

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Mainland Driving School Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 23 May 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:	Mainland Driving School Limited (MDSL)
Location:	5 Vulcan Place, Middleton, Christchurch
Type:	Private Training Establishment (PTE)
First registered:	July 2001
Number of students:	Domestic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Licensing: approximately 2,000 students attending one-day courses</li><li>• MSD (Ministry of Social Development) courses: 102 students per year in ten to 12 courses per annum.</li><li>• Polytechnic course: 14 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) on a six-month course</li></ul> International: nil
Number of staff:	2.75 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Domains in Humanities/English</li><li>• Domains in Sciences/Mathematics</li><li>• Domains in Service Sector/Commercial Road Transport</li><li>• Local course – Certificate in Commercial Driving Options (Level 3)</li><li>• Unit Standards – various generic and commercial driving, up to and including</li></ul>

level 4

Sites:	5 Vulcan Place, Middleton, Christchurch Corner of Dyer Street and Nell Place, Whangarei
Distinctive characteristics:	MDSL engages in commercial transport licensing training and short courses of up to three months' duration for students directed by Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) to receive training in commercial driving skills to gain employment.
Recent significant changes:	There have been a number of changes since 2008. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expansion of business into Whangarei with the purchase of Truckmaster Driver Services</li><li>• Reductions in funding from the industry training organisation (ITO), Competenz, and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)</li><li>• Attempts to start branches in Auckland and Napier. Both of these have since been sold to simplify the business and because of the lack of suitable staff in those areas</li><li>• Sale of the motorcycle training business in Christchurch to simplify the business and cut costs</li><li>• Significant changes in funding and EFTS</li><li>• The appointment of a business development manager in 2011 to provide a better management focus in a changing business environment</li><li>• Sale of shares agreement and changes in directorship in 2011</li><li>• Restructure of the mode of operation at Whangarei due to the departure of the principal trainer there.</li></ul>
Previous quality assurance history:	At the 2008 NZQA audit, MDSL met all but one requirement of the then standard, QA Standard One. The requirement not met related to governance and management, as the organisation had not provided documentation to NZQA by the

due date. This was provided at audit.

Other:

MDSL offers short courses to employees of other organisations, leading to driver licence endorsements (mostly in the commercial transport and equipment areas) and a 12-week commercial driving course. Client company employers pay for their employees to go on the short courses, while the commercial driving course is funded by the TEC through its Training Opportunities (TOPS) courses, and MSD through its Youth Guarantee scheme.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the external evaluation and review (EER) included the following focus areas.

- Governance, management, and strategy

This is a mandatory focus area.

- Polytechnic course

This is a programme run by Christchurch Polytechnic and Institute of Technology (CPIT) which uses MDSL facilities, equipment, and teaching staff. This arrangement is run under a comprehensive memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreement between CPIT and MDSL.

- Training Opportunities course

This is a programme designed to use the learning of driving skills to motivate unemployed people to find employment. This programme is funded by MSD.

- Vehicle licensing

Vehicle licensing is the required outcome of all the current programmes run by MDSL, and so the evaluation for licensing has now been incorporated into that of the polytechnic and Training Opportunities courses listed above.

The listed programmes were evaluated because of their varied nature and the large numbers of students involved in some of them.

### 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.*

A team of two lead evaluators conducted the evaluation visit over two days at the Christchurch site. It was deemed not necessary to visit the Whangarei site as the Christchurch branch facilitates the vehicle licensing which is duplicated at the Whangarei site.

The evaluators met with the owners, managing directors of the PTE, trainers, students, administrative staff, and the CPIT business manager. During the visit the evaluators contacted a variety of stakeholders such as employers and representatives of WINZ, Competenz, and Aoraki Polytechnic.

Documents and information sighted included a self-assessment report, student evaluations, the student information database, internal moderation forms, minutes of meetings, memoranda of understanding, tutor performance reviews, student handbook, financial budgets, external moderation reports, entry interview questionnaires, business proposal documents, and student workbooks.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Mainland Driving School Limited**.

