

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

AsureQuality Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 12 November 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:	AsureQuality Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Unit 1, Sir William Pickering Drive, Burnside, Christchurch
Delivery sites:	Nationwide  In-house courses are delivered mostly on site at trainees' workplaces.  'Public' courses are delivered at a variety of locations and venues which have undergone an assessment to ensure the facilities and resources are adequate for training.
First registered:	AsureQuality Ltd 2007
Courses currently delivered:	A total of 52 different courses are delivered internally (internal technical training) and externally (commercial training) for the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meat industry</li><li>• Food and dairy industry</li><li>• Farm and livestock industry</li></ul> Courses range from short courses of two to three hours duration to national certificate qualifications, providing technical vocational training. They are both unit standard and non-unit standard-based.

Code of Practice signatory:	AsureQuality Limited is not a signatory to the Code of Practice.
Number of students:	<p>Domestic: between July 2012 and June 2013 approximately 3,500 trainees attended AsureQuality courses.</p> <p>There is a broad and even distribution of trainees between the ages of 21 and 60 years. The majority (51 per cent) identify as New Zealand European. Māori and Pasifika trainee figures are combined and make up 39 per cent of all trainees.</p> <p>International: nil</p>
Number of staff:	The AsureQuality Training Services team employs five full-time and one part-time staff. In addition, there are 72 trainers and assessors selected from the 1,700 people employed at AsureQuality. The role of trainer or assessor is a secondary role within the AsureQuality Training Services team. The trainers' primary roles are as meat inspectors, food safety assessors, compliance auditors and farm technicians.
Scope of active accreditation:	<p>AsureQuality has training scheme approval for Introductory Auditing Skills (level 4).</p> <p>Subfield consents to assess include: Animal Product Examination Services (level 6); Food and related Product Process (level 4); and Meat Inspection Services (level 6).</p> <p>Domain consents pertain to food safety, particularly for primary industries.</p>
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>AsureQuality Limited is a State Owned Enterprise containing these operational business units: Meat Industry Services, Audit and Inspection (Food and Dairy) Laboratories, Biosecurity, and Farm and Livestock Services. AsureQuality provides food quality and biosecurity services to the food and primary production sectors.</p> <p>The AsureQuality Training Services team is the training arm and PTE within AsureQuality Limited.</p>

Recent significant changes:	A new student management system, VETtrak, was introduced in late 2012, to provide trainee data for analysis.
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>The previous external evaluation and review (EER) visit by NZQA was in January 2011. The summative statements of confidence were Highly Confident in the educational performance of AsureQuality Limited and Highly Confident in its capability in self-assessment.</p> <p>NZQA external moderation for 2013 indicates that AsureQuality has met the required standards for two of three unit standards. This is an improvement on the 2012 moderation round where AsureQuality did not meet moderation requirements for two of three unit standards and only three of nine assessor decisions were upheld.</p> <p>External moderation of the past two years' student assessments by Primary ITO (and formally NZITO) confirmed that assessments met the national standard and assessor decisions were upheld.</p>

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Following a review of documentation supplied and a scoping meeting between the lead evaluator and the AsureQuality training services team training manager and training administrator, the following focus areas were agreed for inclusion in the EER:

- Governance, management and strategy. This is a mandatory focus area.
- Meat Inspection, National Certificate in Animal Product Examination Services (NC APE) (Level 4). This is the highest-level course with the longest duration (26 weeks) offered commercially by AsureQuality. Trainees that successfully complete the qualification receive a Ministry of Primary Industries warrant that allows them to carry out their role as an Official Assessor (Meat Inspector), meeting industry requirements. This course makes up 29 per cent of all the training AsureQuality delivered in 2013. This is the same focus area as selected for the previous EER, which at the time was only delivered internally to AsureQuality trainers and assessors. For the past two years the course has been delivered to commercial customers. AsureQuality is the only provider approved to deliver this course.

- Introductory Food Safety course. This is one of the 70 per cent of courses offered by AsureQuality that is non-unit standard based. It is delivered internally and commercially, in-house and as a public course, over a half-day. A large proportion of total AsureQuality trainees attend this course, which is delivered 34 times throughout the year. The course is representative of the second largest area of training, Audit and Inspection (Food and Dairy) services, the largest being Meat Industry.

The course with the most number of trainees, Milk Effluent-Stage 1, sits within Farm and Livestock selecting a course, such as, Milk Effluent-Stage 1 as a focus area may not have provided the breadth of review to understand AsureQuality's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

### 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 conducted the EER over two days on site in Christchurch at AsureQuality Training Services head office. The EER included interviews with the interim business manager of meat industry services, training services manager, training administrators, customer relationship manager, area/line manager, training coordinator, lead trainers/technical managers, and internal moderators. Stakeholders were interviewed by phone and included graduates and trainees and employers, as well as representatives of Primary ITO, Ministry for Primary Industries, and the Meat Industry Association. Document review included a range of quality assurance processes, procedures and related activities.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **AsureQuality Limited**.

