Report of External Evaluation and Review

Training Systems & Solutions Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 27 September 2011

Contents

MoE Number: 7245

NZQA Reference: CO5129

Dates of EER visit: 3 and 4 August 2011

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

Location:	Auckland
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1998
Number of students:	Domestic: 23 equivalent full-time students under Training Systems & Solutions Limited's (TSSL's) accreditation. TSSL also delivers training to an additional 164 equivalent full-time students who have signed training agreements with the ElectroTechnology Industry Training Organisation (ETITO).
Number of staff:	Two full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	- National Certificate in Security (Levels 2 and 3) - National Diploma in Security (Level 6)
Sites:	None
Distinctive characteristics:	- Training sessions for the National Certificate in Security are held at the clients' workplaces in Auckland, Hamilton, Napier, and Wellington. - All TSSL's learners are part-time as they are in employment. - Most of the learners are employed by TSSL's two main clients which are security companies. - TSSL has two full-time staff members: the managing director and the training and assessment manager. - TSSL offers short seminars on topics such as

	personal safety and retail security awareness.
	• TSSL also offers a course towards the National Diploma in Security at level 6 for security managers, executives, consultants, and other security practitioners but it currently has no active students.
Recent significant changes:	• TSSL started the courses towards the National Certificate in Security with its two main clients in the latter part of 2010. • TSSL has recently started reporting credits for the National Certificate in Security for one of its clients under its own accreditation.
Previous quality assurance history:	At the last quality assurance visit by NZQA, an audit in 2007, TSSL met all the requirements of the then standard, QA Standard One, except that it needed to update its performance indicators to measure the achievement of its changed aims and objectives.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

In accordance with NZQA policy, the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy was included in the scope. The National Certificate in Security (Levels 2 and 3) was selected as a focus area because approximately 90 per cent of TSSL's time is spent delivering training towards this qualification. Seminars on topics such as personal safety were not selected as a third focus area because such seminars are highly customised and only last for a few hours.

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 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 external evaluation and review was conducted over two days by two NZQA evaluators. The evaluation involved interviews with:

- The managing director of TSSL
- The training and assessment manager
- A tutor via phone

- The managing directors and operations managers of TSSL's two main clients via phone

- A sample of learners in a meeting and others via phone

- Two contacts in the ElectroTechnology Industry Training Organisation (ETITO) via phone

- A tutor from another security training organisation via phone.

The EER also involved a review of relevant documentation such as the course induction letter, a progress report to a client, an example of evaluation collection, business plans, and a monthly progress report.

TSSL has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Training Systems & Solutions Limited.**

The learners on TSSL's course are achieving the unit standard credits required and making good progress towards the achievement of qualifications. The monthly list of credits and the total credits achieved reflect high levels of achievement. However, the credits are only part of the story. Learners interviewed by the evaluation team explained how the TSSL training has stimulated an interest in further training and helped them develop a wide range of other skills that can be used in a variety of jobs.

TSSL's courses make a valuable contribution to the security industry. The firm's wide range of contacts throughout the industry means it has an excellent understanding of needs and ensures the courses are based on those needs. Emphasis is always placed on ensuring that the training is realistic. The training is also valuable as it results in improved security services, particularly at malls and at special events which are the areas where TSSL's two main clients provide their services.

TSSL realises that its programmes and activities have to match the needs of not only the learners but also the two main clients employing the learners. Every effort is made by the firm to ensure that the training courses towards the national certificate respond to the educational needs of the clients. TSSL's close involvement with employers and ETITO ensures that the courses delivered are also meeting the needs of the wider industry. Conversations held by the evaluation team with clients and learners revealed that TSSL is held in high regard for its commitment, expertise, and quality of teaching. All the learners are on individual programmes and benefit from these as well as from the small classes. It is rare for any of these classes to have more than eight members, so individual attention can be given and learners can work at their own pace.

