

Report of External Evaluation and Review

First Training Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 23 February 2015

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	5
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	6
Recommendations	16
Appendix	17

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Final Report

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:	First Training Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	5/22 Moselle Ave, Henderson, Auckland
Delivery sites:	Four delivery locations in Auckland, Whangarei, Franklin, and North Canterbury. Delivery occurs largely at organisation/workplace venues. Most (approximately 95 per cent) of the delivery occurs in the Auckland region. The remaining 5 per cent is delivered for clients in Whangarei and North Canterbury by Auckland-based tutors.
First registered:	11 August 2006
Courses currently delivered	First Aid training courses include: First Aid for the School Environment; First Aid for Schools (unit standards); Workplace First Aid; Outdoor First Aid; Providing First Aid for Young Children; First Aid training for PTEs delivering qualifications on the NZQF; Pre-Hospital Emergency Care: First Aid as a Life Skill; and Health and Safety Training.
Code of Practice signatory:	N/A
Number of students:	4,521 students (approximately 45 full-time equivalents) enrolled in first aid and emergency care training courses in 2013.
Number of staff:	Three full-time; plus five full-time equivalent staff employed on a part-time basis (nine tutors and one administrator).

Scope of active accreditation:	<p>First Training is accredited to deliver first aid unit standards (6400, 6401 and 6402, plus the two unit standards that will replace them – 26551 and 26552), as well as a range of unit standards within the Domains of Community/Outdoor Recreation, Pre-Hospital Emergency Care, and Health Care.</p> <p>It is also accredited to deliver the training scheme First Aid as a Life Skill.</p>
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Currently, the bulk of the training relates to first aid (unit standards 26551 and 26552), with some additional unit standards added relating to health and safety (e.g. courses such as Outdoor First Aid and Pre-Hospital Emergency Care: First Aid as a Life Skill). Courses vary between one and three days.</p> <p>All courses are self-funded. First Training does not receive government funding.</p>
Recent significant changes:	<p>The number of courses delivered by First Training has increased by 34 per cent since 2011. This also resulted in student enrolments increasing by 45 per cent. As a result, additional staff were appointed.</p>
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>The most recent external evaluation and review (EER) was conducted by NZQA in November 2010, where First Training received statements of Highly Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment.</p> <p>Three of the four unit standards externally moderated by NZQA in 2013 fully met the national standard. The exception was unit standard 26551, where assessor decisions had not met the national standard. However, in 2014 all four unit standards fully met the national standard.</p>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the EER included the following focus areas:

- Governance, management and strategy – mandatory for all EERs
- First Aid training

First Aid was selected because it is the core delivery activity at First Training. All courses delivered that involve one or more of the first aid unit standards (6400, 6401, 6402, or 26551, 26552) are part of this focus area.

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.

Prior to the site visit, First Training submitted documents relating to the EER to NZQA. In addition, the external lead evaluator communicated with the managing director by email and telephone to agree on and finalise the scope and agenda for the EER.

The evaluation team of two visited First Training over two days. The evaluators met with the managing director, two tutors and school students currently undertaking first aid training. In addition, telephone interviews were conducted with a sample of trainees who had recently completed a First Aid Training course, as well as a sample of client contacts at organisations where training had been delivered by First Training. The evaluation team also viewed a range of documents on site.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of the **First Training Limited**

- Course achievement rates have been consistently high at 98 per cent for the past three years.
- First Training had a 45 per cent increase in first aid course enrolments between 2011 and 2013.
- Training, resources and facilities are tailored to meet the environment and context in which the course is delivered. Interviews with clients indicated that this was an important contributor to their continued business with First Training.
- The practical, hands-on, scenario-based delivery approaches used by tutors are strongly valued and appreciated by students, maximising learner engagement.
- Student course evaluations show consistently high ratings. The positive feedback on the high quality and value of the training was also confirmed from interviews with clients as well as current and past students. It is evident that the teaching is very effective and a significant contributor to the high achievement rates.
- First Training was able to demonstrate that all tutors are appropriately trained and qualified and continue to maintain currency both in first aid tutoring and first aid practice.
- External moderation of the first aid unit standards indicates assessment is fit for purpose and assessor decisions made have fully met the national standards.
- Overall, there was sufficient evidence for NZQA to have high confidence in First Training's educational performance.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of the **First Training Limited**.