Key reasons for this include the following:

- Trainee outcomes across all courses are consistently very high and any variance between courses is understood and monitored.
- AsureQuality is comprehensively meeting industry, employer and learner needs. The strength of these outcomes is validated through industry performing to legislative standards and meeting compliance requirements.
- Courses are well matched to sector needs. Trainers and staff are recognised by industry as having technical expertise and extensive experience in their fields of delivery. This expertise is used to ensure course content and delivery are relevant, authentic and comprehensive.
- AsureQuality as an organisation is embedded in the meat, dairy, farming and wider food processing industries and has strong stakeholder relationships at all levels of the organisation within these sectors, ensuring all courses are relevant and meeting industry needs.
- The Training Services team sits clearly within the structure of AsureQuality and makes a significant contribution to the organisation. The Training Services team is well led, and staff are clear about their roles and work collaboratively to add value to the programmes on offer and the trainees they teach.
- The educational performance at AsureQuality is underpinned by highly effective processes based on the Deming philosophy of Plan, Check, Do, Act. AsureQuality's quality management system provides consistently high-quality professional practice and a broad range of high-quality information.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **AsureQuality Limited**.

AsureQuality has a quality assurance culture which is well established within the organisation, and is understood and implemented by all staff. The processes, practices and activities are purposeful and embedded, providing meaningful and authentic information for review.

As a result, AsureQuality effectively monitors areas that have the most impact on learner educational performance including:

- Learner outcomes
- Systematic course reviews
- Effectiveness of teaching and credibility of trainers
- Trainee perception of training through feedback

AsureQuality's comprehensive system of quality assurance gathers rich data which is monitored, analysed and widely reported. Analysis is ongoing and provides quality information which is used as a basis for decision-making. There is clear evidence of changes and improvements as a result of self-assessment. The impact and effectiveness of these changes are mostly systematically reviewed.

The quality and validity of the self-assessment information is consistently high. One area that could be further strengthened is the gathering of stakeholder feedback, specifically from companies that commit their staff to NC APE training.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 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 **Excellent**.

The measure of learner achievement at AsureQuality is the successful completion and achievement of qualifications, unit standards or, for non-unit standard based courses, attendance for the duration of the course. The overall learner achievement rate is very high at 98-99 per cent for the past two years over all courses.

The focus areas of both the National Certificate Animal Product Examination (NC APE) and Introductory Food Safety courses have very high completion rates. In the four-hour Introductory Food Safety course, all trainees who attend the full course gain a certificate of attendance. AsureQuality carries out an end-of-course assessment quiz to confirm whether the learning outcomes have been met.

The NC APE has been delivered commercially for the past two years, and the achievement rate is almost a 100 per cent. AsureQuality continues to support trainees in the study and practical requirements of the course until the required skills and knowledge are demonstrated or the company withdraws their employee. Non-completions are all withdrawals and are approximately 1 per cent of enrolments to date. Withdrawals in every instance have been instigated by the company that employs the trainee. Graduates meet industry and legislative standards to work competently as meat inspectors, where they are monitored hourly and daily in these roles.

Monitoring of achievement is robust, particularly for NC APE, the level 4 qualification. Weekly progress in theory and practice is tracked and reported to the trainee, company and trainer. AsureQuality management ensures high achievement outcomes by monitoring two key performance indicators:

1. The number of outstanding assessments per learner and per course.
2. The Net Promoter Scale, which systematically measures the stated likelihood of trainees to refer others to an AsureQuality course. AsureQuality has a rigorous methodology for calculating ratings and has set high targets by which trainers and courses are evaluated. The results for

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

NC APE and Introductory Food Safety courses over the past year have been rated very highly.

Both of these indicators are tracked for each course and for each trainer to enable comparisons and trends to be identified over time. Results are included in monthly key performance indicator reports to AsureQuality management and area managers. The latter is important as the performance of the trainers is the responsibility of the area managers, who have key relationships with companies and employers.

Data specifically on Māori and Pasifika achievement is rudimentary and will need to be further developed. However, through existing comprehensive data-gathering, AsureQuality is able to provide evidence that these learners are achieving consistently at the same rate as other trainees.

## 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**.

Courses offered by AsureQuality very strongly support the meat, food and dairy, and farm and livestock industries to meet compliance, legislative and vocational needs and industry requirements in New Zealand. AsureQuality is clearly producing highly valued and required outcomes for these industries.

