

Report of External Evaluation and Review

C4 Group Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 4 April 2013

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, learners, prospective learners, 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:	C4 Group Limited (C4)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Penrose, Auckland
Delivery sites:	Head office and training centre, as above. Other training occurs at sites throughout New Zealand, depending on client needs.
First registered:	21 December 2011
Courses currently delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Security (Level 2)• National Certificate in Security (Level 3)• National Certificate in Security (Level 4)• First Aid• Emergency Management (CIMS2 and CIMS4) <p>Plus various short courses in self-defence, airline security, control and restraint.</p>
Code of Practice signatory?	No
Number of learners:	Domestic: approx. 1,000 (all part-time) International: nil
Number of staff:	Three full-time equivalents plus contractors as required
Scope of active	C4 holds consent to assess in a variety of domains

accreditation:	and unit standards in the areas of security, emergency management, and communication up to level 5, and First Aid (u/s 26551, 26552 and 25459)
Distinctive characteristics:	C4 is currently the largest provider of security training in New Zealand with responsibility for over 1,000 trainees spanning a wide range of industries from security companies to airlines to community volunteer groups.
Recent significant changes:	C4 was first registered as a PTE in December 2011. Prior to that date the organisation was providing training for approximately 10 years under the accreditation of an associated provider.
Previous quality assurance history:	No previous compliance history since registration.
Other:	N/A

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

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

- Governance, management and strategy.

In addition, the following focus areas were selected:

- National Certificate in Security levels 2, 3 and 4 – selected because it is the biggest programme area and the core of C4's business
- First Aid – selected because of the current high profile and changes to delivery in this sector.

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

The EER was conducted in February 2013. Prior to the EER visit, the lead evaluator visited the Auckland head office and met with the managing director. A one and a half-day EER visit was subsequently made to the C4 site in Auckland, where the evaluation team reviewed a range of documentation and met with the chief executive, managing director, IT support person and teaching staff. Telephone interviews were held with five of C4's clients and three learners. The evaluation team also visited The Skills Organisation, the industry training organisation responsible for security services, where they met with the standards and qualification systems manager and the customer evaluation advisor. A second Skills Organisation evaluation advisor was interviewed by telephone.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **C4 Group Limited**.

Learner achievement on C4 courses is good. In the past year, all learners who have been retained on the National Certificate in Security courses have achieved all of the assessments required. C4 has sound assessment tools and a robust moderation process used to confirm that assessment outcomes are valid. The only reason that learners have left the programme is when they have terminated their employment and/or left the industry.

Feedback from clients and learners indicates that courses have an appropriate mix of theory and practice and are delivered in a manner that enables learners to understand and acquire useful skills and knowledge. As the learners are all employed, the skills and knowledge gained are immediately applicable to the workplace and are valued by both the employee and employer. The quality of the training provided at C4 was affirmed by a range of stakeholders who described the graduates as work-ready, well presented and with good customer service skills.

C4 has learner support structures that are appropriate to the needs of the learners and minimise barriers to achieving. Staff at C4 are strongly focussed on supporting the needs of learners.

Discussion with stakeholders, and sample checks of staff CVs, indicated that C4 employs trainers who have sound skills and experience; it engages exceptionally well with its clients and industry and makes a valuable contribution to the industry and community.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **C4 Group Limited**.

C4 has established a robust and reflective organisation with a 'no blame' culture which actively encourages staff and stakeholders to put forward ideas for improvement.

There was evidence that in the past 12 months the organisation has embraced the self-assessment process and is beginning to use it effectively. All staff members are involved in reviewing the purpose and direction of the training and how well it is meeting stakeholders' needs. Staff members also have plenty of opportunities for reflection on their role, which benefits learners through improved teaching techniques. C4 has the foundations of a system to gather and collate feedback from learners and client organisations. What information has been gathered has been used to inform improvements to teaching practice and course delivery.

C4 works closely with its client organisations to help identify the learning needs of organisations and learners and then addresses these needs well through responsive customer service, good teaching and appropriate learner support. The evaluation team noted that the overall capability of the staff is very good and there is genuine enthusiasm for the value of the reflective approach and its role in ongoing self-improvement.

While the focus of C4's self-assessment has centred on identifying and responding to customer needs – which has resulted in a sound reputation with its customers – the next challenge for C4 is to focus its efforts towards increasing its understanding of educational performance to sustain current levels of achievement by embedding systematic, whole-of-organisation analysis and ensuing action from self-assessment activities.

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**.

Course completion rates across the National Certificate in Security and the First Aid courses, and feedback from learners and stakeholders indicates that C4 is providing learners with the required knowledge and skills to perform well in the security industry. Learner achievement is enhanced by the emphasis C4 also places on skills that enable graduates to be work-ready, such as time management and personal presentation.