Although there are moves to put all learner support information on the TSSL website, the emphasis is on using online methods to support face-to-face contact. The firm has plans for the future and captures these in its business plan. Both tutors are heavily involved with the New Zealand Security Association. Their rich backgrounds in the industry mean they are well equipped for their positions and have a direct impact on learner achievement through their roles as tutors. However, TSSL could develop more specific goals, such as monthly targets of credits to be achieved, so that everyone is focussed on achievement levels.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Training Systems & Solutions Limited.**

The small size of TSSL means that it responds very quickly to suggestions from its clients. Changes can be made so quickly and easily that there is little need for documentation or formal processes for analysing data before making decisions. TSSL recognises this is a form of self-assessment that is relatively informal but extremely valuable. The managing director and the training and assessment manager do most of the training and they are in constant contact with one another. Furthermore, these people are doing the training at their clients' premises and are meeting the clients as well as the learners at each session. Many of these sessions are weekly, so constant feedback is being given. The sessions are used by TSSL to assess how well it is doing and how it could improve its performance. They are also used to check how well TSSL is satisfying the needs of the learners.

TSSL has effective self-assessment systems for the diploma programme and the short seminars it offers. Four aspects of the seminars, for example, are evaluated by the participants. The results are analysed and the presenters are asked to respond to the data. As this is the first year that TSSL has delivered the training towards the National Certificate in Security to its two main clients, some features of the self-assessment system are still being developed. The informal systems are working effectively so far, but more formal ones will be necessary in the future.

TSSL recognises that the training towards this national certificate results in the learners gaining credits and improving their skills. Measuring skill development poses more problems than credit achievement, but more could be done to provide a useful basis for comparing credits achieved in the different regions, with different tutors, and with different gaps between training sessions. The connection between regular learner attendance at the sessions and levels of credit achievement could also be used by TSSL to show its clients how the best results can be achieved.

TSSL has effective ways of checking what it is doing against developments in other countries. It is in close contact with international developments and particularly compares overseas certification with the equivalent in New Zealand. There are therefore some effective self-assessment systems in use, and once they are fully used in the national certificate course, TSSL will gain a comprehensive understanding of its educational performance.

Findings[1]

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 **Adequate.**

The National Certificate in Security is regarded as the basic industry qualification and it is envisaged that part of it will be mandatory for the security industry later this year. It consists mainly of generic unit standards that provide a range of general employment skills, such as personal presentation and cultural awareness. The learners on TSSL's course are achieving the credits required and making good progress. A record of the credits achieved by each learner is sent to NZQA for one of TSSL's main clients and to ETITO for the other major client. The monthly list and the total credits seen by the evaluation team showed high levels of achievement.

However, the credits are only part of the story. Learners met by the evaluation team explained how the TSSL training has stimulated an interest in further training, one of them going so far as to pursue a career in the police. The students also described how they increased their knowledge of the law, developed their time management skills, and became more aware of the importance of learning the locations of exits and fire hoses. They particularly stressed the very wide range of communication skills they acquired, including report writing, listening, and how to talk to impatient customers or business owners. TSSL's clients reinforced the value of this skill development for their employees. These skills can be used in a wide variety of jobs and clearly mean a lot to the learners. They feel that TSSL understands their situations. One learner who recently completed the level 6 diploma programme, for example, explained how he found it difficult to complete the 12 hours of study required for the course when he was already working 50 hours a week, but always felt TSSL recognised the pressure he was under.

At the moment, TSSL examines the credits achieved each month, and its monthly reports to its clients serve as a form of self-assessment. The manager has a clear understanding of the importance of achieving credits and upskilling the learners so that they are better equipped to deal with a wider variety of situations. Measuring skill development poses more problems than credit achievement, but more could be done to provide a useful basis for comparing credits achieved in the different regions, with different tutors, and with different gaps between training sessions. For example, in the Hamilton region one of the main clients has recently moved to monthly training and assessment sessions, while in the Auckland region the same client has weekly sessions. The connection between regular learner attendance at the sessions and levels of credit achievement could also be used by TSSL to show its clients how the best results can be achieved.

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

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good.**

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

TSSL's courses make a valuable contribution to the security industry. The firm has a wide range of contacts throughout the industry as exemplified by the extensive activities of its two full-time employees. One of them spends two days a week undertaking audits, consultancy, and various administrative tasks for the New Zealand Security Association and is organising the upcoming New Zealand Security Conference, while the other regularly attends the monthly meetings of two security bodies. Such continuous engagement means they both have an excellent understanding of the needs of the industry and ensure the courses are based on those needs.

Emphasis is always placed on ensuring the training is realistic, and its value is enhanced by the way in which the learners are encouraged to apply what they already know rather than being told how to react to different situations. In this way the learners' confidence is increased and they are inspired to undertake further training. The learners confirmed that their career prospects improved as a result of the progress they are making in their courses.