MDSL provides a high standard of education. Most learners that engage in the programmes provided by MDSL succeed in meeting their outcomes. Individual learning styles are recognised and catered for as much as possible. Students with learning difficulties are identified and are given support as required, such as the provision of reader-writers. The teachers in the programmes are individually selected for their expertise and abilities and establish a good rapport with the students. The teachers have maturity and life skills that bring balance and relevance to the learning situation. MDSL is exceeding TEC completion targets and works very well with government agencies such as WINZ. The provider has valuable educational relationships with the polytechnic sector, which enables it to keep current with educational practices and acts as an important form of external moderation. Learners are able to engage at a pace that suits their learning style, and the MDSL system allows students who are less likely to achieve to receive additional tuition or to return in the next intake to complete their course.

The students receive useful skills which will assist in gaining them employment. MDSL is well equipped to assist the students in gaining employment. Students learn how to drive various commercial vehicles which have New Zealand Transport Authority (NZTA) licensing requirements. Students can learn to drive a variety of commercial vehicles and be licensed with the various endorsements to drive trucks, articulated vehicles, passenger vehicles, diggers, loaders, forklifts, and dangerous goods vehicles. Students informally learn “soft skills” in the process of their learning, which will assist them in employment. These skills include punctuality, timeliness, attendance, assertiveness, interaction, and communication. MDSL tutors notice the changes in the students over time. Literacy and numeracy improvements are gauged at the end of the programme and improvements have been noticeable, but these are currently seen as being a result of the naturally embedded practice of literacy and numeracy that the programmes provide rather than as a result of an integrated teaching strategy. Student satisfaction with the programme is high and the programme is effective in that most achieve their licence endorsements.

MDSL is well resourced to run the programmes. It has adequate classroom facilities and a storage area for the fleet of vehicles that it owns to facilitate the learning. Students receive adequate personal resources to complete the theory part of the course.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Mainland Driving School Limited**.

MDSL has a well-integrated self-assessment system which is incorporated into the business structure. The directors and owners are also the managers and have a “hands-on” understanding of the running of the PTE. This relationship works well as currently MDSL is relatively small and closely managed by a small team. This provider has a small management team, despite having two branches located at some distance apart, and this enables ready communication between administration staff, trainers, and management. Potential problem areas are identified early and can be dealt with quickly. MDSL management is proactive in the self-assessment process, as can be seen in the way it has dealt with a couple of problem areas recently, such as the responses to the workload of the administrative manager and the changes in the organisation of the Whangarei branch.

MDSL has an effective student information data system which assists in keeping student details and progress up to date. This system is used to extract relevant data for analysis and forecasting for future programmes.

Students’ needs are assessed and students are matched individually to the types of employment that will best suit them. TEC results are carefully tracked and there is a strong emphasis on training and employment. Student feedback is comprehensive and used to initiate improvements in the programmes and resources. The standard of delivery is closely monitored and teachers are encouraged to gain teaching skills as part of professional development.



# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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**.

MDSL is a very good provider and ensures that most of its learners succeed. Students learn at the pace that suits them best in the classroom situation, and the learning in licence endorsement situations is often one-to-one. The classroom groups are generally limited to ten students, enabling intensive tuition. The students are able to repeat tasks until they have mastered them. Many of the students are mature and bring a wealth of experience with them into the class. This enables the students to use accounts of their own experiences to illustrate the learning.

