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External Evaluation and Review Report

AsureQuality Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 17 July 2018

AsureQuality Limited at a Glance

AsureQuality Limited (AsureQuality) is a state-owned enterprise which provides a range of food and biosecurity services, including education, to the food and primary production sectors.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	1/6H Sir William Pickering Drive, Burnside, Christchurch
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Courses	AsureQuality has one approved programme, Introductory Auditing Skills (Training Scheme) (level 4). Additionally, AsureQuality offers a wide range of courses related to food safety and biosecurity.
Number of students:	4707 equating to 317 EFTS (equivalent full-time students)
Number of staff:	Eight full-time and 75 part-time trainers
Scope of evaluation:	The two focus areas selected are Meat Inspection Programmes and Advanced Auditing Skills.
MoE number:	7210
NZQA reference:	C28780
Dates of EER visit:	7 and 8 May 2018

Summary of Results

AsureQuality has a clear focus on quality and strong processes that enable it to comprehensively identify and meet the needs of trainees, industry and other stakeholders.

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Almost all trainees successfully complete their training. Trainees achieve relevant skills and knowledge that they apply directly in their workplace.
- Improved reporting and analysis of achievement data may provide further insights into educational performance.
- Training provides valuable outcomes for New Zealand. Graduates can contribute to ensuring food safety, meeting export market requirements, and protecting New Zealand's biosecurity. Individuals value the employment and career progression that the training provides.
- Programme design, delivery and assessment comprehensively meet the needs of learners and other important stakeholders.
- Robust and effective processes monitor and improve the quality of provision and assessment.
- AsureQuality effectively varies the provision of support as appropriate for the length and context of the courses.
- Robust management processes support trainee achievement, and AsureQuality Academy (the training arm of AsureQuality) is well supported by the organisation as a whole.
- AsureQuality has strong, comprehensive processes that are effectively implemented to manage its compliance accountabilities.

Key evaluation question findings

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Good**

Reasons for ratings:	<p>Almost all trainees successfully complete the training they enrol in. Māori and Pasifika trainee achievement is comparable to that of other trainees. Trainees gain the technical skills required for their work. Additionally, AsureQuality effectively develops trainees' workplace skills such as teamwork and communication. Individual trainee achievement is actively tracked, and timely, effective interventions are made when necessary. AsureQuality holds a lot of data about trainee achievement – improved reporting and analysis of this may provide further insights into educational performance.</p>
Supporting evidence:	<p>Trainees are in employment and the training provided is directly related to the employment. This is reflected in the high achievement rates (96 per cent successful completion). Māori and Pasifika trainee achievement is monitored by comparing the proportion of successful trainees with the proportion enrolled. This analysis shows that Māori and Pasifika trainee achievement is comparable to that of other trainees. Reasons for non-completion have been analysed and used to inform delivery and programme design. This has resulted in improved completion rates.</p> <p>Trainees gain skills and knowledge directly related to their workplace. There is a focus on the application of skills and knowledge in courses and assessment. The use of industry experts for delivery ensures the information is relevant and current. This is enhanced through case studies and on-job training and assessment where appropriate. Robust moderation provides confidence that reported achievement has been appropriately assessed. For longer courses, the monitoring of individual trainee progress is very effective in supporting trainee achievement. A limited sample provided the evaluators with confidence that results are being correctly reported to external agencies. However, inconsistent use of the student management system has caused some discrepancies in internal reporting. Analysis of achievement data is discussed further in 1.5.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Almost all trainees successfully complete their training. Trainees achieve relevant skills and knowledge that they apply directly in their workplace. Self-assessment is generally effective but further analysis of aggregated data may provide further insights into educational performance.</p>

