External Evaluation and Review Report

New Zealand Leather and Shoe Research Association Incorporated

Date of report: 10 May 2022

About New Zealand Leather and Shoe Research Association Incorporated

New Zealand Leather and Shoe Research Association (LASRA) operates as the New Zealand leather and fellmongery industry's principal research and sole formal training organisation. The small private training establishment delivers industry training to leather manufacturing processing plant employees.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Fitzherbert Science Centres, Dairy Farm Road, Palmerston North
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: seven students (1.75 equivalent full-time students)
Number of staff:	One part-time
TEO profile:	New Zealand Leather and Shoe Research Association LASRA provides training for employees nominated by leather manufacturing processing plants. To ensure the continuation of this specialised and traditional industry skill, students complete a range of courses to gain theoretical knowledge of skin and hide processing. Students must be full-time employees in a tannery or fellmongery and have at least one year's experience of working under supervision. The employers are members of the association.
Last EER outcome:	At the previous external evaluation and review (EER), conducted in February 2017, NZQA was Confident in LASRA's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	Fundamentals of Leather Manufacturing (Level 4) Training Scheme (ID 126876)
MoE number:	7314

Final report

NZQA reference: C41267

Dates of EER visit: 2 and 3 March 2022 (virtual)

Summary of results

LASRA is providing high value industry training to students, enabling the continuation of strong traditions beneficial to its member stakeholders. Self-assessment practices are generally effective but would benefit from improvements in systemising and formalising some processes.

Confident in educational performance

- Overall student achievement is strong, and students gain skills and knowledge that are directly applicable to the industry.

- Industry stakeholders support the ongoing importance of LASRA delivering the technical training for the industry, which supplements in-house operational training.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- The tutorial staff are highly knowledgeable, with industry experience and connections, providing students with real-world examples of leather manufacturing processes.

- Mentoring by training officers in the workplace provides trainees with an additional and, in the context of LASRA's organisational setup, essential layer of support.

- LASRA's governance board and management, along with its research outputs, provide appropriate guidance and help ensure that the organisation maintains industry relevance.

- The academic leadership has clear plans in place to address short-term demands that arise from having a part-time tutor. However, a long-term solution through succession planning and further professional development of other tutorial staff in assessment and moderation is needed to mitigate any unplanned consequences that might arise.

- Compliance accountabilities are mostly managed well, but there have been occasional slips, which a greater formality of oversight would address.

Key evaluation question findings[1]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Overall student achievement was strong between 2018 and 2020 for the training delivered[2] (refer to Tables 1-4 in Appendix 1). Achievement results for 2021 were significantly impacted by the challenges of Covid-19.
	Māori and Pasifika student participation rates reflect the industry demographics. Pass rates for these groups are strong, with 78 per cent of Māori and 100 per cent of Pasifika students successfully completing their qualifications over the last four years (refer Table 5 in Appendix 1).
	There is extensive collection and evaluation of achievement data which is reported at different levels of the organisation and provides a broad understanding of some trends. However, more formal analysis of withdrawals, non-completions and priority group performance may provide better understanding of the full picture of educational performance.
Conclusion:	There are strong achievement outcomes, with knowledge and skills gained, which are having positive impacts on the students and benefiting their organisations.
	Self-assessment is effective, although more formal analysis of trends will provide better understanding of the factors affecting achievement outcomes, enabling a focus on initiatives to improve student engagement and achievement.

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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.

