

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Sue's Unlimited Limited trading as
Sue's Computer Training Co

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 5 December 2012

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, 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:	Sue's Unlimited Limited trading as Sue's Computer Training Co (Sue's)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	112 Osprey Drive, Welcome Bay, Tauranga
First registered:	14 February 2000
Courses currently delivered	The organisation has NZQA approval to deliver several programmes/qualifications, but since 2007 has solely delivered the Certificate in Medical Transcription (Level 4).
Number of students:	27 domestic students in 2011, being 12 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) (79 per cent European, 9 per cent Māori, 12 per cent Asian)
Number of staff:	One full-time and two part-time staff members
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>The Certificate in Medical Transcription is a niche local qualification delivered fully by online learning through a New Zealand-owned web-based programme which was developed by an American company. New Zealand components have been added to the course content.</p> <p>The programme can be completed full-time in 42 weeks or on a part-time basis. It is solely delivered to domestic students. The programme has attracted a number of learners who have previously worked in the medical or transcription/secretarial professions and have sought a career change. Past students have</p>

mainly identified as European and in the 35-year plus age group.

The organisation also delivers short half to one-day computer training courses to private clients in areas such as Microsoft Word and Excel.

Recent significant changes: A new course facilitator was appointed in 2012.

Previous quality assurance history: At the previous NZQA quality assurance visit in August 2008, the organisation met all of the requirements of the quality assurance standard then used.

NZQA undertook a validation visit to the organisation in September 2011. At that visit, the organisation met all requirements of the Policies and Criteria for PTEs that were examined.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the external evaluation and review included the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy, and the Certificate in Medical Transcription (Level 4), which is the sole programme delivered by the organisation.

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 evaluation was conducted by two evaluators over one day at the organisation's head office in Tauranga. The evaluators engaged with the business owner, the programme facilitator, a key stakeholder who is external member of the advisory committee, and current students and graduates.

A range of documentary evidence was also reviewed, including 2011 and 2012 student evaluation results, learner destination data, 2012 moderation results, advisory group minutes, the organisation's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (S.W.O.T) analysis, and student communications and feedback.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Sue's Unlimited Limited trading as Sue's Computer Training Co.**

Key stakeholders and the organisation identify that medical transcriptionists are in demand overseas and increasingly in New Zealand. As a niche provider, Sue's is responding to that need and providing comprehensive, highly regarded training which is preparing learners well for medical transcription work in New Zealand and overseas. Potentially, wider stakeholder engagement across the industry could enhance the organisation's understanding of stakeholders' needs and facilitate further opportunities for learners.

Strong employment outcomes confirm the demand for trained medical transcriptionists and the quality of training provided. The organisation has maintained contact with approximately 70 per cent of its graduates since 2007. Of those, 88 per cent have obtained employment as medical transcriptionists or are employed in related work. A key stakeholder, representing one of New Zealand's largest transcription companies and who has employed Sue's graduates, confirmed the quality of the training provided, and the value of Sue's role in the professionalisation of the sector.

The online delivery of the programme is valued by learners who prefer the flexibility that this training option provides. With the exception of student frustration with spelling and grammar errors in transcription keys (and which are currently being addressed by the programme owners), learners have been mostly satisfied with the quality of the course content and delivery. This is evident from student evaluation feedback and good course completion rates in 2009 and 2010 (78 and 77 per cent respectively).

However, course completion rates dipped in 2011 (66 per cent), which reflected a slight increase in students withdrawing or moving from full to part-time study. These results led the organisation to identify that students required additional learning support as they progressed from the introductory block one of training to the commencement of the transcription phase in block two. Sue's has made a number of changes in response and is continuing to review options for more interactive delivery. The organisation has also developed its self-assessment processes to better understand the reasons that may underlie why students withdraw from the programme.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Sue's Unlimited Limited trading as Sue's Computer Training Co.**

The organisation has a comprehensive student management system in place which provides robust data that the organisation actively uses to understand learner progress on an ongoing basis.

Learner online activity, completion of course work and assessments, and assessment results are closely and regularly monitored by both the programme facilitator and managing director to understand learner progress. The organisation has a robust moderation process established with moderation outcomes used to review the quality of assessment.

Negative trends or changes in student progress act as a trigger for the organisation to engage one-to-one with learners to identify and respond to any potential support needs.

Sue's regularly and systematically collects student feedback on key aspects of the programme and its delivery. Findings are used to make improvements on an ongoing basis, and are analysed annually to inform programme review and advisory group discussions.

That the organisation purposefully analyses self-assessment information and uses findings to make useful improvements was well demonstrated by its analysis of student progress across different blocks of learning to identify an area of the programme where several learners were withdrawing or deciding to move from full to part-time study.

