



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Quality Plus Training Ltd

Date of report: 20 April 2010

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MoE Number: 7801
NZQA Reference: C01129
Date of EER visit: 12 February 2010

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.

Brief description of TEO

Location: Head Office, Tai Tapu, Canterbury

Type: Private Training Establishment

Size: Small, two full-time staff

Sites: Tai Tapu

Quality Plus Training Limited (QPT) was registered as a private training establishment in 2006, offering short courses in audit training. QPT offers training to the general public (Health Sector) some of whom may be members of a Designated Audit Agency (DAA). DAA's are approved by the Director General of Health to audit all services covered by the Health and Disability Services (Safety) Act 2001.

QPT's educational goals and objectives are to provide training to meet national and Ministry of Health guidelines and to have a 90 per cent satisfaction rating by participants on the courses. Courses are to be continually improved using participant feedback and to meet changing practices in health and disability auditing. The managing director of QPT has provided auditor training for more than 14 years.

Courses currently offered are:

- Health Auditor Training Course (HAT) – five days (includes unit standard 8086)
- Internal Auditor Training Course (IAT) – two days.

Under the previous system of quality audit, QPT was audited by NZQA in 2007 and met all requirements.

Executive Summary

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Quality Plus Training Ltd.**

Key reasons for this are:

- Trainees enrol to learn or improve their knowledge and skills around audit. Tutors and trainees both report significant gains compared with entry-level skills
- Trainee evaluations sighted showed 90 per cent satisfaction ratings across the two courses offered
- Completion rates for both courses are above sector benchmarks
- Trainees are assessed regularly throughout the week-long course. Accurate records of feedback are given and final results are kept
- All issues, academic or personal, are dealt with promptly and appropriately
- Trainees reported consistently high levels of satisfaction with course content, tutor preparation, and presentation.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Quality Plus Training Ltd.**

Key reasons are:

- The trainer's self-assessment was focussed and informative and emphasised the importance of learning outcomes for trainees
- Management and staff showed understanding of the evaluative process
- Management and staff were committed to the business and valued the working environment where open discussion and sharing of ideas occurred on a daily basis
- Informal review is frequent and effective, aided by the small, close-knit team.

TEO response

The TEO confirmed factual accuracy of the draft report.

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 (ITPQuality) 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).

Findings

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

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/for-providers/keydocs/index.html>

Outline of scope

The agreed scope of the external evaluation and review of Quality Plus Training Ltd included the following mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management, and strategy.

The courses chosen for evaluation were:

- Health Auditor Training Course
- Internal Auditor Training Course.

These are the two courses currently offered by Quality Plus Training.

Part 1: Answers to Key Evaluation Questions across the organisation

This section provides a picture of the TEO's performance in terms of the outcomes achieved and the key contributing processes. Performance judgements are based on the answers to key evaluation questions across the focus areas sampled. This section also provides a judgement about the extent to which the organisation uses self-assessment information to understand its own performance and bring about improvements, i.e. capability in self-assessment.

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**.

Context

QPT has provided auditor training for many years. Learners enrol for either a two-day Internal Auditor Training (IAT) course or a five-day Health Auditor Training (HAT) course. Data on enrolment, retention, and completion rates have been kept over this time. Most courses are small, with six to nine participants. These courses are offered four to six times

a year, or more often depending on demand. There are two main tutors who do the training. One is a lead auditor; the other has an adult education qualification.

Explanation

QPT aims to achieve 90 per cent satisfaction ratings from trainees who enrol in these courses. Pass rates on the courses currently meet that rating. Trainee evaluations showed that the majority of trainees were very satisfied with the courses. Most trainees who attend are employed in quality assurance or risk assessment roles, accounting for 80 per cent of enrolments. Twenty per cent of trainees want to be auditors and these students need to complete all the course requirements, including the final exam. This means the HAT course is able to meet the needs of the two main groups of participants simultaneously.

Students participate in workshops during both courses and there is regular homework set each night. The homework is marked and assessed in reference to unit standard 8086 *Demonstrate knowledge required for quality auditing*. The following day individual feedback is provided, which enables the tutors to gauge individual progress and provide extra support to students who need it. Students commented that the courses met their expectations and were enjoyable.

The exam at the end of the course week (2.5 hrs) for HAT picks up any aspects of unit standard 8086 that have not been covered through homework. The exam is co-marked with another contracted tutor who has an adult education qualification. Seventy to 80 per cent of students require a re-sit for one or two questions in the final exam for the Health Auditor Training course. Re-sit questions are emailed to students. Trainees who do not pass or attempt the final summative assessment (exam) are awarded a Certificate of Attendance. This meets the needs of 80 per cent of the attendees.

