and business clients to provide language, literacy and numeracy support. MITA provides updates and reminders to the company and the trainee about what tasks are required to be completed. The 'trainee tracker' and logbook are recent initiatives to support students to complete. Student feedback recently resulted in the block course materials being sent before the course starts. This was well

received by the trainees; however, the impact on educational performance is not clear. An improved database is currently being implemented, which aims to provide richer data for analysis to improve decision-making and achievement.

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 **Adequate**.

MITA leadership has been effective in supporting strong educational performance. This small and newly registered organisation has a clear purpose: providing respected and relevant training to meet the needs of the electricity distribution industry. The PTE has developed strong and established industry linkages. The technical manager has worked in the industry for over 20 years as a technician and trainer, and later as a workplace assessor and judge in industry competitions, and has been part of the targeted review of industry qualifications. While maintaining the core Line Mechanic programme, MITA has responded to the demand for new types of training (most significantly the Live Line training).

MITA's organisational structure is changing as the business evolves. Two clear and complementary leadership roles have been developed: the technical manager and operational manager roles. MITA has also retained a core group of capable contract trainers to deliver the training and maintain the high level of achievement. A recent internal self-assessment process identified that the PTE has been stretched to some extent because of growth in enrolments. A temporary logistical role has been put in place and plans have been developed for a longer-term solution. A quality assurance and administrative position will be established in early 2015, informed by the experience of this external evaluation. The importance of a stronger external moderation role has also been recognised. Other, more straightforward resourcing decisions have meanwhile been taken, most significantly the purchase of a crane truck to enhance the training delivered, and new equipment loaded on to mobile trailers.

A range of self-assessment processes have been implemented, detailed throughout this report. Some have been more effective than others. These processes include: a trainee survey, business client survey and visits, annual audit of the quality management system, external consultant to support the self-assessment review. Some of these processes have been variable in quality, and for some it is too soon to judge their impact on educational performance. The overall self-assessment capacity of the organisation is still developing.

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 **Adequate**.

2.2 Focus area: Line Mechanic programme

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that MITA Consulting:

- Gather, analyse and report data on the outcomes of training, including: trainees and graduates working safely on the course and in the industry, and the progression rate to more advanced training and roles. Develop internal targets and external benchmarks for trainee outcomes.
- Establish an annual improvement plan to track the outcomes of new initiatives and their impact, particularly on educational performance. Identify any organisational learning that has taken place from these initiatives.
- Strengthen the process for employer feedback by reviewing the survey, introducing a variety of methods for gathering information, and reviewing how the information will be used to inform training practices. This would include being more systematic in gaining feedback from business clients when they visit training sessions or interact with the company.
- Identify the key ways in which trainee team members are supporting or could better support each other's learning.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

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 External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.

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).

The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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