[2] There are no graduates as yet for the newly approved Fundamentals of Leather Manufacturing Training Scheme which was approved by NZQA in August 2021, with the first delivery starting in February 2022. The achievement results reported were for non-NZQA approved courses that were unit standards-based, which LASRA has consent to assess.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The organisation is recognised as a leader in the leather industry, and the training offered is highly regarded by the key stakeholders and the wider manufacturing community. Graduates pathway to further study which leads to promotion within their organisation. Destination data by ethnicity shows evidence of significant improvement for Pasifika graduates. Although not on a par with other groups, Māori graduates receive promotions, albeit at a lower rate than other groups (refer Figure 1 in Appendix 1). Graduates become training officers in their organisation, indicating organisational confidence in their knowledge and capability. Training officers support the next cohort of students, creating a culture of knowledge sharing. Students who achieve outstanding results receive industry recognition and awards from LASRA. Students gain confidence, their work performance is enhanced, and they are better informed about industry developments through the theoretical knowledge gained. This allows students to contribute to the knowledge base and capability in their organisations. Achievement data is used to inform industry members of training goals being achieved and to understand the extent of capability building across the industry. LASRA industry members provide an extended network of long-term partnerships that support decision-making, information-sharing and feedback about industry needs. Stakeholders praise the quality of training, the team culture and the enduring working relationship with LASRA staff.
Conclusion:	Partnerships with member organisations are well maintained to ensure the training delivers the outcomes the industry seeks and values. Regular and comprehensive stakeholder feedback allows LASRA to deliver valued outcomes. Outcome information is disseminated throughout the organisation's membership.

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

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	There is strong alignment of course design and delivery with industry needs. The online mode of delivery of theory courses provides a flexible solution to meet the needs of students who commonly work 12-hour rotating shifts in the industry.
	The development and ongoing review of the training is done in conjunction with industry and research developments at LASRA. Adjustments to material made in response to changes in industry and feedback from members led to the development of the training scheme, offering a more simplified programme than previously.
	Work-based learning is supplemented with an improved learning management system. Online resources include comprehensive learning materials (also available in hard copy), videos, weekly online lectures and quizzes. Weekly lectures, delivered by researchers and industry specialists, are recorded, enabling students to review lectures at any time.
	Online work is monitored, and students receive regular individual feedback from the tutor about their progress, and further guidance after assessment activities.
	The tutor is a knowledgeable former industry practitioner with connections in the industry, thereby providing students with real-world examples of leather manufacturing processes.
	Assessments are mostly delivered online, with e-portfolios linked to industry work, providing further evidence of student understanding. An internal moderation system, although not formalised, is being implemented. Although the tutor meets the Consent and Moderation Requirements (CMR), it was not clear whether other tutorial staff involved in internal moderation of assessment, meet these requirements. An external moderation agreement is in place with an independent contractor. External moderation is completed informally, with feedback provided directly to the tutor and actions taken in consultation with the chief executive.

Conclusion:	Skills and knowledge are purposely developed to provide relevant and current knowledge of process technologies for students in an industry with strong workplace support for the purpose of capability building. LASRA is working to revise policies and implement practices to ensure academic standards are maintained and achievement is validated.

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

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Student support and their involvement in learning is strong. Successful outcomes are supported by each company's targeted selection and internal promotion process. The recruitment process provides an understanding of student goals and learner needs, including literacy and numeracy. Students work online, with the tutor providing additional support when needed after completion of assessments. Student progress is monitored and reported to training officers if further encouragement is required. The additional support provided by the training officers in the workplace is a key motivational aspect for ensuring students' engagement and commitment to their learning and ensuring completion. Students are well informed and understand the requirements of the training; however, stakeholder interviews expressed some frustration with understanding the requirements of the online assessments. While support is being provided after multiple failure attempts, it may be more helpful to have additional pre-assessment guidance for online assessments. Possibly, inserting some low-stakes, formative, practice assessments at the start of the training scheme would add value. Student feedback is collected after each module and issues are dealt with as they occur. That said, the extent to which LASRA has a deep understanding of students' learning challenges, where they exist, and how effectively their feedback is used for innovation and/or improvement purposes is relatively unclear.

	Considering more culturally responsive approaches to supporting students would be beneficial, not least because of the high participation of Pasifika and Māori students.
Conclusion:	There is generally effective support and student engagement as part of the training and activities provided by LASRA. Students have a mostly positive experience and most of them complete the training successfully. A greater level of analysis of feedback and deeper consideration of literacy and language needs would be beneficial to ensure that appropriate interventions and support are provided.