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

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

Reasons for ratings:	<p>AsureQuality provides vocational training that directly supports food safety and biosecurity in New Zealand, and the ability of farmers to export food products by enabling legislative requirements to be met.</p> <p>Valued outcomes achieved by trainees include employment, career progression and the improved skills and knowledge they apply in the workplace.</p>
Supporting evidence:	<p>Trainees who successfully complete the meat inspection course gain the National Certificate in Animal Product Examination and a warrant from the Ministry of Primary Industries that enables them to be employed as a meat inspector. Appropriately qualified meat inspectors are a key element enabling meat processing companies to meet international market access requirements. As the warrant issuing authority, the Ministry of Primary Industries oversees this training and has confidence in the training provided and the reporting system. The ministry is also assured by their engagement with AsureQuality to ensure continuity of valuable outcomes.</p> <p>Trainees and graduates from the meat inspection programme valued the employment and increased pay they received as meat inspectors. Graduates from the Advanced Auditing Skills valued the skills they developed and could apply on the job.</p> <p>AsureQuality also develops training courses that meet individual customer and industry needs. To ensure that the courses provide value to the customers, there is a high level of engagement with them in the development of courses. Course outcomes are reviewed with customers after delivery. Ongoing requests for provision of courses attest to the value customers receive. Good examples of this were seen during this evaluation.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Training by AsureQuality provides valuable outcomes for New Zealand and relevant industries with staff able to contribute to ensuring food safety, to meet export market requirements, and to protect New Zealand's biosecurity. Individuals value the employment and career progression that the training equips them for.</p>

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

<p>Reasons for ratings:</p>	<p>AsureQuality engages meaningfully with customers to identify needs and develop programmes to address those needs. Programme design and the effectiveness of delivery for new programmes is validated through post-course reviews, and there are regular reviews for existing programmes. Individual trainee progress is tracked and, when necessary, responded to appropriately. Robust moderation processes ensure that assessment is fair, valid, consistent and appropriate. Moderation is used to improve assessment.</p> <p>The meat inspection programme continues to meet the Ministry for Primary Industries' requirements for training warranted meat inspectors.</p>
<p>Supporting evidence:</p>	<p>AsureQuality's services are requested throughout the world because of their recognised expertise in the fields of food safety and biosecurity. Staff delivering these services are seconded to provide training, enabling them to share their expertise and experience and ensure currency of content. Staff seconded to training roles receive appropriate training and support before beginning training.</p> <p>Regular trainee evaluations of courses and trainers reflect high levels of satisfaction. Additionally, there is peer review of delivery and assessment. In the very few cases where expectations have not been met, robust processes identify corrective actions and follow the action through to completion. This has resulted in improved delivery.</p> <p>Moderation is comprehensive and robust and clearly results in improved assessment. Assessments are sampled for moderation depending on volume and perceived risk. Moderation is conducted centrally by trained staff. AsureQuality continues to develop its moderation processes. For example, in response to feedback from the trainers, on-site moderation was recently introduced. This is a positive change involving paper-based moderation triangulated by staff and trainee interviews and observation of assessment.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Programme design, delivery and assessment comprehensively meet the needs of learners and other important stakeholders. There are robust and effective processes to monitor the quality of provision. Systems to ensure that opportunities for improvement are identified and improvements made are comprehensive and effective.</p>

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

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

<p>Reasons for ratings:</p>	<p>AsureQuality has a clear focus on supporting individual trainees to be successful. Many of AsureQuality's courses are of one or two days duration, and there are good processes in place to ensure trainees are well supported in this context. Pre-course materials provide good guidance on the course requirements. At registration, trainees are asked to identify their learning and cultural needs so they may be catered to. Staff are appropriately trained and create inclusive, supportive learning environments.</p> <p>For longer courses, the progress of individual trainees is monitored against course benchmarks, and support is provided by trainers when required. Trainees rated the support they receive from trainers very highly.</p>
<p>Supporting evidence:</p>	<p>For both focus areas there is comprehensive information available to guide trainee and employer selection of courses and educational pathways. For some courses, such as Advanced Auditing Skills, pre-course readings and questions are provided that enable the trainer to understand trainees' existing knowledge and respond accordingly.</p> <p>Trainees and graduates were very positive about the accessibility of trainers and the quality of support received during courses and after course completion.</p> <p>For the meat inspection courses, trainee progress is tracked against benchmarks set for the programme. Where progress falls behind that expected, additional support is provided and the effectiveness of this is assessed and documented in the tracking system.</p> <p>Trainees and graduates were positive about the quality and timeliness of feedback they received from the trainers. The trainers are respected for their expertise and industry involvement, and this is often a motivating factor for trainees. Programmes are designed to enable trainees to apply their knowledge and skills in the workplace.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>AsureQuality effectively varies the provision of support so that it is appropriate for the length and context of the course. Staff are effective at engaging trainees in their learning and establishing inclusive learning environments.</p>