Students are also required to present case studies. They work in teams and participation is compulsory. One final task for HAT trainees is to prepare an audit summary which is presented to the wider group. This presentation is assessed using criteria relevant to conducting an audit. The students appreciated being taught by tutors who had current knowledge of audit. Student evaluations included comments that the applied teaching methods of the course helped them stay motivated and achieve well. They also stated that they respected the industry knowledge of the tutors and were confident they were being taught by well-qualified audit specialists.

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**.

Context

QPT has well-appointed office space at Tai Tapu near Lincoln township. It does not use this space for audit training, preferring to use facilities in Christchurch city, either at trainees' workplaces or a conference facility.

Explanation

Regular contact with external stakeholders and informal conversation with employers and contractors employed in the field helps the tutors to keep their training materials and teaching methods up to date.

There is significant repeat business; for example, Southern Cross Healthcare have used QPT auditor training for staff on an ongoing basis. In addition, the Ministry of Health, district health boards, and the Accident Compensation Commission send their staff to QPT for training. Some of QPT's graduates are employed by QPT; others gain quality management or consulting roles on completion of their training.

There is no formal process for stakeholder feedback as the manager and tutors at QPT all have informal connections through the audit community. They also belong to professional bodies, such as the New Zealand Organisation for Quality (NZOQ). One tutor is on the NZOQ board and both tutors have been on review committees overseeing new industry standards. Membership of Standards New Zealand (SNZ), the body that undertakes international research, helps ensure the students' knowledge base for their training is current and informed.

QPT plans to seek approval to offer unit standard 8084 *Audit and management systems for compliance with quality standards*. This standard is at a higher level than unit standard 8086. This would enable current course participants to enrol in a course with a higher unit standard; successful completion could increase their employment options. Unit 8086 is already offered by some of QPT's competitors.

The manager of QPT is the managing director of a Designated Audit Agency (DAA). This group provides professional development for other auditors.

QPT is actively involved with the New Zealand audit community. The owner is an accomplished businesswoman with well-established networks that allow her to provide her staff, students, and clients with excellent, professional audit training.

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**.

Context

QPT responds to stakeholder needs by seeking ongoing feedback from students, employers, and the wider audit community. Courses are offered regularly and on client demand.

Explanation

The HAT course is reviewed annually and an annual review plan is produced. The evaluation team sighted plans for the last two years. These plans are used to inform future changes to course content or delivery and to track these changes over time.

The Manager of QPT has a current Registered Nurse Practising Certificate from the New Zealand Nursing Council. In addition, the manager is a Managing Director of the DAA Group (one of 8 auditing companies in the health sector) who is accredited by JASANZ (Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand) to ISO (International Organisation for Standardisation) 17021 and ISO 19011.

Students' backgrounds vary, with some trainees not having done any formal training for 20 years; others are undertaking ongoing professional development. There is evidence from student evaluations and stakeholders contacted that the HAT course exceeds student expectations. Stakeholders reported that they had been sending staff to train with QPT for many years. They said that the trainees returned to work enthusiastic, motivated, and keen to continue their studies in the audit field. Many of them referred back to their training notes after the course had finished. They also encouraged other staff members to consider doing the training.

QPT is an established audit company with an excellent understanding of the audit field. Their responsiveness to stakeholder needs means they will maintain their current courses and intend to grow the business with the introduction of another unit standard, 8084. This would provide trainees with a higher level audit standard which meets learner and stakeholder demand. It also addresses the issue that the level of the HAT course may be too low for the types of skills required by auditors, such as critical thinking. Inclusion of standard 8084 could also increase future employment options for successful trainees.

The number of courses offered each year, and ongoing repeat business, indicates that QPT is matching the needs of its learners and stakeholders well.

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 **Excellent**.

Context

Staff development is an accepted part of “business as usual” at QPT. Any skill sets or competencies not held within the immediate team are filled by external expertise.

Explanation

Student evaluations and interviews with students indicate high levels of satisfaction with the delivery of the courses. Students said tutors were well prepared, responsive to individual student needs, and available to give extra tuition if required.

The manager is a tutor, which means she is involved with the students, and she is aware of the demands of the role. There is a good balance between theory and practical teaching sessions. The tutor with the adult education qualification tutors the first two days of the HAT course. Her expertise is used to judge any barriers to learning that may be apparent for students. She is able to resolve or signal any ongoing issues to the tutor who completes the remaining three days of the course. This pattern has been used successfully for some time and builds to the strengths of the two tutors involved.

Internal moderation is managed by one tutor marking first and then the second tutor re-marking the student work. External moderation occurs with NZQA each year. In 2008 the external moderation was not compliant. This led to discussion with an external contractor who was very experienced at assessing against unit standards in the tertiary sector. She assisted QPT to better understand NZQA moderation requirements. The resultant changes made to the moderation materials meant the moderation met NZQA’s requirements in 2009. This is a representative example of the way QPT deals with issues and addresses any gaps in their expertise and ensures ongoing improvement.