This resulted in the organisation implementing additional activities aimed at providing increased student support targeted to that particular component of the programme. It has also led the organisation to take action to strengthen the quality of its self-assessment information by explicitly engaging with learners who choose to withdraw, to discuss possible programme improvements.

Potentially, the organisation could also extend its in-depth engagement with graduates of the programme. It currently has a strong understanding of graduate destinations and could use its ongoing contact with graduates to gain a more systematic understanding of the value of the training from the perspective of learners now employed in the industry.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

The training provides learners with a strong grounding and preparation for employment in the practice of medical transcription. Students obtain a wide breadth of knowledge and experience, including their engagement in transcription across diverse subject matter areas (e.g. cardiology, ophthalmology), and in the learning and use of extensive medical terminology and anatomy. The knowledge of specific technical terminology for medical fields is an important part of the training, in addition to the transcription skills.

In 2009 and 2010, learner course completion, retention, and qualification achievement rates met or exceeded the sector median for level 4 qualifications (see the table below). In 2011, these rates of achievement were under par.

Year	Course Completion (%)		Qualification Completion (%)		Retention (%)	
	Sue's	Level 4 sector median	Sue's	Level 4 sector median	Sue's	Level 4 sector median
2009	78	69	70	65	61	52
2010	77	76	69	71	63	58
2011	66	81	64	76	56	65

Source: Tertiary Education Commission

The organisation has undertaken a solid job of seeking to understand the dip in 2011 results, assisted by well-established, robust data-recording processes. Sue's identified that the 2011 results were affected by a slight increase in student withdrawals (five of 15 students) and some students moving from full-time to part-time study over a two-year period. This caused the organisation to undertake a more in-depth analysis of student withdrawals, including contacting students who had withdrawn in the last three years to identify whether there was anything more the organisation could have done to prevent them leaving, and greater interrogation of its data.

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

This analysis flagged for the organisation the need to provide more support to learners as they moved from the introductory part of the course to the transcribing phase in block two. As a result, Sue's introduced compulsory 'attendance' at an online tutorial at the start of block two, extra online classes for discussion and feedback during this block, and a re-sit option for the first few transcriptions undertaken to help students ease into the transcription phase.

In 2012, fewer students have withdrawn (two, and two students have moved from full to part-time study) than in 2011, and this may be an indicator of the strength of the improvements made.

In terms of the organisation's self-assessment capability, the 2011 results provided the organisation with an awareness of how it could undertake more in-depth data collection and analysis to better understand how it can support learner achievement. Indeed, it was evident to the evaluators that this experience has provided the organisation with a stronger understanding of the value of self-assessment and a keenness to embed new self-assessment processes.

The organisation's ongoing review of learner achievement has been well supported by good data-recording and analysis processes. This has involved regular monitoring of individual learners' online activity (an absence of activity beyond a 72-hour period provides an alert), their completion of assignments, and assessment results. Inactivity or non-achievement in these areas results in the programme facilitator or managing director immediately contacting the learner to seek to identify and respond to their difficulties or needs.

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**.

Overall, the organisation maintains contact with and is aware of the destination outcomes of approximately 70 per cent of students who have graduated since 2007. Of the 70 per cent, 38 out of 43 (88 per cent) have obtained employment as medical transcriptionists or are employed in related work. These strong employment outcomes confirm the value of the training and the demand for trained medical transcriptionists.

A number of students have had prior experience working in the medical profession or in other secretarial or transcribing roles. The Certificate in Medical Transcription programme provides them with the opportunity to build on this past experience to obtain employment in other, and often less demanding, roles. The training also leads to flexible employment which can be undertaken from home and which is an important factor for many of the trainees enrolling in the programme.

The training has provided graduates with the opportunity to work for New Zealand-based medical professionals, as well as for organisations in the United Kingdom and the United States. Graduates and the key stakeholder interviewed for this evaluation confirmed the importance of the training to success in employment, and that it would be difficult to work in the field without this prior training.

An advisory group member, who is also a key stakeholder in the medical transcription sector, describes the training as 'professionalising the medical transcription industry in New Zealand', and identifies that Sue's graduates produce a higher standard of transcription than many trained on the job. This stakeholder identifies the key relevance and value of the training, given a predicted growth in the New Zealand market but a limited skills base. The programme facilitator, who has long-standing experience working in medical transcription in the United States, also views the training as high quality, and considers it to be on par with, if not superior to, training provided overseas.

The organisation could develop the existing contact it maintains with graduates to systematically engage with them about the value of the training now that they are in employment, and any areas where the programme could be enhanced. This would also provide added insights into industry trends and developments.