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

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Governance and management have a clear purpose and direction, with a focus on meeting the association's training needs and goals. LASRA is the only research institute of its type in Australasia, and one of only 20 world-wide. LASRA's key focus areas in research, innovation and technology transfer ensure strong leadership and advocacy for its industry members and provide a strong advisory expertise for the PTE.

The LASRA governance board, made up of industry members, meets quarterly. The director and tutor report to the board; however, the director has direct oversight and operational involvement in the training activities of the PTE.

LASRA continues to service Australian companies, with a number of their staff enrolling in the training. This reflects a long, unique historical association with the training organisation.

Industry and student feedback inform programme change and development. The newly formed academic committee – made up of LASRA's tutor, a senior scientist and the director as chair – provides the necessary technical expertise for ongoing programme review and development. The ongoing programme review led to the development of a new training scheme. There are plans in place for the development of a programme of study that will lead to the New Zealand Certificate in Fellmongery and |

	Leather Processing (Level 4), which is not currently available through any other education provider in New Zealand.
	Although student numbers have declined over the last four years due to labour fluctuations and industry contraction, the industry views LASRA's training as highly valuable and important for the transfer of knowledge and skills within the leather manufacturing industry. This ensures LASRA's continuing long-term contracts with industry stakeholders.
	While the tutorial workload may currently be reduced due to the small number of enrolments, the learning support and teaching model (with a part-time tutor) may not be sustainable in the long term and may warrant another solution to ensure any risks to smooth delivery are mitigated.
Conclusion:	A strategic and innovative governance and management team supports the highly knowledgeable and experienced tutor to ensure industry members' educational goals are being met.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Marginal**
Self-assessment:	**Marginal**
Findings and supporting evidence:	LASRA is meeting most of its compliance requirements, with compliance tasks and obligations resting with the director and tutor.
	LASRA's key compliance accountabilities are well managed, for example: financial reporting; IANZ (accreditation body) audit, gaining the NZ mark of competence; NZQA Fit and Proper Person and Conflict of Interest statutory declarations for the director; NZQA attestations submitted on time; participation in external moderation activities.
	An issue of late credit reporting was found to be due to LASRA reporting credits through Primary ITO, and was not a fault of the PTE. LASRA will be reporting directly to NZQA since its delivery of Primary ITO's programme has ceased and the training scheme was approved in August 2021.
	LASRA was found to be in breach of reporting credits and advertising a qualification it did not have approval for. This issue was subsequently resolved prior to the EER. However,

	this non-compliance significantly affects the ratings in this key evaluation question.
	Accountabilities under the Code of Practice are mostly managed well. The primary responsibility of pastoral care, however, resides with the training officers in the workplace and not directly with LASRA. There is an opportunity for LASRA to strengthen student support online with the addition of training officers being made aware of the appropriate responses required to meet the Code of Practice obligations, and occasional visits to workplaces to ensure accountabilities are being met.
	The new training scheme is currently being delivered consistent with NZQA approvals.
Conclusion:	LASRA is meeting most of its key compliance requirements but needs to take a more systematic approach to ensure all compliance obligations are met.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Fundamentals of Leather Manufacturing (Level 4) Training Scheme

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may 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 New Zealand Leather and Shoe Research Association Incorporated:

- Review and formalise the quality management system to strengthen the handling of academic results reporting to management, as well as moderation outcomes, and incorporate all changes reflected in the training scheme requirements.

- Work closely with the appropriate Workforce Development Council (WDC) and current external contractor to ensure ongoing programme development and quality management processes are strengthened.

- Continue to collect, aggregate and analyse student feedback and formalise training officers' feedback to understand the extent and depth of student challenges, to enable appropriate responses and overall decision-making.

- While the tutor meets the Consent and Moderation Requirements (CMR), ensure any other staff involved in assessment and moderation activities, meet the CMR for the unit standards being delivered.