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

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Good**

<p>Reasons for ratings:</p>	<p>AsureQuality has a clear purpose and focus on food safety and biosecurity, and the organisation's values were evident in AsureQuality Academy's operations. Expertise within the organisation is used to ensure trainers are current and well qualified. New trainers are supported by appropriate induction and development of teaching skills. Systematic monitoring of the performance of trainers and courses results in appropriate actions when necessary. Staff feedback on courses and processes is valued and results in worthwhile improvements. There is strong engagement with key organisations such as the Ministry of Primary Industries and the Primary Industry Training Organisation.</p> <p>As noted in 1.1, areas to be strengthened are the analysis of achievement data to better understand educational performance, and the consistent use of the student management system to support reporting of data.</p>
<p>Supporting evidence:</p>	<p>AsureQuality Academy is the division of AsureQuality that provides internal and commercial training. There are clear reporting lines to the AsureQuality Board, and key performance indicators are reported regularly. Strong central processes identify and track opportunities for improvement and ensure the quality loop is closed. For example, logs of actions resulting from moderation trainer feedback and annual trainer forums provides confidence that actions are completed and effective. Training is organised and administered centrally. Trainers are well supported with sufficient resources to support learning and teaching. The student management and business process management systems have been recently upgraded.</p> <p>Although AsureQuality has a generally high achievement rate and there is a strong focus on individual trainee achievement, further understanding of educational performance could be gained through more analysis of trainee achievement data. This could be analysed by trainee cohorts and demographics, trainers, and sites.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>AsureQuality Academy has robust management processes to support trainee achievement, and the academy is well supported by the organisation as a whole. However, greater analysis of achievement data already collected would lead to better understanding of educational achievement.</p>

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Excellent**

Reasons for ratings:	<p>AsureQuality has effective systems to monitor compliance accountabilities. These include regular compliance audits and a risk management plan.</p> <p>When non-compliance is identified or there is doubt in their own understanding, AsureQuality engages with the relevant authority to ensure it responds appropriately.</p>
Supporting evidence:	<p>AsureQuality recognises the importance of operating legally and ethically, and AsureQuality Academy has a part-time compliance administrator. There are comprehensive processes for ensuring staff know what is required of them. Staff confirmed that they regularly receive information updates, and they are required to confirm that they have read them.</p> <p>Following the recent internal identification of a non-compliance related to student fees, the organisation responded quickly to rectify the situation and is seeking a longer-term solution to the issue. In response to the identification of the non-compliance, the frequency of compliance audits has been increased to twice a year. Currently, AsureQuality is seeking advice from NZQA on two areas of compliance: site approvals and international students on work visas.</p> <p>Compliance with requirements for delivery hours, trainer qualifications and assessment and moderation are effectively monitored and managed centrally. For example, the course management system prevents a trainer being assigned to deliver or assess outside of the scope that AsureQuality has set for the trainer.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>AsureQuality has strong, comprehensive processes that are effectively implemented to manage compliance accountabilities.</p>

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Meat Inspection Programmes

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Good**

2.2 Focus area: Advanced Auditing Skills

Performance: **Excellent**

Self-assessment: **Good**

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation will improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that AsureQuality Limited use analysis of achievement data to better understand educational achievement.

Requirements

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

There are no requirements arising from the EER.

Appendix 1

About AsureQuality Limited

Distinctive characteristics:

AsureQuality provides food safety and biosecurity services to the food and primary production sectors, including audit, inspection, farm assurance, biosecurity and food testing.

AsureQuality Academy is the training arm and PTE within AsureQuality. Most of AsureQuality's training is one or two-day courses purchased directly by industry. AsureQuality also provides some longer programmes such as that leading to the National Certificate in Animal Product Examination Services (Level 4). AsureQuality delivers this programme in partnership with the Primary Industry Training Organisation.

Recent significant changes:

The branding of AsureQuality's training business unit has changed from AsureQuality Training Services to AsureQuality Academy. A new manager was appointed in November 2017. Internal training of staff for AsureQuality is currently being transferred to AsureQuality's people and culture team.

Previous quality assurance history:

The previous EER was conducted in May 2014. NZQA was Highly Confident in AsureQuality's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

AsureQuality was exempt from NZQA moderation in 2017, as NZQA found in the two previous moderation rounds that the organisation is assessing at the standard.

Moderation by relevant industry training organisations also confirms that assessment is at the appropriate standard.

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.*

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

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

- *Identify organisational fraud¹*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

¹ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Appendix 2

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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