The learning is facilitated by experienced registered driving instructors. The teachers are able to bring industry experience and knowledge to the learning environment. They use their experiences to break down learning barriers and communicate with empathy to the students. The tutors accommodate students' individual styles of learning, and give extra coaching where required. MDSL provides an effective learning environment with well-equipped classrooms and useful resources. There are four computers which the students use on a rotational basis to practise sample theory driving tests on the NZTA website; this is adequate for the current numbers of students. The students must be able to pass the sample test twice before they are considered to sit the actual test, which is administered off site by NZTA. They are required to gain a 100 per cent pass mark. MDSL has opted to provide its own vehicles for the students and has a range of vehicles covering the types of licence endorsements that it teaches. The vehicles include trucks, forklifts, diggers, and rollers. This fleet of vehicles provides an ideal tool for learning and has the advantage of being always on hand to reinforce lesson concepts.

MDSL achieved completion rates of 80 per cent in MSD-funded courses in 2011, and 83 per cent in TOPS courses. These results exceed the TEC expectations of 65 per cent completion for the year. All courses meet NZTA standards, and a powerful attraction for students is the ability to gain more than one type of licence endorsement. Many students take more than one endorsement, and many come back at later times to attain further endorsements to their licences. MDSL is recognised by employers as being a high-quality provider of driving tuition in Christchurch. This is also recognised by training partners such as CPIT, Aoraki

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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.

Polytechnic, and ITOs. MSDL has a very good recent moderation record with the NZQA Tertiary Assessment and Moderation unit, having met all its moderation requirements in 2010.

One strong reminder of student achievement is the “wall of fame” displayed in one classroom. This is a collection of photographs of graduates who have recently gained employment posing next to their work vehicles. This is an excellent way of motivating the current students who aspire to have their own photograph on the wall.

The attainment of TEC targets is important to MDSL as it affects funding. With a view to achieving maximum outcomes, MDSL organises assessment strategies for individual learners based on their learning styles. There is a good flow of data from the TEC to MDSL and vice versa, which assists in the planning of the programmes. The administration officer at MDSL strives to place students in the employment position that suits them best. This is done by establishing strong links and maintaining good communications with employers.

## 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 **Excellent**.

The students gain valuable skills in operating heavy and specialised transport vehicles. In addition, students learn to operate in a realistic work environment, gaining attributes such as punctuality, timeliness, attendance, and personal presentation. Many of the students gain employment as a result. Drivers' licences are a valuable way of gaining employment opportunities, and the various licence endorsements available give a range of employment options. MDSL gives individual attention to the learning and employment needs of the students. MDSL gives priority to matching the students to type of employment in order to place the student in a position in which they are likely to thrive.

The evaluation team heard that a few employers use only MDSL to seek out employees. Some employers that take students from MDSL for employment said that the training received is a good basic skill set which can be built upon with further workplace training by the employer. MDSL has relocated the occasional student who did not fit into their first employment placement and was required to be allocated to a position that suited them better.

MDSL keeps a detailed record of student job placements. The student information data system is a useful, practical database which incorporates filtering and reporting processes and is easy to follow. It stores student details, marks, and attendance and is used for scheduling classes, allocating tutors, and tracking student progress through the licensing requirements. The system is directly

connected to the Whangarei branch of MDSL. Student and employer feedback shows widespread satisfaction with the programme outcomes. MDSL shows good capability at responding to industry needs.

MDSL has formed a strong and important academic relationship with CPIT through the joint facilitation of the polytechnic programme, which is administered by CPIT and delivered by MDSL using its teachers, premises, and resources. The relationship is particularly useful for MDSL as it can connect with the services of a major polytechnic.

Currently, literacy and numeracy is embedded in the courses in an unstructured way as students learn the jargon of the Road Code and about distances, volumes, weights, and measures.

### 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**.

The main aspiration of the students is to find employment, and MDSL courses largely fulfil this with an average of 80 and 83 per cent respectively of the students completing the Youth Guarantee and TOPS programmes and becoming employment-ready. The students gain the tangible skills of driving a variety of vehicles. They learn about defensive driving and vehicle dynamics to teach them how vehicles behave in dangerous situations. The aims and aspirations of the students who successfully complete the course are met, and they mostly gain additional life skills and confidence as a result.

