



Report of External Evaluation and Review

PassRite Driving Academy Limited

Date of report: 1 June 2010

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Brief description of TEO	3
Executive Summary	4
Basis for External Evaluation and Review	5
Findings	6
Part 1: Answers to Key Evaluation Questions across the organisation	6
Part 2: Performance in focus areas	10
Actions Required and Recommendations.....	11

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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.

Brief description of TEO

Location: Auckland

Type: Private training establishment

Size: PassRite Training Academy Limited trains around 1500 students per year on short courses of less than one week in duration

Sites: Auckland and Hamilton¹

PassRite Driving Academy Limited (PassRite), founded in 1990 by its current director, is a provider of driver training and education for all classes of driver licensing and endorsements.

PassRite delivers short courses of between one and five days, which include a theory component and practical driver training and assessment using its own fleet of modern trucks and truck and trailer.

PassRite is a New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA) approved course provider and its instructors are also NZTA approved.

The company has recently had a change of personnel at the management level.

¹ The Hamilton site is run by a separate company, but is an approved site by virtue of a Memorandum of Understanding with PassRite.

Executive Summary

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **PassRite Driving Academy Limited** because the majority of students pass the assessment to gain the endorsement or licence they are studying for. The high pass rate is due to the longer duration of the courses, (compared with other providers), which ensures that students are given the time they need to learn the required skills and gain the confidence to be safe on the road. Students also focus on passing the licence via this route with PassRite as they can gain it within a week, whereas outside of an NZTA-approved provider this would take six months. Nevertheless, a stronger focus on the training, assessments, and moderation within these short courses would increase the quality, relevance, and consistency of the outcomes.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Not Yet Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **PassRite Driving Academy Limited** because although there are regular formal meetings that record review discussions should they arise; the current self-assessment process is largely informal. While purposeful changes have been made as a result of this process it is not effective or reliable in constructively informing PassRite of its overall educational performance. PassRite management acknowledges the need to be fully aware of the quality and effectiveness of its training in order to regain and improve stakeholders' confidence. PassRite is at the early stages of implementing a systematic self-assessment process to review the organisation at all levels by reviewing what and how valuable information is gathered from all stakeholders regarding the delivery and content of each programme.

TEO response

PassRite Driving Academy Limited agrees with the factual accuracy of this 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 scope of the external evaluation and review of PassRite Driving Academy Limited included the following focus area:

- Truck driver licensing.

The majority of training is in truck driver licensing for classes 2, 4 and 5.

The mandatory focus area is:

- Governance, management, and strategy.

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 **Good**.

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

Explanation

Although achievement information was not presented through a formal self-assessment process, there was strong evidence from all parties spoken with at the review that over 90 per cent of students passed the assessment to gain the endorsement or licence they were studying for.

This pass rate has been consistent, meets the organisation's expectations, and is attributed to:

- The students' two years of car driving experience prior to the course.

- The length of training, being longer than some other providers, as PassRite believes its students need the time to learn the specific skills and gain the confidence to be safe on the road.
- The policy PassRite has adopted in not letting students take the assessment until they deem them confident and ready.
- The re-sit policy that allows students to take the assessment again, when the trainer deems them ready, if they did not achieve the first time.
- The flexibility in allowing students more time to complete the theory and written assessments.

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

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

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

Explanation

There was evidence, largely through informal self-assessment, that the value of the courses to both the students and the employers who send their employees to PassRite include the following.

- Students and employers expressed the value of the course at PassRite as the length of time possible to gain a Class 2, 4 or 5 licence that legally allows the student to drive a truck or truck and trailer. Students have the distinct advantage of progressing from a learner licence in truck driving to a full licence within one week, whereas it would take at least six months if taken outside of an NZTA-approved provider.
- Gaining the additional endorsements or truck driving licences clearly opens up further job opportunities for the students and they become more productive and valuable to their employers because they can perform a wider variety of duties.

The obvious value of the outcome for the community at large is the assurance that the students have the knowledge, skills, and confidence required to be safe on the road.

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 **Adequate**.

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

Explanation

PassRite is somewhat restricted in its ability to change the courses as a result of self-assessment findings because the course content is approved by NZTA and the industry training organisation, Tranzqual, and is defined by legislation.