The training is also valuable as it results in improved security services, particularly at malls and at special events which are the areas where TSSL's two main clients provide their services. Strong anecdotal evidence was supplied indicating a drop in the incidence of thefts and assaults in a large mall after TSSL provided training, because the learners became more aware of the appropriate procedures to follow. Such an outcome is valuable to the client employing those learners. The whole security industry benefits from the security blog run by TSSL – to which the firm makes daily postings – and the organisational role undertaken by TSSL in the New Zealand Security Conference.

TSSL's level 6 diploma course caters for a different type of learner and places great emphasis on providing valuable outcomes. There is no recognition of prior learning as it is felt that previous security surveys, for example, might be outdated, might not match the current unit standards, and might also involve some security issues. This attitude typifies the professionalism of TSSL. The firm takes a similar approach in its seminars on topics such as personal safety and emergency management. One of the four aspects of the seminars evaluated by the participants is the value of the subject matter, and the results seen by the evaluation team confirmed that this is rated highly.

Such evaluations show that TSSL is prepared to assess itself, and on each occasion the presenter is asked to respond to the results. ETITO is confident in TSSL's performance on the training towards the national certificate, and the two main tutors discuss progress with the clients each week at the sessions. Written evaluation was not evident in this course as it has only been partially delivered at this stage. However, such evaluation leading to self-assessment would still be worthwhile in order for changes to be made for the current cohort.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent.**

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

TSSL realises that its programmes and activities have to match the needs of not only the learners but also the two main clients employing the learners. One of the clients has established a system in which each learner attends sessions in one hour of company time and one hour of personal time. The other client encourages its learners to attend sessions after work, and these sessions occasionally change from weekly to fortnightly and vice versa. TSSL is praised by its clients for being flexible and being able to accommodate these arrangements.

Every effort is made by TSSL to ensure that its training responds to the educational needs of the learners. An online literacy assessment tool conducted by ETITO provides relevant information, and learners are asked to inform their assessors prior to any assessment if they have any specific needs. One of the main tutors has also developed her understanding of Māori culture by undertaking courses so that the many Māori students can feel more confident that their needs are recognised. Through their extensive experience in security and related issues, the tutors therefore provide effective support to the learners. Moreover, TSSL's close involvement with employers and ETITO helps to ensure that the courses delivered are also meeting the needs of the industry.

This involvement with the security industry helps to ensure that the programmes are kept up to date. Training sessions are usually held weekly at the client's workplace, so the two main tutors are constantly in contact with the clients to assess their needs and to check their satisfaction with the courses. One of the clients stressed how engaged its employees are with the training even though some found it difficult. The workbooks used in the courses have been written by TSSL. They are widely recognised as valuable resources and are extensively used by other training providers. Each workbook covers a unit standard and is broken up into sections, each one followed by a self-assessment that the learners are encouraged to undertake before moving on to the next section.

TSSL therefore keeps abreast of the needs of the learners and the clients through informal processes. These processes are the means by which the firm assesses how it is performing and are effective to an extent. A written review once or twice during the delivery of the national certificate course would be a useful supplement as it would ensure a more comprehensive system of self-assessment.

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.**

Conversations held by the evaluation team with clients and learners revealed that TSSL is widely regarded as a passionate training organisation. These respondents hold TSSL in high regard for its commitment, expertise, and quality of teaching. The learners particularly appreciate the way in which one of the main presenters can clearly answer questions but prefers to show how the learner can answer the questions themselves through using their experience or what they have learned. He is praised for his sense of humour and the way in which he interacts with the class. The other main presenter is appreciated for her warmth, patience, and ability to relate to the learners and explain the material. The learners recognise that she succeeds in attending to everyone's needs and is particularly effective at clarifying what is required in the assessments.

All the learners are on individual programmes and benefit from these as well as from the small classes. It is rare for any of these classes to have more than eight members, so individual attention can be given and learners can work at their own pace. Everyone is supplied with a TSSL workbook which the learners consider to have the appropriate amount of detail and to be set at a level that makes the learners feel comfortable. The self-assessment tasks in the workbook are used as a type of formative assessment as they provide an opportunity for the tutor to explain difficult points. The learners are also provided with personal checklists so they know what they have achieved and what lies ahead.