The students also achieve the useful attributes of regular attendance, timeliness, punctuality, and other workplace disciplines. Literacy and numeracy enhancement are currently largely informal and the students improve these skills during the normal lessons. Tutors remarked that they noticed changes in the confidence and motivation of most students throughout the programme.

Other stakeholders were pleased with the results of the programmes. Employers were contacted and they all endorsed the standard of the students who graduated from the programmes. CPIT, after interrupting its relationship with MDSL for a year, quickly resumed the relationship after realising that the other options for a partnership were not as flexible and responsive as MDSL. This is an important endorsement from a major local provider.

MDSL keeps close contact with its partners through formalised MOUs which stipulate areas of academic and administrative responsibility. These MOUs are updated from time to time to reflect the changing nature of the relationships. The MOU with CPIT is currently under review. The MDSL administrative officer has a close and ongoing relationship with employers and government agencies. The

trainers have good relations with industry and there is much informal communication between them. MDSL meets NZTA standards for licence training and has strong relationships with WINZ case managers. The MDSL administration officer spends time liaising with WINZ caseworkers in order to attract appropriate trainees with a genuine interest in the training MDSL offers. This person also gives presentations at WINZ seminars.

MDSL is in the process of developing a new course which combines the skills of truck and loader driving. The provider has been working closely with the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) and Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCIRT) to determine how it can devise training to meet the needs of earthquake-damaged Christchurch. There is a strong passion among the managers to assist in the rebuild of the city. This course development is a good example of planning and development for the future using adversity as a motivator.

#### 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 **Excellent**.

The teaching at MDSL is mostly effective and of a high standard. The premises have adequate classroom facilities for the numbers of students that attend. The students are each given a “student box” when they start the course. Each box contains the resource materials, workbooks, and writing materials required to do the course. The students are required to give some of the resources (like the Road Code booklet) back at the end of the course, which does not please all of them. Some students said they would like to retain the resource material for future reference.

The students use the NZTA online testing facilities to practise their multi-choice test questions. For this they use the computer facilities on a student rotation basis. There are four computers available for the use of the trainees, which is sufficient for current numbers. The students are required to pass practice tests twice before they are permitted to sit the actual test at NZTA. MDSL tutors take care to teach their students the technical jargon that is required by NZTA in order to pass the tests required of them. Students with learning difficulties can opt for a reader-writer in assessments.

Those students who do not at first achieve their aims are either assisted on an individual basis to complete the learning or leave the programme and return on the next programme to complete their learning. This is an advantage of the programmes being only one month in duration. The class sizes are kept to a maximum of 11 students, allowing the teachers to give more attention to each student. Practice sessions for the licence tests are facilitated on an individual basis.

Literacy and numeracy is not completely integrated into the programmes. MDSL has acquired resources from Aoraki Polytechnic and had displayed these on a desk in a classroom, but they are not currently being used. MDSL tutors have some training in literacy and numeracy, but there seems to be uncertainty as to how the literacy and numeracy resources could be better integrated into a course. MDSL is aware of this factor and is seeking guidance from the Aoraki literacy and numeracy tutors.

The trainers bring a wealth of life experience to the teaching situation. Most are experienced drivers of commercial vehicles and are able to bring stories of their life experiences which helps to add realism to the lessons. Teachers all gain their I (Instructor) Endorsement which is required for all commercial vehicle instructors. Teachers are encouraged to gain training in unit standard 4098 *Use standards to assess candidate performance* and adult learning qualifications as soon as possible, and those interviewed had begun this process. Training staff undergo a mentoring programme when they start at MDSL and participate in a programme of regular performance review and peer assessment. MDSL engages teaching staff in professional development and is prepared to support staff to gain teaching qualifications.

There is tight control of student attendance. If the students do not attend consistently, they are pulled off the programme and have an opportunity to re-enrol in the next one. There is a trial period at the beginning of the course to determine whether the students are suitably motivated before they are allowed to continue.

