

Report of External Evaluation and Review

MITA Consulting Ltd

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 18 November 2015

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MoE Number: 7098
NZQA Reference: C19046
Date of EER visit: 22 and 23 July 2015

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
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	6 September 2012
Location:	45 Keeling Road, Henderson, Auckland
Delivery sites:	Waikato Institute of Technology, Hamilton; Eastern Institute of Technology, Napier; Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, Christchurch; Delta Training Depot, Dunedin
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Electricity Supply (Line Mechanic) (Level 3 and 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)• New Zealand Certificate in Electricity Supply (Introductory) (Level 2)• New Zealand Certificate in Electricity Supply (Line Mechanic Distribution) (Level 4)

Number of students:	All domestic: 242 – all on short courses; Māori 24.4 per cent; Pasifika 5.4 per cent; around 2 per cent female
Number of staff:	Two full-time equivalents; one part-time administration and four contract trainers
Scope of active accreditation:	Consent to assess for the domain of Electricity Supply Distribution Networks up to level 4
Distinctive characteristics:	The Line Mechanic programme consists of five block courses of 30 days of theoretical and hands-on applied learning for trainees employed full-time in technical roles in the electricity distribution sector. Training is funded by the employer and occurs at a range of delivery sites across the country, including at the head office in Henderson, Auckland. MITA is an approved Electricity Workers Registration Board (EWRB) provider and a member of the EEA (Electricity Engineers Association).
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>At its most recent external evaluation and review (EER) in October 2014, NZQA was Confident in MITA's educational performance and Not Yet Confident in the PTE's capability in self-assessment. There were a number of recommendations in the evaluation report from which MITA developed a comprehensive action plan. The Connexis industry training organisation (ITO) workplace assessor audit of MITA in 2014 found that the PTE met the required industry standards.</p> <p>NZQA recently listed the New Zealand Certificate in Electricity Supply (Introductory) (Level 2) (Line Mechanic). As a result of a consistency review (May 2015) for this certificate, NZQA notified MITA (June 2015) that it had met the sufficiency criteria for this qualification.</p>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas selected were the mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy as well as the New Zealand Certificate in Electricity Supply (Introductory) (Level 2) (Line Mechanic) programme. This programme was selected as it has the greatest number of trainees, trainees are full-time employees,

and it comprises the core business of the PTE. The programme includes three national certificates: National Certificate in Electricity Supply (Level 2) and the National Certificates in Electricity Supply (Line Mechanic) (Levels 3 and 4). The New Zealand Certificate in Electricity Supply (Introductory) (Level 2) programme will replace the level 2 national certificate.

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.

A team of two evaluators visited the Auckland office and delivery site for 1.5 days. The team interviewed the two co-owners, who are the technical training managing director/lead trainer and the operations and administration manager respectively; the quality assurance manager, two trainers, two graduates of the Line Mechanic programme, six Line Mechanic trainees on their second training block course, three Connexis customer service managers and three business clients.

The team reviewed a range of documentation including the action plan developed since the last EER, self-assessment summary, the six key evaluation question booklets, evaluations completed by trainees, staff evaluations, minutes of a range of meetings (including the advisory group), the student handbook, trainee log book, and stakeholder survey results.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

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

MITA trainees are full-time employees within the electricity supply industry, having met employer selection criteria. They are also funded to attend training. While this pre-selection and funding contributes to MITA trainees' retention rate of 99 per cent, MITA adds value by providing training that is:

- informed and aligned to industry standards
- customised to meet specific employer needs
- conducted in small groups to ensure individual learner needs can be accommodated
- undertaken by contracted trainers (including the managing director) with adult teaching expertise and many years' experience in the industry
- organised into manageable blocks of learning that teach theory followed by hands-on application of this theory
- undertaken in a safe training environment (with real equipment) where mistakes are discussed and seen as opportunities to improve future practice
- focused on teamwork, problem-solving, effective communication skills and critical thinking
- modelled on appropriate workplace behaviours, where trainers engage learners by constructively sharing, discussing and reflecting on their personal industry experiences
- underpinned by a sense of 'belonging and ongoing commitment' to the wider industry
- informative and ensures trainees understand and actively engage with the career pathways and future work opportunities available to them, including EWRB registration as a line mechanic on successful completion of the level 2 training programme.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **MITA Consulting Ltd**.

MITA has effectively addressed the recommendations from its previous EER by undertaking a comprehensive needs analysis of its business, evidenced in its EER improvement plan. This has included:

- strengthening processes for stakeholder feedback
- developing more robust data analysis
- conducting external benchmarking
- undertaking trainer meetings and trainer performance reviews
- analysing trainee log books
- conducting independent reviews of its moderation systems and processes, and conducting an independent audit of its quality management system.