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 **Good**.

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

The programme matches learners' needs for a flexible study option, enabling them to organise their learning time around their own needs, and which will lead to a career path enabling flexible working options. Learners have actively sought out this programme, given a demand to work in the area of medical transcription and because Sue's is a niche provider of this training. Strong employment outcomes (see section 1.2) confirm that students' employment goals are well matched.

A comprehensive pre-enrolment entry test seeks to ensure that learners have appropriate computer skills and knowledge to be able to undertake online learning. They also need typing skills and speed, an interest in the medical transcription field, and the ability to commit to the hours required to successfully undertake the course. The organisation has recently placed stronger emphasis on proactively identifying the other commitments learners have outside the programme in order to appropriately channel learners into either full or part-time study, and to ensure learners are able to give sufficient commitment to the course.

Student evaluation feedback is provided at the end of each block of learning and is analysed by the organisation to understand learner satisfaction with the content and delivery of the programme. Student satisfaction has averaged 90 per cent

across 2011 and 2012, and analysis of student evaluations confirms that the programme activities have matched learners' needs.

Students have expressed frustration at spelling and grammar errors in transcription keys and this has been an issue expressed for some time. However, this is also a concern of the managing director of Sue's, who has actively engaged with the programme representatives/owners to have the errors addressed, and who maintains a master sheet of these errors to monitor their resolution. In 2012, an entire review has been conducted of all of the New Zealand transcribing keys, and it is anticipated that this will resolve the issue.

The programme content provides learners with a comprehensive grounding across all core areas of medical transcription. Graduates interviewed for this evaluation identified that the training has prepared them very well for work across different medical disciplines. They identified that there is very little that they have come across in employment which was not covered in the training, and that they have continued to use the course materials as a support tool in an employment context.

A small advisory committee and close relationships held with key stakeholders with industry knowledge ensures that the organisation keeps up to date with sector developments in New Zealand and overseas and with activities and practices in the local public and private sectors. The advisory group comes together annually (as well as informally during the year) as a key part of programme review and contributes to the organisation's responses to key issues identified during the year, including from an analysis of student feedback. Advisory meeting minutes indicate the organisation's recent focus on the implementation of strategies to enhance student retention and learner support.

The organisation has relationships with a number of district health board representatives (including two advisory committee members), but has identified that it would be beneficial to extend its engagement to facilitate a wider understanding of different stakeholders needs, and possibly to enhance opportunities for students and graduates. To this end, Sue's is planning to survey district health boards and private health facilities to develop an evidence base to better inform the organisation's understanding of potential demand and opportunities for its trainees.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Learners indicate strong satisfaction with the teaching provided by the organisation and with the level of facilitator knowledge and support provided. Satisfaction with teaching quality has been constant despite changes in teaching staffing in 2012, and is indicative of the organisation's focus on recruiting staff experienced in the medical transcription area.

Students and graduates interviewed confirmed that responses and feedback to their queries are mostly timely and helpful. Feedback from a small number of learners indicated a desire for more proactive input from the facilitator, and potentially there is room for a greater level of feedback to be provided to students when they are doing well and regarding their overall progress during the course.

Students find feedback on their assessments to be helpful, and that the quizzes in each module contribute to their learning and retention of knowledge. They consider the online forum to be a very useful learning tool because of the facilitation of regular peer discussion and facilitator input.

Student transcriptions and essays are marked by the facilitator using a master list/ marking guide and model answers. These have been developed to ensure marking consistency and specify the amount of marks to be deducted for various errors. This is of importance given that a large part of the marking is focused on the quality of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The same marking guides are also used to moderate student assessments.

A robust moderation process is in place to ensure consistency of marking and assessment results and, alongside student progress and feedback, is used to reflect on the effectiveness of the teaching.

The organisation uses an external moderator experienced in medical transcription who moderates 10 per cent of all dictation assessments completed each year from a sample of three students' assessment for each dictation moderated. The moderator re-marks each sample of work and compares assessment marks against those awarded by the programme facilitator. Any discrepancies and likely reasons for these are identified and are reviewed by the managing director.

In 2012, several discrepancies were identified between the assessor's marking and that of the moderator. Most of these related to minor inconsistencies and were not a reflection on the quality of assessment. However, there were a small number of assessments in one of the earlier blocks of learning where large inconsistencies were identified. While of concern and investigated by the managing director, the reasons underlying this were identified as arising from a one-off situation. A review of students' work and assessment results across the programme (and marked by a different facilitator), reassured the business that this was not a systemic issue.

This demonstrated the strength of the organisation's existing moderation process, and how it is used to review teaching effectiveness. However, the organisation has identified that it would be an even more effective process if undertaken more regularly than on an annual basis.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

A good level of guidance and support is provided to students within the online delivery method used.