Both the organisation and its staff have a strong focus on learner achievement. The courses that C4 delivers are structured with the presumption that every learner will pass, and client organisations expect no less. Learner achievement on recent C4 courses is first-rate. In the past year, all learners who have been retained on the National Certificate in Security courses have achieved all of the assessments required. The only reason that learners have left the programme is when they have terminated their employment and/or left the industry.

Staff at C4 demonstrated a good intuitive understanding of the factors that lead to learner achievement and regularly discuss ideas for improving achievement. Taking a more analytical approach to monitoring learner achievement would improve C4's ability to provide proactive intervention and support. C4 also needs to consider the value of external benchmarking with similar providers to provide comparisons of their rates of achievement and skill development.

C4 has sound assessment tools and a robust moderation process used to confirm that assessment outcomes are valid. The representatives from the standard-setting body, The Skills Organisation spoke positively about C4's response to moderation and a recent moderation report from The Skills Organisation noted that the assessment for one particular unit standard was 'the best example the moderator had ever seen'.

Learners receive timely, accurate and supportive feedback on their progress from C4 staff. The organisation closely monitors learner progress and acts immediately if a learner is not progressing as expected.

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 **Excellent**.

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

The core of C4's business revolves around a small number of clients with whom the PTE has had a relationship for several years. These clients operate in an environment that is very conscious of costs and benefits, and their repeat business is evidence that C4 is providing good value to them. For instance, two major airlines use C4 on an ongoing basis for staff skills developments and updates.

Evidence from stakeholders, including learners, indicates that C4 engages exceptionally well with its industry clients and is highly valued for the contribution that it makes. C4 personnel occupy leadership roles in national organisations such as the Community Patrols of New Zealand (CPNZ) and the New Zealand Institute of Private Investigators. C4 provides training for CPNZ volunteers throughout New Zealand on a marginal cost basis. C4 also provides free or low-cost services to community and school programmes such as the STRIVE programme run by Southern Cross Campus high school in South Auckland.

The client organisations interviewed reported high levels of satisfaction with C4's services, and C4 believes that its reputation is centred on the long-term benefits – for instance, positive changes in employee behaviour and improved capability – that the training it provides will have for the client company and the individual learners. Pending changes to legislation will require learners to complete the security training in order to apply to the Ministry of Justice for their certificate of approval to operate as a security officer.

All of the learners attending C4 courses are in employment. The courses are directly related to that employment. Through the courses, learners acquire useful skills and knowledge which they can apply within their workplace. The clients spoken to during the EER were very satisfied with the value they received from the training provided by C4 because it is delivered in ways that best suit the needs of clients and learners.

C4 has attempted to look at the long-term benefits of its training using a client survey based on Kirkpatrick's learning and training evaluation model.² To date, the response from employers and other stakeholders has been insufficient to support useful analysis. C4 does, however, intend to persist with other approaches to this challenge.

² Kirkpatrick, Dr D, Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels (1st Edition, Berrett-Koehler, 1993)

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**.

C4's regular and ongoing interaction with its stakeholders is a stand-out feature of the organisation. C4 has extensive, largely informal, stakeholder engagement with its programmes and activities which show close matching with learner and employer needs. Mechanisms employed include ongoing contact with clients and learners, learner satisfaction surveys and participation in industry forums. Industry clients also commented positively about C4's regular communication with them to gather feedback on how well C4 was meeting their needs. C4 then uses the feedback to inform improvements to courses. For instance, one major client wanted a higher level of company-specific contextualisation and more practical application of skills. C4 was able to work with the company to make these improvements.

Staff at C4 have already engaged with The Skills Organisation in preparation for the impending Targeted Review of Qualifications process in 2014. Many of C4's short courses are related to compliance obligations, for instance liquor licensing or certificate of approval to operate as a security officer. This compliance environment is periodically changing and C4 is consistently anticipating and responding appropriately to these changes.

C4's customer service focus is typified in the way it schedules its courses around the needs of clients and delivers training where and when it is needed. Outside of Auckland, teaching premises are hired on a casual basis or provided by the corporate client. C4 has systems and processes to ensure that premises are fit for purpose and that the learning environments it creates are suited to the needs of learners. Teachers also work with client organisations to develop teaching scenarios that are contextualised to the workplace environments of learners.

The majority of C4's courses are delivered through print-based distance delivery supplemented with face-to-face block courses or one-to-one tutorial support. Several of C4's courses are now also offered online to those learners who prefer it. The variety of delivery styles is in direct response to assessment of the needs of the clients and what works best for them.

C4 is regularly used by clients in a consultancy role. For instance, the organisation was recently asked by the Auckland District Licensing Agency to assist with staff training plans for two local bars whose licences were in danger of being suspended.