The key value to trainees is course completion and/or achievement of the qualification, which ensures trainees meet workplace requirements and increases their skills and knowledge, such as in the Introductory Food Safety course. Success in some courses enables the trainee to progress within the company and take on additional responsibilities or roles.

AsureQuality has access to valuable ongoing and direct evidence of the competency of NC APE graduates in their role of meat inspector in the workplace. The broader AsureQuality organisation is responsible for the daily monitoring of every meat inspector for the Ministry of Primary Industries. In effect, AsureQuality is monitoring its own graduates. Errors in grading carcasses are required to be reported to the ministry and within AsureQuality to rectify. To date, there have been no such reports. The continuous meeting of this national industry standard indicates the high level competency of graduates in the workplace and the value of the training to New Zealand exports.

AsureQuality has strong relationships with stakeholders, who include trainees, Primary ITO, regulatory bodies and companies within each sector. Alongside delivering key industrial training, AsureQuality also engages with stakeholders in a variety of ways appropriate for the industry. These include contributing to the

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NZQA-led Targeted Review of Qualifications (TRoQ) process, and providing technical expertise and experience in the development of qualifications. Regulatory bodies all reported that AsureQuality communicates effectively and is mostly highly responsive in meeting their needs or requirements.

AsureQuality has a lot of information on the quality of the training, which is authentic and systematic. However, the feedback mechanism in place for company/customer feedback is an important area for AsureQuality to strengthen. AsureQuality uses its internal business units, key staff and their external relationships to gather information about the value of the courses. However, this process is not highly systematic or formalised. Gathering information from companies and processing plants on how well their training needs are being met would be valuable, especially for the NC APE, as AsureQuality is the only approved provider of this course.

### 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**.

AsureQuality courses are well matched to the needs of the meat, food and dairy, and farm and livestock industries. AsureQuality is in a unique and valuable position, as the primary role of the trainers is to provide regulatory services as meat inspectors, food safety assessors, compliance auditors and farm technicians, auditing and supporting workplaces and practices against national and industry standards. Most AsureQuality trainers work on site at companies and processing plants, and are therefore already engaging with their industries and noting first-hand their current and future needs.

There is clear evidence from trainee evaluations, achievement of qualifications and unit standards completions that AsureQuality well matches the needs of trainees. Currently, attendance at an Introductory Food Safety course is monitored. However, collecting simple data on the extent to which learning outcomes are being achieved would add value and feed into course review.

Change to and improvement of courses are continuous. Responding to changes to legislation and keeping abreast of industry needs ensures courses are relevant, authentic and interesting for trainees. Examples include developing courses for halal certification, improving teaching resources and materials to include photos and videos, and providing examples of current issues and trends within industries.

Changes to course materials and resources are based on AsureQuality's self-review of:

- All courses at least annually, which uses the technical expertise and experience of AsureQuality staff.
- Data, reflecting trainee progress individually and per course.
- Trainee feedback and continuous monitoring and analysis of the Net Promoter Scale scores per course and per trainer. The scores confirm that almost all courses are rated very highly by trainees.
- Input from compliance bodies, which requires AsureQuality to upskill the workforce, ensuring industries consistently and substantially meet required quality standards. Changes to the meat industry courses also require approval of the Ministry of Primary Industries, providing a strong external indicator of relevance and matching of needs for this sector.

These processes and activities are systematic and provide quality information by which AsureQuality reviews and considers course design and delivery.

#### 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 **Excellent**.

The industry knowledge, technical expertise and experience of the AsureQuality trainers are exemplary. Industries, Primary ITO and compliance bodies recognise AsureQuality and its staff as experts in their field whom they engage in a variety of capacities. AsureQuality identifies and carefully selects staff from within the organisation who have the experience, knowledge, skills and attributes to design and deliver training to a high standard. From the trainees' perspective, the credibility of trainers and their passion for the industry is highly valued and enhances both the theoretical and practice-based learning.

External moderation by NZQA and Primary ITO in 2013 indicates that assessments meet the required standard, and assessor judgements are upheld. Where there have been discrepancies, as occurred in 2012, AsureQuality is able to and does follow through to the original trainer and plans corrective action, which is monitored. High levels of trainee achievement and the observed competency of the workforce are strong indicators of the effectiveness of the teaching.

AsureQuality has robust and comprehensive processes and activities to inform itself and the trainers about the effectiveness of the teaching. There is a systematic analysis of the capability of the trainers and thorough induction into the role of trainer. A personnel competency matrix tracks areas that AsureQuality identifies as significant to monitor to understand the effectiveness of the teaching. These areas include technical expertise and experience, adult education unit standards and qualifications held or working towards, internal and external

moderation outcomes, participation in course review, observations and trainee Net Promoter Scale ratings. Trainers receive this collated feedback every three months from which they and the line manager can formally gauge the quality of the training delivered. An action plan tracks any areas for development, and is reviewed monthly until the required standard is achieved. Reviewing the effectiveness of changes specifically related to the Net Promoter Scale score could be improved to understand which changes resulted in improved trainer performance on this scale.

