

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

St John

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 8 March 2011

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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

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|--------------------------------|---|
| Location:                      | Head Office:<br>St John House<br>114 The Terrace<br>Wellington  |
| Type:                          | Private training establishment  |
| First registered:              | 2000  |
| Number of students:            | Domestic: 57,390 students on short courses (100 full-time equivalents)  |
| Number of staff:               | 90 full-time equivalents  |
| Scope of active accreditation: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workplace First Aid</li><li>• Workplace First Aid Express</li><li>• Child First Aid</li><li>• CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation)</li><li>• Pre-Hospital Emergency Care</li><li>• Basic Life Support</li><li>• Outdoor First Aid</li></ul> |
| Sites:                         | Northern Region:<br>2 Harrison Road, Mount Wellington<br>Auckland<br><br>Central Region:<br>63 Seddon Road<br>Hamilton<br><br>Southern Region:<br>Guardian Assurance House<br>79-83 Hereford Street<br>Christchurch   |

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Distinctive characteristics:        | St John is an international charity with a large volunteer base. In New Zealand St John is a leading provider of ambulance and emergency first aid.   |
| Recent significant changes:         | The organisation has recently restructured and consolidated five regions into three.  |
| Previous quality assurance history: | At the previous quality assurance visit by NZQA, an audit in 2008, there were four requirements not met relating to the elements: governance and management, and notification and reporting on learner achievement. The governance and management requirements not met related to senior management not defining how it intended to address principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and not documenting changes to the quality management system. While St John reported all unit standards achieved on the National Diploma in Ambulance Practice, it only reported unit standards achieved in the first aid courses if requested by the student. |
| Other:                              | At the end of 2008, the National Diploma in Ambulance Practice (Level 5) was introduced. This followed an industry-wide review of the previous National Certificate in Ambulance (Patient Care and Transport) (Level 4). At this external evaluation and review a number of cohorts had completed the programme.  |

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

To gain an understanding of the organisation, it was decided that one focus area should be a short course, Workforce First Aid. Short courses are offered to thousands of people every year and are open to the public or tailored to specific workplaces.

The second focus area is distinctly different: clinical training offered to ambulance staff. The National Diploma in Ambulance Practice has been offered since 2008 and is the minimum qualification required to be an ambulance officer. It is a blended learning programme using a mix of online resources and block courses and most learners are enrolled part-time.

In accordance with NZQA policy, the scope also included the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy.

### 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 external evaluation and review team of two lead evaluators spent one day at each of the St John sites in Auckland, Hamilton, and Christchurch. During the visit, the team met with key staff (including the customer services director, the training manager, clinical education manager, training delivery manager, tutor development manager, a district operations manager, education projects manager, and tutors), and students, graduates, and other key stakeholders. While on site the evaluation team viewed key documents, for example student survey summary data, achievement results, and the in-house newsletter *Clinical Matters*.

St John has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received were 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 **St John**.

St John works to achieve excellent outcomes for learners who engage with training. Ninety-five per cent of those who participate in the Workforce First Aid course achieve the certificate. Learners value the new skills and increased confidence to deal with emergency situations.

The achievement rate for the National Diploma in Ambulance Practice is variable across the country. For some remote rural districts, the achievement rate has been below 50 per cent while in other centres cohorts have achieved over 80 per cent successful completions. For those who complete the training, the new knowledge and skills enable them to give more effective first-response treatment. This new programme is part of an overall strategy to increase the clinical competency of ambulance staff across the organisation and includes the introduction of a new requirement for all ambulance officers to participate in continuing clinical education (CCE).

St John has a clear vision and strategy which is clearly articulated across the organisation. The organisation's strategy is well aligned to key stakeholders, for example the Government's "Better, Sooner, More Convenient" primary healthcare initiative. Some aspects of CCE are aimed at supporting ambulance staff to assess whether transport to hospital is appropriate.

The passion and commitment of staff to the work of St John is clearly evident, and most staff spoken to by the evaluation team have multiple roles within the organisation. This is important for training because it enables the tutors and training managers to keep their clinical skills and experience current and therefore gain an in-depth understanding of the breadth of work that St John undertakes.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **St John**.