Improvements that have occurred as a result of these processes include:

- appointment of a quality assurance manager and the development of an operational database supported by an operations manual
- assurance from external benchmarking that MITA performs as well as, or better than, other, similar providers
- more formalised input and tracking of decisions by conducting regular trainer meetings
- adopting useful advice given by external contractors in trainer appraisals and making changes to moderation systems and office and administration processes.

The outcomes from these activities have been supplemented by the managing director's recent involvement in the consistency review (May 2015) for the New Zealand Certificate in Electricity Supply (Introductory) (Level 2) programme. This review required MITA to compile a self-assessment report that demonstrated how it meets the graduate profile for the qualification, by providing evidence of this for each graduate outcome; and to discuss this report with other tertiary education organisations providing the same qualification.

In June 2015, as a result of the consistency review, NZQA notified MITA that it had met the sufficiency criteria for this qualification. This indicated that there was good evidence that graduates meet all, or nearly all, of the most important outcomes of the graduate profile of the qualification. The graduate profile is the skills, knowledge and attributes a graduate is expected to gain through completing a qualification.

NZQA stated that, 'good practice noted includes the emerging use of stakeholder feedback to inform programme development and delivery. MITA have worked collaboratively with Connexis for moderation events. Good tracking of graduates and engagement with employers which confirms that they meet the graduate profile'.

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**.

The New Zealand Certificate in Electricity Supply (Introductory) programme involves five block courses undertaken over a minimum two-year period, culminating in a final EWRB exam (six theory and six practical exams over two days) which is required for registration as a linesman or lineswoman.

Over 2014-2015, 314 students were enrolled with MITA. Six of these trainees left the industry, a retention rate of 98.09 per cent. Of the trainees who left, two left for disciplinary reasons, three made a change of career, and one went overseas. The enrolled trainees who remained in the industry had a 100 per cent success rate.

In 2014, level 2 course completions were 92 per cent, but with 8 per cent still requiring their employer attestation (where an on-the-job assessor observes a skill performed competently a minimum of three times). In 2015, level 2 course completions are 95.3 per cent, with 4 per cent still requiring the employer attestation. These results compare well with the 2013 electricity industry national average for course completions of 78 per cent. In 2014, 171 trainees sat the EWRB registration exams; of these, 25 required a re-sit. In 2015, 76 trainees sat the exam and 12 required a re-sit. All re-sit trainees achieved the qualification.

Employers consistently report that the training meets the required standard. MITA has developed good systems for managing trainee results, including providing individual progress reports to employers. However, the full potential of the data management system is not yet realised – for example, trainers inputting trainee results directly into the database.

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 **Good**.

Employers' investment in employee training is highly valued by the trainees. Trainees feel part of an industry with clear pathways and options for further training and advancement. In 2014, 92 per cent of graduates progressed to the level 4 Line

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

Mechanic qualification and 7 per cent progressed to the level 3 Cable Jointing qualification; in 2015, 100 per cent have progressed to the level 4 Line Mechanic qualification. Successful completion of training is also rewarded financially.

Employers described MITA as a 'one-stop-shop' for any training needs, including one-off training requirements such as refresher courses. They reported that they were highly satisfied with MITA's flexibility and responsiveness to any training requests.

MITA management, trainers and trainees are actively involved in the annual Line Mechanic competitions as judges and participants. MITA trainees have had considerable success over time at these events, indicating their enthusiasm and competence at a national level.

MITA is developing its processes for gathering useful stakeholder feedback, including a recent online survey to employers. This survey of 59 stakeholders, with a 56 per cent return rate, showed that 97 per cent agreed that the training course objectives were clear, 91 per cent agreed that staff completing the course demonstrated increased knowledge of industry best practice, and 85 per cent agreed that staff completing the course applied industry best practice. Further work and analysis in this area will enable more accurate identification of the key factors that contribute to valued outcomes.

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**.

MITA meets all stakeholder needs closely. Employers consistently affirmed the usefulness of the training and MITA's responsiveness to industry developments. One example is the focus on health and safety. This is a key training focus, particularly with a trainee population of predominantly young men.

MITA works collaboratively with its ITO, Connexis. Improvements from this relationship include the development of the trainee log book used by the workplace assessors to sign off competent trainee practice. Connexis customer service managers also visit trainees to track progress and identify any issues the trainee or employer is having. They also visit MITA block courses and liaise with trainers about trainee progress. This collective oversight identifies any issues promptly.