- Self-assessment is an ongoing process at First Training, which includes the monitoring of all course results. Any non-completions are immediately discussed with the tutor to identify known reasons, and any relevant actions are taken. The 2 per cent non-completions were identified as being largely beyond First Training's control.
- An important contributing factor to the quality of the teaching is the effectiveness of First Training's self-assessment, which involves a combination of formal and informal processes. It was evident that these self-assessment processes are used by tutors and managers to ensure teaching practices and ideas are shared, and any areas for improvement initiated.
- All tutors complete a standard self-assessment document on a three-monthly basis. In addition, regular peer and management observations of tutors' delivery and assessment practices are conducted. The results are then discussed with the training manager. Any matters identified that may be of value to other tutors are also shared at the monthly staff meetings. It was evident that this approach had led to highly effective and consistent teaching approaches across courses delivered by different tutors.
- First Training staff keep up-to-date with relevant regulatory and technological changes. Any matters relating to the currency of the content and delivery of first aid training are shared among staff at their monthly meetings, and any needed changes are actioned and monitored.
- An 'instructor pathway' was recently introduced, which enables all new staff to be mentored and supported during the different parts of their professional development. This enables new and experienced tutors to share ideas and good practices, which in practice has enabled both parties to learn from each other.
- First Training was able to demonstrate that the combination of formal and informal self-assessment practice was highly effective and had led to ongoing improvements that have enabled the organisation to maintain high levels of educational performance.

Findings¹

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**.

Course achievement rates for all the training courses involving first aid unit standards have been consistently high at 98 per cent for the past three years. The validity of the results achieved was evident from the detailed course achievement data viewed on site, together with the feedback received from stakeholders and trainees. In addition, student assessments for the first aid unit standards were validated by the recent external moderation results, which fully met all requirements.

Self-assessment is an ongoing process at First Training, which is used to monitor all course results. Any non-completions are immediately discussed with the tutor to identify known reasons. The 2 per cent who were unsuccessful were identified by First Training as being school students who were either not motivated to complete and typically did not attend the second day of training, or were students who had significant English language barriers (generally where English was a second language). Given the high quality of teaching and student support provided (as noted below), it is recognised that non-achievements are usually beyond First Training's control. Non-completions are largely related to Year 12 and 13 students who may not be motivated to fully participate and complete the course training. As noted later in this report, First Training has responded to this by ensuring all school courses have two trainers allocated, enabling relevant support and encouragement to be provided.

While the correlation and analysis of overall achievement data is not currently part of First Training's operational activities, it is acknowledged that the very low non-completion rates have enabled informal processes to be used to identify why some students do not complete, and then try and address such matters where possible. Given that First Training intends to expand delivery across other regions in New Zealand, developing a more formal process for collating and analysing learner achievements would be beneficial.

¹ 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**.

First Training is aware of the value of the training through feedback received from trainees at the end of the training course, and from further feedback obtained from surveys emailed to trainees shortly after the training. In addition, information is obtained through informal ongoing conversations between First Training staff and client organisations and from trainees returning on refresher courses to revalidate their first aid certificate.

A common theme of the value of the outcomes identified by First Training was evident from completed course evaluation forms, post-training survey results, and from clients and trainees interviewed by the evaluators. This referred to the knowledge, skills and confidence trainees gained to provide appropriate responses in first aid situations. A number of examples of using such knowledge and skills in real situations were also provided by client organisation/school coordinators (clients) and trainees interviewed. These included car crash accidents, cardiac arrests, outdoor activity injuries and drowning incidents.