However, PassRite conducts a level of needs analysis of companies that want to send a number of employees for training because it can offer the flexibility of day, evening, or weekend training to suit the company.

Currently the students complete application forms on the first day, so the trainers do not know who the students are until they turn up for training. Informal self-assessment has shown PassRite that on occasions this practice has caught it unprepared for some students who have needed additional support in learning. PassRite is currently looking at improving its needs analysis strategies.

Students reported that while they appreciated that the trainers had extensive knowledge in their field of expertise, some material may not be relevant to the endorsement they want to obtain.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Explanation

All trainers are highly experienced in their field of truck driving, and although they are a small team and work well together, their training ability and consistency in delivery are not currently closely monitored. Formally recorded peer observation of training and assessment would ensure that PassRite knows it is delivering the best possible training for the students and stakeholders.

Trainers explained that although all students come with two years' driving experience of cars and have developed road-wise knowledge and skills, they value the one-to-one practical training in the trucks that gives them the specifics of truck driving.

Historically the external moderation of the PassRite courses conducted by Tranzqual ITO has been satisfactory; however, the quality and consistency of assessment dropped in 2009. An action plan in place and a significant change to personnel at management level supports a positive move towards consistency in assessment for 2010.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Explanation

Students spoken with at the review confirmed that prior to commencement they receive useful information which prepares them for the course.

Once the students are on the course they are well supported by the trainer, who offers additional guidance where necessary. Trainers show their commitment to the students' achievement by giving extra time for both written and practical assessments; they also have the flexibility to change trainer if deemed beneficial for the students' achievement.

Students with additional learning needs have also been accommodated when identified to the trainer. As mentioned in section 1.3, the trainers are not aware of who is on their course before the first day, so specific additional support, such as a reader/writer for those who need someone to write for them, cannot be prepared in advance.

All students complete an evaluation form at the end of the course, but results of this are not currently shared with all staff in a systematic way. The results are not measured or analysed to give the staff and trainers constructive feedback on their service and training.

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 **Adequate**.

Explanation

The company has recently had a change in personnel at the management level, which has given internal and external stakeholders a renewed confidence in the quality of PassRite's training. There was strong evidence to show that PassRite has experienced a lack in confidence from the sector over the past 18 months, which it is now working hard to retrieve.

The strategic direction of PassRite is clearly in the process of development and will be led by the general manager and the director.

Staff at PassRite expressed their feeling of now being heard by management due to a more open and inclusive leadership style, and they had every confidence that the reputation of PassRite would now be strengthened.

One positive strategy currently taking place is the recruitment of trainers in permanent positions, with a member of staff dedicated to engaging with stakeholders to provide PassRite with knowledge about the industry while recruiting potential students.

Management is also revitalising the relationship with PassRite Hamilton exercised through the memorandum of understanding.

PassRite management is fully aware of the current weaknesses in self-assessment. They have a positive approach to actively working towards developing a systematic and comprehensive self-assessment process which will provide them with knowledge about their training and positively support potential growth.

Part 2: Performance in focus areas

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 **Adequate**

2.2 Focus area: Truck driver licensing

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

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

Actions Required and Recommendations

Further actions

Because NZQA is Not Yet Confident in PassRite Driving Academy Limited's capability in self-assessment, NZQA will contact the organisation within 20 working days of this report to agree upon an appropriate quality improvement plan.

The plan is intended to enable PassRite Driving Academy Limited to work towards achieving a judgement of at least Confident in relation to capability in self-assessment. Implementation of this plan will be monitored by NZQA. When the plan has been completed, or at any time deemed necessary by NZQA, another external evaluation and review will be scheduled.

Please note that an action plan has already been received from PassRite Driving Academy Limited.

Recommendations

It is recommended that PassRite Driving Academy Limited:

- Develop a systematic self-assessment process, so that all significant aspects of the academy's operation are prioritised for consideration over a manageable time frame.
- Integrate valuable data collection, its analysis and interpretation, and the intended use of self-assessment results as a means of identifying and maintaining the academy's strengths and acting on significant areas for improvement.

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