St John monitors its activities and has a number of mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of its first aid training. These include follow-up surveys and secret shoppers. The information is collected in a systematic way, analysed, and reported across the organisation, informing planning decisions.

It is clear that the introduction of the National Diploma in Ambulance Practice has been closely monitored and early issues that have arisen have been quickly identified and the programme adjusted to address them.

The evaluation team heard from a number of staff that the organisation has improved processes for seeking feedback on new ideas and initiatives and consulting with staff about change. Performance data is analysed and shared and there are effective mechanisms for communication across the organisation.

While learner feedback is gathered a short time after training, effective ways could also be found to ensure learners can give more immediate feedback to their tutors at the time of their learning. Learners and tutors noted that this feedback could help improve the teaching and learning experience.

## TEO response

St John has confirmed the factual accuracy of this report.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 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**.

Over 95 per cent of those who attend the Workforce First Aid short course achieve the skills taught to a sufficient standard to be awarded the certificate. Those who do not achieve are usually unable to demonstrate the skills of CPR because they are physically unable to kneel down and do so. As a result of the training, attendees of the short courses report a significant increase in confidence and capability in being able to deal with an emergency medical situation. Achievement on the short courses is carefully monitored by training delivery managers and issues with courses are quickly identified and addressed with appropriate actions.

Achievement of the National Diploma in Ambulance Practice is variable, with students in large population centres doing better than those in small rural settlements. This programme has only been running for two years. Achievement rates across the regions have been closely monitored and issues that have emerged for students from smaller ambulance stations have resulted in new initiatives to improve learner success. Early indications are that more careful screening of volunteers before they enrol on the programme and providing increased opportunities for ambulance experience for those in smaller rural centres, are starting to improve achievement rates.

However, those who have successfully completed the national diploma report increased levels of confidence in dealing with the wide variety of incidents they confront when on ambulance duty. The numerous formative assessment events allow learners to build their knowledge and skills. The portfolio of exemplars and the professional interview, which learners need to complete in order to achieve, support their critical thinking and application of skills and knowledge to complex scenarios. A systematic analysis of the outcomes for those graduates who have completed the national diploma could provide useful information to inform the programme's ongoing development.

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

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

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

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

St John works hard to achieve excellent outcomes for learners who engage with the training. There has been a strategic shift away from offering numerous public first aid courses towards targeting industries and companies to offer courses that align with the particular needs of their sectors. This has resulted in better outcomes for learners.

The value for those who learn new skills is the increased confidence to deal with emergency situations. Eighty-six per cent of respondents to a St John survey reported an increase in confidence after their first aid course. Every student leaves with a mannequin and a DVD. Students reported sharing these resources and the skills they had learned and practising CPR with their families at home. This sharing of knowledge and resources supports St John's aim of every New Zealand home having someone trained in first aid skills.

At a strategic level, the organisation aims to deliver valued outcomes for key stakeholders and the wider New Zealand community. St John has aligned its activities with the Government's "Better, Sooner, More Convenient" primary healthcare initiative. New practice levels and the introduction of new qualifications and minimum requirements for continuing clinical education (CCE) aim to give ambulance officers the skills and expertise to make important decisions about treatment and possible transport to hospital when they are called out.

A number of cohorts have now completed the new National Diploma in Ambulance Practice. There was no evidence that the organisation had systematically evaluated the value for these people and the communities they serve. However, there was good evidence of effective communication between those responsible for the training and those responsible for the ambulance service. The features and requirements of clinical education is a regular item for the agenda in operations meetings. The national diploma is now the minimum qualification required to be an ambulance officer, and the clinical competence of staff who have participated in the programme enables St John to better meet its goals for the organisation and the wider community.

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

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

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

St John has a strategy to increase the number of customised first aid courses it offers. Tailoring a course to specific industries or workplaces better matches the needs of those doing the course, improving the relevancy of the training. However, even in the public courses learners reported that tutors encouraged the sharing of real-life experiences and

worked to tailor the learning to individual circumstances. Access to the mannequins and workbooks encourages learners to practise and apply the theory during and after the course.

A project to reassign and establish new practice levels for St John ambulance staff included the design of the new qualification, the National Diploma in Ambulance Practice. This qualification and the ongoing CCE have been developed through extensive consultation with St John's clinical management group and operations staff to ensure the training meets international standards and the requirements for running an effective New Zealand ambulance service.