School students interviewed also felt that the interactive nature of the training delivery had enhanced team support and collaboration. A further example of the benefits of the training was also able to be identified, which was confirmed by a number of the school students interviewed. Essentially, many students are motivated to enrol in the training course in order to provide them with an introductory pathway into education programmes within the health and social service areas, with the intention of pursuing careers in areas such as paramedics, tourism and hospitality.

Currently, there are no formal processes for gathering and analysing feedback from clients on the value of the training outcomes. In addition, it is currently unknown how many trainees who had previously completed a first aid course at First Training return to do their refresher courses. Creating a more formalised process would enable First Training to gather additional information that could be analysed to identify any further related issues or trends. Nevertheless, it is recognised that the value of the training is supported by the 45 per cent increase in first aid course enrolments during the two-year period between 2011 and 2013. A particular area of growth has been with school Gateway programme students, which First Training identified as being the result of recommendations being made by their school clients.

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**.

Where required, organisations that make bookings on behalf of their staff are contacted by First Training prior to the training commencing. This enables trainers to identify the location and context of the training to ensure the delivery approaches and resources used are relevant to the client's workplace and industry environment. For new clients, particularly those whose staff work in an outdoor environment, a pre-site visit is undertaken by the trainer to ensure relevant resources, materials and delivery approaches can be used to meet the trainees' needs. Clients interviewed confirmed that the training was always tailored to meet the environment and context in which their staff were operating. It was evident that practical scenarios are created by the trainer to simulate real-life situations where potential accidents and hazards may occur. Clients were able to identify a number of examples of how this occurred.

As outlined later in this report, First Training has processes in place to gather relevant information about the students undertaking the course, both prior to enrolment and at the commencement of delivery. This information is used to ensure student learning needs are accommodated and relevant support and attention is provided to maximise course completion.

Ensuring that courses delivered are meeting student needs is also discussed at the regular monthly staff meetings. Examples were able to be provided, including a situation in which a course delivered to male school students included some students who were not motivated or committed to complete the course. This was discussed with the school coordinator and changes were agreed to address this issue for future training. This included changing the timing of courses delivered, as well as allocating two young male tutors to facilitate maximum engagement. This has subsequently worked well, with evidence to show no concerns being expressed, and with related improvements in course completions.

First Training keeps up-to-date with relevant regulatory and technological changes through active involvement with the New Zealand Resuscitation Council and the Association of Emergency Care Training Providers. In addition, all staff are actively involved in the health and other sectors of relevance to emergency care. First Training is aware of the health and safety regulatory changes that are likely to occur in 2015, and will be reviewing the training to accommodate relevant changes. Any matters relating to the currency of the content and delivery of first aid training are shared among staff at their monthly meetings.

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**.

It is evident from documents viewed, from the repeat business achieved, and from interviews with clients as well as current and past students, that the teaching is highly effective and a significant contributor to the high achievement rates.

An important contributing factor to the quality of the teaching is the effectiveness of First Training's self-assessment, which involves a combination of formal and informal processes. It was evident from the EER interviews that there is regular one-to-one contact between the teaching staff, training manager and managing director. The training manager will often discuss delivery plans and pedagogical approaches with the trainer immediately prior to commencement of a course, and these occasions are used to share ideas to maximise learner engagement and achievement. Immediately following the course, the student feedback forms and follow-up surveys are reviewed by the tutor, training manager and managing director. Any issues of importance are discussed in more detail and, if required, such matters are addressed, although in practice issues of concern rarely occur.

All tutors also complete a standard self-assessment document on a three-monthly basis. The results are then discussed with the training manager. Any matters identified that may be of value to other tutors are also shared at the following monthly staff meeting. In addition, to further enhance the consistency and quality of teaching practices, regular peer and management observations of tutors' delivery and assessment practices are conducted. Such observations are then discussed with the tutor, and again any matters of relevance to other tutors will be raised at the monthly staff meetings. It was evident from the course feedback forms viewed and from students interviewed that the teaching is highly valued and consistent across courses delivered by different tutors. A common theme from this feedback was the adoption of practical, hands-on, scenario-based delivery approaches, which immediately follow introductory and preparatory components. This active engagement of students appears to be an important contributor to successful achievement. In addition, it was evident from interviews with tutors, current and past students, and from completed student evaluation forms, that staff are passionate about their teaching and strongly committed to their students.