- Involve staff in the relevant Ako Aotearoa workshops on educational practices for different cultures.

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 external evaluation and review.

Appendix 1

Table 1. 2018 student achievement

	New Zealand					Australia
	Felly*	Intro	Advanced		Total NZ	
			Year 1	Year 2		
Enrolled	5	6	4	4	19	-
Withdrawn	1	2	0	2	5	-
Deferred	0	0	1	0	1	-
Pending	0	0	0	0	0	-
Passed	4	4	3	2	13	-

*Fellmongery

Data supplied by LASRA

Table 2. 2019 student achievement

	New Zealand					Australia	Total
	Intro	Felly	Advanced		Total	Intro	
			Year 1	Year 2			
Enrolled	9	5	1	3	18	6	24
Withdrawn	0	0	0	1	1	1	2
Deferred	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pending	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Passed	9	5	1	2	17	5	22

Data supplied by LASRA

Table 3. 2020 student achievement (New Zealand)

	Felly	Intro	Advanced		Total
			Year 1	Year 2	
Enrolled	2	20	0	1	23
Withdrawn	0	6	0	0	6
Deferred	0	1	0	0	1
Pending	0	0	0	0	0
Passed	2	13	0	1	16

Data supplied by LASRA

Table 4. 2021 student achievement (New Zealand)

	Felly	Intro	Advanced		Total
			Year 1	Year 2	
Enrolled	2	4	1	0	7
Withdrawn	0	2	0	0	2
Deferred	0	1	0	0	1
Pending	0	0	0	0	0
Passed	2	1	1	0	4

Pass rate=57%

Enrolments for 2021 were the lowest on record, with just seven. Only four completed the course. This can be attributed to the state of the industry and the Covid pandemic.
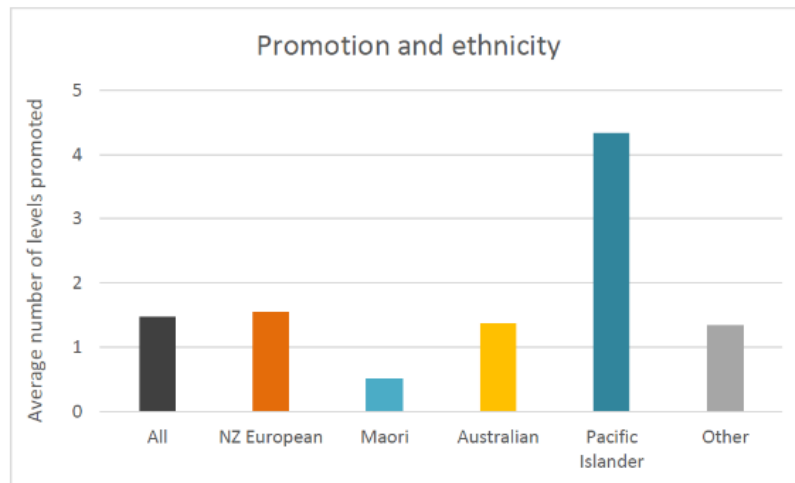
Data supplied by LASRA

Table 5. Māori and Pasifika student achievement

Year	Māori		Pasifika		Total
	Pass	Incomplete	Pass	Incomplete	
2018	6	1	2	0	9
2019	5	0	1	0	6
2020	2	3	2	0	7
2021	1	0	0	0	1
Total	14	4	5	0	23

Data supplied by LASRA

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Figure 11. Student enrolments and progress 2016-21

This graphic also only covers the 38 industry-enrolled students who remain employed in the industry and for whom records were provided by their employer.

Graph supplied by LASRA

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/. 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. 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 fraud[3]*

- *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.*

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[3] 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.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2021, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*

- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*

- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2021, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2021 and the Training Scheme Rules 2021 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2021 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, training schemes and consents to assess and 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2021. 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). All rules cited above are available at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/.

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