The National Diploma in Ambulance Practice has been well designed to meet the needs of learners. Most of those who enrol are volunteers who work part-time for St John and they frequently work full-time in other occupations. Therefore, the training is blended, with innovative online learning modules supported by paper-based resources and block courses. Learners are encouraged to engage with the content and there is regular contact made to ensure learners are coping with the material and workload. The workload is appropriate for the level of the qualification, but some students find it very demanding on top of their work and volunteer commitments.

#### 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**.

A key factor in ensuring effective teaching at St John is that all tutors and tutor managers maintain clinical and operational competency in ambulance work. This ensures that they maintain their currency and familiarity with adverse medical events and the diversity of situations that learners experience.

St John has a strong focus on tutor development and encourages training, both internally and externally, in adult education. Also, the evaluation team heard evidence of valuable tutor development days, team-teaching, peer-teaching, and tutor champions being used to share good practice across the country. Feedback collected from learners guides professional development and performance management. Online surveys conducted regularly by the organisation show that over 90 per cent of respondents consistently agree that their tutor was credible and experienced and did a good job overall.

A strong aspect of the National Diploma in Ambulance Practice is the effective use of formative and summative assessment. Online quizzes and the use of "clickers" (a student response system) during the block courses support learners' understanding and inform tutors about difficult topics and learners who need extra support. The summative assessment is a collection of evidence and exemplars which outline a student's ambulance experience and their reflections on individual cases. This portfolio of evidence is used to inform a professional conversation which engages the learner in a series of case studies that require them to apply their knowledge and skills to different scenarios.

While St John monitors achievement and learner satisfaction broadly across its programmes, more effective ways could be found to ensure learners themselves can give immediate

feedback to their tutors on how their learning is progressing during their training. Learners and tutors felt that there would be a benefit in also being able to give and/or receive feedback at the time of the training, rather than some time after the event.

## 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**.

St John ensures that learners are clear about what to expect from their first aid course. Learners spoken to by the evaluation team found the information they received prior to the course useful and informative. Tutors are responsive to learners' questions and concerns.

Mechanisms for the guidance and support of learners on the national diploma have improved in the two years since the programme began. Initially, all ambulance volunteers were encouraged to enrol and this resulted in some learners beginning a programme they were unable to complete. A better screening and referral system would ensure that only those likely to succeed are enrolled.

Another issue which emerged was the ability of rural ambulance volunteers to gain the necessary experience and events to complete their portfolio, a requirement for passing. A system of ensuring that rural volunteers can spend blocks of time working shifts at urban ambulance stations would ensure that these learners have a good chance of success. With these two issues addressed, the rate of achievement is likely to improve.

A change to assigning each cohort of students to only one tutor has ensured more careful monitoring of students' progress through their course of study.

## 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**.

St John has a clear vision and strategy which is clearly articulated and understood across the organisation. The organisation's strategy is well aligned to key stakeholders, for example the Government initiative on health care: "Better, Sooner, More convenient". The wider strategy for the organisation aligns with the training goals which are being well resourced and monitored. The evaluation team heard from a number of staff that the organisation has improved consultation and communication across the organisation.

The passion and commitment of staff to the work of St John is clearly evident and most staff spoken to had multiple roles within the organisation. This is important for training because the tutors and training managers have a clear understanding of the work St John's people do and all participate in ongoing professional development to maintain clinical currency. Staff spoken to feel valued by the organisation and value the work they do.

Currently, St John is non-compliant with an NZQA requirement to report all unit standards achieved by those who participate in training. However, St John clearly outlines to potential students the opportunity to be awarded unit standards and reports all credits when requested by learners. An extensive database ensures that all those who have successfully completed training can request St John to register the credits for them. This information can also be used for refresher courses.

St John has effective mechanisms for monitoring learner achievement across the different training it offers; therefore, issues are identified and addressed in a timely way. The current programme of training for ambulance officers is a new initiative which is in the process of being fully implemented. There is good evidence that the introduction of this new training has been carefully monitored and evaluated and early issues have been identified and are being addressed.

# 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: Workplace First Aid

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

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

## 2.3 Focus area: National Diploma in Ambulance Practice

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

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

# Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this 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 Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and 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](http://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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