First Training was able to demonstrate that all tutors are appropriately trained and qualified, and continue to maintain currency both in first aid tutoring and first aid practice.

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**.

At the commencement of the course, all students are provided with a handbook to guide them through the course. To enable relevant support to be provided to students, courses that have more than 15 students are allocated two tutors. In the school environment, two tutors are allocated even when enrolments are below 15. This usually involves a 'lead' tutor, and a 'second' tutor who is available to provide relevant support.

In preparing for the training, trainers access and use the requested information from clients about the enrolled students, which includes any medical conditions as well as cultural issues and numeracy and literacy, and other matters of relevance to course training. In addition, it was evident from interviews with trainers, past trainees and clients that an introductory session is used by the trainers to gather further information on student backgrounds. The information gathered is then used to identify those students who may have learning difficulties or other issues, and relevant support is provided. This is considered to be particularly important in the school environment, particularly if students have English language difficulties. In such situations, trainers will often get additional support from school staff. Where needed, tutors will also spend additional time with students at the end of the course.

First Training is aware of the need to actively engage learners to ensure they develop the required knowledge and skills. The practical, hands-on, scenario-based activities are largely done in groups, which also enables students to gain relevant support and mentoring from their peers.

As mentioned earlier, matters relating to student support are also discussed by the tutors as part of their ongoing self-assessment process, and any issues that arise are discussed and addressed.

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 **Good**.

First Training has a clear strategic plan, which is reviewed and amended as needed on an annual basis. This strategic plan provides a vision and direction for First Training, with objectives and action plans monitored on a regular basis. The plan is also informed by a 'SWOT'² exercise, which in turn contributes to self-assessment activities to identify and respond to areas for change and improvement. From documents viewed and from interviews conducted during the EER visit, it was evident that First Training has used such self-assessment activities to make related changes and improvements. One important example included updating the website, which First Training believes has contributed to increased bookings.

To maximise communication among tutors in order to maintain high-quality training, a 'drop box' was recently created. This enables staff to easily access and share information of relevance to the training on a continuous basis. It is viewed as being particularly useful for those tutors who are unable to attend monthly staff meetings.

All new staff go through an 'instructor pathway', which is used by the training manager to provide relevant support during the different stages of a tutor's learning, and to identify their readiness to progress to the next stage. This includes an initial induction, attendance on a range of courses ('shadow a course'), assisting on a course, leading on particular course topics, leading a whole course, and then becoming a lead instructor. Each stage also involves a prerequisite for the minimum qualifications a tutor must have. Peer observation is also used as part of the monitoring and development process. First Training believes this change has led to consistently high levels of course delivery. This was validated from student survey results viewed and from the clients and past students interviewed.

It was evident that students and clients consider that appropriate resources are being made available on training courses. As mentioned earlier, all delivery is tailored to meet clients' contextual needs. Client feedback indicates that such an approach is very much valued, particularly for the outdoor first aid training, and is an important factor in choosing First Training.

First Training identified that its customer management database system has been a work-in-progress for a few years, and acknowledges that there are elements that need to be improved. Currently, the database is not used to collate and subsequently analyse information relating to education outcomes. Developing the system further will enable First Training to have a broader understanding of learner achievements, client and trainee retention rates (e.g. repeat bookings and take-up

² A method of evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a project or business.

of refresher training), and the value of the outcomes of the training to key stakeholders. Given the intended expansion of delivery in other regions, such improvements will be beneficial.

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 **Good**.

2.2 Focus area: First Aid training

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

NZQA recommends that First Training Limited:

- Develop a more formalised process for gathering stakeholder feedback on the value of the training.
- Further develop the computer system to enable First Training to collate and analyse learner achievement, client and trainee retentions, and the value of the outcomes of the training for key stakeholders.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

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 External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.

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).

The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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