At the end of each course tutors evaluate the course and document any decisions made that have led to changes to the training materials, teaching style, or assessments. Students also evaluate the course, and feedback from student evaluations has led to refinements to the course materials, content, and delivery. For example, changes were made to a mode of assessment which involved moving a question in the final exam to the workshop part of the course, as it was able to be assessed more appropriately in verbal rather than written form.

Experiences discussed throughout the week are drawn from the auditor’s field work. This “interactional approach” encourages students to form a realistic impression of what is involved in audit. Role-plays simulate actual experiences and are used to foster team building, encourage reflection, and promote analysis.

Homework given each day is discussed the following day with the whole group. It is then marked and individual feedback is given to each student. Other assessment methods involve analysing case studies, observing and asking questions at audit closing meetings, and simulating real audit situations wherever possible. The combination of formative and summative assessment accommodates different learning styles and individual learning needs. This approach maximises the learning potential of the greatest number of students.

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**.

Context

Most prospective students speak to the manager to get information about the courses before enrolling. This guidance sometimes means students decide not to enrol. The exception to this is the Southern Cross staff who talk with previous trainees to gain course information.

Explanation

Different teaching methods are used to meet the different learning styles of students. Students are provided with comprehensive course notes. Additional course notes are provided for tutors. Students are required to fill in a questionnaire prior to attending the course. Questions are asked about their current job and knowledge of audit. Gaining a student profile before the course allows the teaching to be tailored to the knowledge levels and work experience of any particular intake.

All students receive pre-reading about six weeks before a course begins. This reading includes the ISO standards covered in the course, and reading to set the “audit context”. Once at the course students are provided with a course folder with the programme for the week, a flow chart of the audit process, and assessment guides and times. The registration form includes the objectives and benefits of the course.

QPT approaches the learning experience as a partnership between teacher and student. Students reported that the learning environment was inclusive and there were no barriers to learning.

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**.

Context

As a small organisation QPT’s governance and management functions are closely aligned, with the manager filling both roles. QPT measures its performance against its goals and understands that student achievement is central to the success of QPT and that word of mouth recommendations account for a significant proportion of enrolments.

Explanation

The individual values of the manager are embedded in QPT’s approach to training. The ethos underlying the training is that the conduct of the audit is vital for ensuring health consumers get an effective, safe service. It is possible to audit against the standards and not achieve this.

The “systems” focus of audit looks at systems planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of any corrective actions, before the audit is finally signed off. This approach talks about following pathways and making sure people do not fall through gaps. To ensure this does not occur, an audit needs to look at services to ensure they are safe. This philosophy of continuous improvement underpins the systems approach and is the central focus of the audit training offered by QPT.

Governance and management issues are reviewed regularly. The QPT Manager is a co-director with the DAA Group Ltd (an auditing company in the health sector). This relationship provides opportunities for advice and support regarding business issues. Other expertise is provided by contractors to QPT, such as that given by a contractor regarding moderation. Refer section 1.4.

Records of attendance, certificate numbers, assessments, and exams are maintained, mostly in hard copy. The appeal process is outlined clearly in the quality manual, and students receive information in the student handbook about how to appeal; no appeals have been received to date.

The manager is a tutor and on site often. This means any issues that arise and decisions required can be made quickly. Staff satisfaction is very high and a positive, constructive culture is evident. This is reflected by low staff turnover, the other key tutor having many years’ continuous service with QPT. This continuity of staff and commitment to QPT is reflected in the consistently high student achievement rates.

Part 2: Performance in 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**.

Refer section 1.6.

2.2 Focus area: Health Auditor Training (HAT)

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

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

Refer sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5.

2.3 Focus area: Internal Auditor Training (IAT)

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

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

Refer sections 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5.

Statements of Confidence

The statements of confidence are derived from the findings within and across the focus areas. A four-step scale is used: highly confident, confident, not yet confident, not confident.

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **highly confident** in the educational performance of Quality Plus Training Ltd.

Key reasons are:

- The evaluation team sighted documentation and observed behaviour that showed coherence in planning, record-keeping, staff and student comments, and academic achievement
- Trainees make significant gains in their knowledge as a result of the audit training provided
- Feedback from internal and external stakeholders attests to the value of the training acquired at QPT
- QPT welcomed the opportunity to discuss its core business with the NZQA evaluation team and seeks input from external sources when necessary
- Trainees commented that tutors are experienced and well resourced, and have current industry knowledge.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **highly confident** in the capability in self-assessment of Quality Plus training Ltd.

Key reasons are:

- Management is able to describe clearly what is done to keep accurate records, review courses, track student progress, collect and analyse stakeholder feedback, and undertake annual planning reviews
- QPT will continue to use ongoing self-review to inform strategies to improve the business and keep themselves well informed about audit “best practice” and compliance with designated government legislation.

Actions Required and Recommendations

Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's regular scheduling policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from this EER.

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