Detailed pre-enrolment information is provided on the organisation's website, which clearly describes study expectations and commitments required. On the second day of the programme a virtual induction class is held with all students using the 'GoToMeeting' forum. This takes students through key aspects of the programme and use of the online learning platform. Information is provided about the different learning resources, learning blocks, and the assessment process.

The learner forum and online tutor meetings enable learners to share and discuss areas of learning they may be having difficulty with. The discussion forums are monitored daily by the programme facilitator who provides input, and uses these to identify knowledge gaps and areas where further information can be posted to assist students' learning. The forums are also reviewed and contributed to by the business owner.

The business owner and programme facilitator respond to individual learner's questions and needs by email and telephone. Students' log-in activity, submission of work, and assessment results are systematically monitored and trigger proactive engagement with students where any potential concerns are identified. The evaluators viewed a number of student emails confirming the responsiveness of the organisation in seeking to assist students to complete the programme alongside personal issues that have arisen.

As mentioned in section 1.1, the organisation recently identified that it needed to improve the level of engagement and support provided to learners as they move into block two of the training due to a concentrated number of students withdrawing or changing to part-time study in this part of the programme. It has also begun to collect information from learners who leave the programme early to potentially identify additional support that the organisation may be able to provide.

The business owner also continues to review options to more actively engage learners through the online delivery medium. Previously, the organisation sought to introduce more online class tutorials, but found this difficult given students' availability and some students' preference for working independently. In 2013 Sue's plans to introduce video clips to visually illustrate different aspects of learning and which students will be able to access in their own time. The provision of peer mentoring by past students is also under initial consideration as a potential mechanism to provide greater one-to-one support to current students. These

potential options, if implemented, seem well targeted to enhance the inclusiveness of an online learning environment.

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 **Good**.

Members of the advisory committee have strong sector knowledge and are engaged both informally and formally by the organisation to contribute their knowledge and advice to programme review and developments. Recent discussions with the advisory group have centred on both operational and strategic matters to support learner achievement, including addressing programme withdrawals and identifying engagement opportunities with local stakeholders regarding potential prospects for graduates, and in relation to tertiary sector priorities.

In response to the proposed demand emerging for medical transcriptionists in the New Zealand market, Sue's has undertaken initial discussions with other providers about potential collaborative opportunities.

As identified in section 1.3, an intent to engage more widely with health-related organisations in New Zealand may better inform the organisation's understanding of stakeholders' needs, potential demand, and opportunities for trainees.

The organisation appears to have effective processes in place for staff recruitment and development. The programme facilitator, new to the programme in 2012, confirmed her satisfaction with the support she has received from the organisation since commencing her role. This has included weekly Skype meetings with the business owner, the provision of key documents relevant to the programme and the operation of the business (including an extensive facilitators guide), and training support from the previous facilitator. A sample of student assessments has been moderated prior to the awarding of grades to ensure that the facilitator is confident with the assessment process and that marking is fair and consistent.

The organisation has well-established self-assessment processes that effectively identify areas for programme improvement. For example, student evaluation feedback has led to enhanced course cost information, changes to course materials, and additional interactive forums. The organisation's regular engagement with the programme owners following frustration about errors in New Zealand transcription keys led to a complete review of these keys in 2012.

Risk management plans are annually reviewed and have resulted in recent developments to enhance the level of organisational knowledge held by the programme administrator as a core part of contingency planning.

A robust student data management system enables the organisation to systematically understand and respond to individual learner's progress and needs. As recently demonstrated, the quality of data collected enabled the organisation to isolate likely reasons underlying a drop in student completion outcomes in 2011, which has led the organisation to introduce a number of improvements in response.

While there are areas where the organisation can develop the robustness of its self-assessment information, the organisation has a good awareness of this potential, with some related actions underway, such as gathering more in-depth information from students who leave the programme early. Undertaking wider stakeholder feedback and more frequent moderation activity are also areas that the organisation is currently reviewing.

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 **Good**.

2.2 Focus area: Certificate in Medical Transcription (Level 4)

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

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

Recommendations

It is recommended that the organisation:

- Monitor the impact of processes recently implemented to improve learner retention to ensure that these are having the desired result, and continue to review options to strengthen learner support and interactive online delivery.
- Continue its focus on embedding self-assessment activities aimed at understanding reasons for learners withdrawing from the programme.
- Sustain strong moderation practices and a focus on enhancing the frequency of post-assessment moderation.
- Proceed with plans to undertake wider engagement across the industry to better inform the organisation's understanding of potential demand and opportunities for its trainees.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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