Other examples of matching needs include: open-book assessments; the option for trainees to have questions read to them; extended time allowance for the EWRB exam if a trainee has language difficulties; and trainees' ability to extend their enrolment to three years if required to complete the qualification.

Training teams are created to encourage ownership and to foster healthy competition. They also replicate the high level of teamwork that is essential in this industry, particularly because of the hazardous nature of the work.

Māori and Pasifika trainees achieve as well as, and sometimes better than, other trainees. This may be indicative of the focus on building effective teams, which fits well with Māori and Pasifika world views where team success is highly valued.

MITA has consistently provided the electricity supply industry with people who have sufficient knowledge and ability to work safely in the industry at entry level.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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**.

MITA uses pre- and post-moderated Connexis assessments but also has its own internal and external moderation schedule, where all unit standards are moderated over a two-year period. Consistency of marking across trainers is also moderated. Assessors are required to attend a Connexis assessor forum each year to maintain registration. They are also required to attend MITA training forums. In this way, they meet both the ITO and MITA requirements. MITA has a service contract with the EWRB for the registration of line mechanics. MITA trainers/assessors are either registered line mechanics or electrical engineers.

Trainees gain useful skills and develop their cognitive abilities. This was evident in classroom activities where trainees described learning the theory in the morning, and being assigned a group task and applying their learning on the equipment on site in the afternoon. The activity is then reviewed back in the classroom, including the practical application of the skills learned, the teamwork involved, and anything that would have made the execution of the task more effective.

Trainers are highly experienced technically and as adult teachers. Their performance has been reviewed by an external assessor and feedback has been actioned. For example, less emphasis is now put on PowerPoint presentations and more on student-centred learning techniques. MITA has been responsive to feedback from trainers and is actively engaged with targeting professional development activities for staff. Trainers interviewed showed good awareness of adult teaching principles and their importance to teaching effectiveness.

Trainers meet regularly five times a year and informally as required. MITA has made good progress with upskilling trainers and developing opportunities for trainers to work together and observe each other's training. Many of these changes and improvements are still in the early stages. More time is required to gauge the full effectiveness of these professional development opportunities for trainee learning.

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 **Excellent**.

Learners are provided with a comprehensive student handbook which clearly outlines expectations and a complaints process. Training occurs during normal work hours, to maintain established work patterns. Both trainers and trainees agreed that MITA was supportive but firm on expectations. Trainers get alongside trainees and often take a mentoring role as they get to know individual trainees well over the duration of the qualification.

The primary responsibility for the pastoral care of the trainees rests with the employer, but MITA keeps close contact with employers around learner progress and any absences or issues. The trainers and trainees relate well to each other. Trainers are responsive to learner needs, for example providing extra one-to-one help and addressing literacy and numeracy issues. All learners are tested for literacy and numeracy and the information is used to inform teaching. ITO-funded Saturday literacy and numeracy classes are available for students requiring additional assistance.

Guidance and support is appropriate given the short courses. Trainees take opportunities to give both formal and informal feedback to trainers.

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

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**.

MITA has established the level 2 National Certificate in Electricity Supply qualification with Connexis, including involvement in the working group to set the parameters for the qualification. The graduate profile outcomes are delivered via the unit standards in the Connexis programme for the qualification.

Educational achievement is supported in a number of ways: the managing director is also a trainer, enabling him to stay close to training issues and provide informed support to his staff; the industry is relatively small, so the managing director and trainers know the people in the industry well; the trainers know most of the trainees by name; there is a fostering of 'brotherhood' similar to other industries where safety is paramount, such as the police or fire services. There is a five-year strategic plan and the managing director has a business mentor whom he consults regularly. There is also an advisory group with flexible membership, allowing the

managing director to use specific expertise as needed. This includes meeting the group prior to trainer meetings to discuss any issues.

Staff are valued, and recruitment and development of staff is effective. For example, the quality assurance manager has a tertiary marketing background which adds value to the current staff expertise, and one of the trainers has considerable management and business experience both in New Zealand and overseas.

Governance and management are strategic, willing to listen and make changes and adapt to industry input. MITA requested this EER, indicating good judgement around the progress it has made since the previous EER in October 2014.

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 **Excellent**.

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

2.2 Focus area: Line Mechanic Programme

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

NZQA recommends that MITA Consulting Ltd:

- Continue to develop its database to enable greater usability by all staff.
- Continue to investigate the best ways to collect stakeholder feedback that is meaningful and can be used to make improvements to the trainee experience.
- Continue to develop professional development opportunities for staff; including using in-house staff expertise for training.
- Continue to develop ways to represent trainee progress as a way to incentivise others.

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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