## 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**.

AsureQuality has clear processes and strong systems geared to providing guidance and support so the trainee will remain engaged and achieve their learning objectives. Trainees receive comprehensive course information and advice and there are clear training pathways for trainees tailored to their industry.

AsureQuality administration staff guide trainees through the options, ensuring the most appropriate course is selected.

Trainee needs are identified at enrolment and reliably conveyed to trainers prior to delivery. Trainers have access to an intranet where a variety of resources and information, including literacy and numeracy resources and assessments in te reo Māori, are available for use to support activities and course content as required. Most trainees are already employed and are motivated to achieve and progress along career pathways.

The NC APE course class sizes are generally small and training occurs in-house, so the client company's resources and standard operating procedures are used to full advantage for the trainee. Trainees are supported in a variety of ways in the theory and practical components of the course to achieve qualification and unit standard-based training. The tracking of outstanding assessments on a weekly basis, and monthly key performance indicator reporting to management, ensures support is identified and targeted. All trainees are continuously supported by AsureQuality to complete qualifications until achieved or the company withdraws the trainee from the course. There is a very high level of trainee achievement and low number of withdrawals.

AsureQuality has long-term relationships with its customers so is highly motivated to ensure that trainees stay engaged and achieve company and industry requirements. All trainees complete evaluations; the Introductory Food Safety and NC APE courses and trainers are consistently rated very highly. The trainee and graduates interviewed by the evaluators said training was fun and engaging, which supports learning.

## 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 **Excellent**.

The purpose and direction of this state owned enterprise is clear. The Training Services team fits well within the broader structure of the wider AsureQuality organisation. The Training Services team is valued and makes a significant contribution to the organisation by effectively developing and upskilling the industry workforce. The team is well led and resourced and benefits from being part of a larger organisation, which supports the operational functions of the PTE.

The recruitment of staff within AsureQuality to the Training Services team, which is a secondary role for the trainers and assessors, is considered an acknowledgement of the regard with which staff technical expertise, experience and competency are valued and utilised. Professional development opportunities are provided to attend trainer forums specifically to support the development of staff in their secondary role of trainer. Staff are clear about their roles and work collaboratively to add value to the programmes on offer and the trainees they teach.

AsureQuality is required to anticipate and respond to changes in each sector quickly and effectively. Stakeholders, compliance bodies and client companies require AsureQuality to support them in providing quality training to build the competency and capacity of the workforce and ensure industry requirements are met and sustained. AsureQuality engages with these stakeholders at various levels of the organisation, and is itself audited and reviewed to ensure ongoing competency.

AsureQuality's training has a strong quality assurance Deming-based philosophy of 'Plan, Do, Check, Act'. This philosophy is understood across the organisation. Clear operational procedures, key accountabilities and expectations are linked to the self-assessment activities of the training services team and AsureQuality as a whole. These processes, procedures and activities are rigorously adhered to, and are comprehensive and purposeful. The resulting quality data provides information for review and analysis across the organisation and specifically ensures key priority areas are effectively monitored and opportunities for new initiatives are realised. Although AsureQuality's processes identify whether a change or action has been implemented, the self-assessment loop would be further strengthened by identifying to what extent changes have brought about the desired improvements, to ensure performance is consistently captured.

## 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 **Excellent**.

### 2.2 Focus area: Meat Inspection, National Certificate in Animal Product Examination (NC APE) (Level 4)

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

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

### 2.3 Focus area: Introductory Food Safety course

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

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

There is evidence that graduates are competent after attending training. From their experience working in the industry as compliance auditors, the trainers are very aware of quality assurance requirements. Collecting some simple direct evidence that learner outcomes are being effectively and consistently met for this non-unit standard based training would add value and justify a higher rating for self-assessment for this focus area. Collecting additional evidence of outcomes would also support AsureQuality's own perception that training increases trainees' skills and knowledge.

# Recommendations

AsureQuality has a variety of sources and data for analysis to indicate the quality and value of the training. NZQA recommends that AsureQuality consider:

- Developing effective ways of gathering feedback from organisations whose employees are enrolled in the NC APE courses, to supplement the data already gathered and analysed.
- Fine-tuning the 'check' step of the quality management system by identifying what impact is being sought from any changes being introduced to improve the Net Promoter Scale score of trainers.

# 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](http://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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