The practical aspect of the teaching is appreciated by the learners who know that the presenters have the practical experience to ensure the training is realistic. The teaching is enhanced by the way in which the learners are taken outside the classroom for exercises that they can apply to their jobs. The learners also benefit from the written feedback they receive on their assignments. This was particularly emphasised by the diploma graduates who also welcomed the additional material supplied.

TSSL makes effective use of performance improvement records which use a colour coding system to show the unit standards achieved by each student. These records therefore track each student's progress and TSSL uses them as a form of self-assessment, although more analysis of them could take place, such as how long it takes learners to complete the qualification. The weekly meetings with the clients are another form of self-assessment used by TSSL for the national certificate course. The firm already uses good evaluation methods of its teaching effectiveness in the seminars and in the diploma. The same approach now needs to be implemented for the national certificate course so that TSSL can be confident that it is doing everything it can to maximise its effectiveness.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent.**

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

TSSL recognises that the effectiveness of teaching is enhanced by good support mechanisms and it provides a wide range. Literacy support for the national certificate learners exists in the form of the online literacy assessments, which show who needs assistance, and the specialist help available from an experienced teacher. TSSL also organises verbal assessments for learners with writing problems and arranges additional help for learners for whom English is a second language.

Both presenters were praised for giving extra time to learners who are struggling. They offer extensive systems of support which go beyond what the learners expected. One of the tutors, for example, is supporting one of the learners on an Open Polytechnic course to become an assessor. Learners commented how the tutors put them at ease so that they don't feel awkward about asking questions. They appreciated how the tutors clearly understand the pressures of time on those learners for whom their security jobs are not their principal form of employment. The management also ensures that the diploma students receive support in the form of personal development programmes in which targets are set and one-to-one interviews with the tutor take place.

Although there are moves to put all the learner support information on the website, the emphasis is on using online methods to support face-to-face contact. Nevertheless, a diploma student expressed his satisfaction with the online readings with which he was supplied. Emails are sent to the national certificate learners reminding them of the dates of their sessions. Records of achievement are emailed to those who want to know what unit standards they still have to pass. The learners are also provided with their tutors' mobile phone numbers and email addresses in case they want to clarify any parts of their assignments or material covered in class.

TSSL assesses the effectiveness of its support through the regular contact the two main presenters have with the students. The firm is able to assess the effectiveness of its support by the increased interest shown by the learners in taking further courses. However, the firm would benefit from a more formal approach to investigating the gaps that might exist in the support structures.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good.**

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

TSSL is a small organisation in which the manager has a multiplicity of roles, which means he sometimes cannot allocate sufficient time for management. He is the main source of ideas for income generation and has pursued off-shore delivery of some courses. TSSL has contracted over the last three years from four full-time employees to the current two, but

now seems to be growing again. There are prospects of an increase in the number of students on the diploma programme through the likely closure of this programme by another provider. Plans are in place for more staff to be employed as consultants along the lines of the person currently running this programme. Some thought has also been given to succession. The firm therefore has plans for the future and captures these in its business plan.

Both the full-time employees are respected by the ETITO and both of them advise the ITO on the development of resources. The manager was the former Deputy Chair of ASIS International and is a trained teacher. The other person who works full-time is respected for her experience in the industry and holds the National Diploma for Adult Literacy for Educators. They are both heavily involved with the New Zealand Security Association. These rich backgrounds mean that they are well-equipped for their positions and have a direct impact on learner achievement through their roles as tutors.

TSSL is regarded as being receptive to comments from its clients. It is prepared to approach problems from a suggested angle and to see if success is gained. Although this flexibility is appreciated, at times it seems to be ad hoc. Even though TSSL is small, it could still have more specific goals, such as monthly targets of credits to be achieved, so that everyone is focussed on achievement levels.

As mentioned earlier, some of TSSL's self-assessment is still being developed because its main course, the National Certificate in Security, is in its first year of delivery for its clients. Hopefully in the future there will be a closer focus on learner achievement and more analysis of trends. The business plan could also benefit from a better review system. However, on some levels TSSL has already made significant progress. It is for example in close contact with international developments and compares overseas certification with the equivalent in New Zealand. This allows the firm to check what it is doing alongside developments in other countries.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management, and strategy

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

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

2.2 Focus area: National Certificate in Security (Levels 2 and 3)

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

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those implied or expressed within the report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

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 courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses 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 policies and criteria 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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