### 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 **Excellent**.

MDSL has a finely tuned system of guidance and support for its students which is integrated into its teaching and pastoral care. Access to the TEC website and the students' ability to practise the online tests is an example of this. MDSL gives extra support to students with learning and language difficulties, and allows students who do not pass their tests at first to catch up or return to the next course. One-to-one learning assists in promoting student awareness. Employment opportunities are sought and fostered for the benefit of the students. The student's suitability is determined when they are matched to employment opportunities to encourage the best rate of job retention. As student attendance is very important in promoting employment skills and passing the programmes, MDSL checks student attendance daily and absences are promptly followed up.

In accordance with NZTA requirements, the students are not allowed to drive a vehicle if it is determined that they are not yet ready to do so. Trainees stated that MDSL tutors are "very tough on the practicals". This is appropriate for a largely practical course of this type. Students get support to master the jargon and technical

language that is required by NZTA for answering the test questions. The PTE maintains a strong relationship with WINZ which assists in obtaining students for the programme and also with the job placements at the end of the programme. MDSL is aware of cultural and social differences in the classes, and employs a lot of visual aids in the teaching to counter this. Posters, overhead projections, workbooks with illustrations, and the use of actual vehicles for reference all help to inform the students' learning. MDSL shows that it has adequate means to deal with student issues and domestic issues that can distract from the learning. The learning environment is relaxed and welcoming and the teachers provide maturity and stability in dealing with students' issues effectively as they arise.

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

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**.

The management at MDSL fosters good relations and communications with its staff, students, and stakeholders. The organisation values its relationships with its clients and uses a system of automatic phone call forwarding which ensures that enquiries are answered promptly. The Christchurch office has a readily accessible reception area which has a full-time receptionist, ensuring maximum responsiveness to the public and trainees.

The principal managing director is proactive in the running of the business, having participated in the licence endorsement programmes himself. He stated that he likes "to learn about the programmes", giving himself an insight into the intricacies of the programmes to enable better understanding. Both directors are active in business, and their skills and attributes complement each other well. Staff selection is based on finding the best people available through personal referrals. Management tries to utilise the natural talents of staff; for example, the administration manager devises resources specifically for the courses as the need arises and liaises with external agencies.

Management identifies training gaps caused by the Christchurch earthquakes. Business plans have been drawn up for the provision of a vehicle licensing programme which will assist in providing the drivers and operators needed to aid the rebuilding of the city. Some research into the needs of this project has been done by consulting with SCIRT. This project is seen as an opportunity to grow as a provider.

In the partnership with CPIT, management has shown that they can adapt to changing business circumstances. Whereas originally, MDSL was not favoured to continue the partnership, the organisation showed that it had the ability to change and so was favourably reconsidered.

The evaluation team noted that the workload for the administration manager was quite heavy for a person working 30 hours a week. This issue had already been identified by management. The administration manager had been asked to submit a self-evaluation of her position and, as a result, a new staff member had been hired to alleviate some of the pressure on this position. This sequence of events is a good illustration of positive management action in response to a difficult situation. The “flat” structure of management makes it easier to respond quickly and decisively to these circumstances.

The handling of the recent developments in the Whangarei area also shows the responsiveness of MDSL management. The evaluators were told that recently the Whangarei operation did not meet all of the standards of NZTA. The teacher at Whangarei decided to stand down from his position at this time. It has been identified that it will be difficult to find a new teacher to cover all the licence endorsement areas because of changes in NZTA trainer requirements, so a system of contracted teachers will be adopted. Management in Christchurch is in constant contact with the Whangarei branch, and the electronic data system allows for instant data retrieval from Whangarei when required.

Management is aware that work needs to be done to integrate literacy and numeracy into the programmes, and this work has been identified as a priority area.

## 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 **Excellent**.

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

### 2.2 Focus area: Training Opportunities course

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: Polytechnic course

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

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



# Recommendations

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

# 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](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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