C4 provides security training for two major airlines. Feedback viewed indicates that C4's training in this field is contextualised to the needs and cultures of each of the companies and well contextualised to the needs of the specific learner groups, for example cabin crew, pilots or ground crew.

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 **Good**.

C4 learners spoke highly of the teaching staff. They liked the open, friendly environment and find their learning activities interesting and challenging. Learners reported receiving clear information about assessment tasks and receiving good, timely feedback about their learning progress.

C4 has a management and peer observation programme for its trainers. The performance of the teaching staff is formally reviewed on an annual basis, but this does not preclude regular and continuing feedback of a formative nature. Teaching staff spoke about how they share ideas, experiences and knowledge through their regular interaction and sharing of office space. The evaluation team noted that the staff were very open with discussions about their teaching practice and their various successes and challenges. Most teaching staff members are full-time, which enables them to freely interact with each other and with learners outside of class time. Staff meetings are held weekly, where much of the discussion is centred on teaching practice, and staff report that this had led to improved practice in delivery. Professional development is supported by the organisation, but at this point appears to be ad hoc rather than formally structured around individual and organisational needs.

All teaching staff hold some adult teaching and/or assessment unit standards and are working towards formal qualifications in adult education. It would be useful if C4 were to give urgency to focussing the ongoing professional development of teaching staff on teaching currency and literacy/numeracy support. One of C4's teaching staff received The Skills Organisation's Workplace Assessor of the Year award in 2011

The evaluators saw that C4 has good resources for teaching. Where the lessons are to be delivered electronically, there are computers available for learner use. There is also a large volume of course notes which is made available to the learners.

C4 management has informal processes to monitor learner and client feedback and takes immediate action where there is any indication of less than satisfactory delivery. C4 also makes good use of the course feedback information collected by one of its major clients. More formal systems of gathering and analysing feedback from learners are in the early stages of implementation. C4 needs to ensure that this implementation continues.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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**.

C4 does not face the same support requirements as providers of full-time courses, but what support services it does provide are generally appropriate to the courses delivered. C4 has found through experience that many of the support needs of learners are centred on fitting the demands of their study around already busy working and family lives. Pastoral care and academic support responsibility is shared by all staff. If a C4 staff member identifies any learner who has specific support needs that may impact on achieving the qualification, they work closely with the learner and employer to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting the learner. There were several examples provided of individual, and at times extensive, support for learners.

Learners are generally preselected by employers who will ideally identify and inform C4 of any learners who have specific support needs. However, this does not always happen. There are occasions where specific individual support requirements do not become apparent until the learners are in the classroom. C4 is able to provide the appropriate support on these occasions, by flexible approaches to teaching or, on occasion, by offering reader/writer support. Although staff demonstrated a strong commitment to literacy and numeracy support and a common sense approach to delivery, some specific training for staff in literacy education would be desirable.

Learners have access to C4 staff outside of class hours either in person, by telephone or by email. Learners reported that they feel comfortable contacting staff and always get a helpful response. The learner support that C4 provides is dedicated and 'led from the heart'. A more analytical approach may lead to the organisation being able to more proactively target learner support.

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**.

C4 has a very good understanding of its business. Its purpose and direction are clear and articulated throughout the organisation. The organisation is aware that the success and sustainability of its business is dependent upon meeting the needs of clients.

Effective resourcing is planned and provided for all courses. The quality of course material is appropriate to the needs of learners, and the training environments support learning.

The organisation has, over time, employed, developed and retained a competent, well-qualified and dedicated group of staff whom it supports effectively to improve educational achievement. The conscious decision by C4 to, where possible, employ teaching staff on a full-time basis has led to a high level of commitment by staff to the organisation and its learners.

Monitoring of performance within the organisation is regular, transparent and robust and management practices are legal and ethical. The organisation enthusiastically encourages opportunities for reflection on its role and how to better meet stakeholder needs. Evidence indicates that the owners actively seek feedback from many sources to use as a learning and improvement tool.

While the focus of C4's self-assessment has centred on identifying and responding to customer needs – which has resulted in a sound reputation with its customers – the next challenge for C4 is to focus its efforts towards increasing its understanding of educational performance to sustain current levels of achievement by embedding systematic, whole-of-organisation analysis and ensuing action from self-assessment activities. C4 will benefit from having a more holistic view of its training and relating it more to the overall outcomes of the industry.

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: First Aid Training

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

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

C4 complies with the requirements of: First Aid as a Life Skill - Training Requirements for Quality Provision of Unit Standard-based First Aid Training, NZQA November 2010.

2.3 Focus area: National Certificate in Security (Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4)

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

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

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

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

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual programmes they own or provide. These criteria and policies are also deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under section 253. Section 233B(1) of the Act requires registered PTEs to comply with these rules.

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

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the EER process approved by the NZQA Board.

The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

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

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

Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>

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