

Report of External Evaluation and Review

AA Solutions

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 29 March 2016

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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:	AA Solutions
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	The Shires, 439 Kohatu-Kawatiri Highway, Motupiko, RD2, Tasman
Delivery sites:	As above
First registered:	2007
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confined Space Training• Height Awareness Training• Hazard ID
Code of Practice signatory?	No
Number of students:	20-30 students on short courses per annum. 0.4 equivalent full-time domestic student No international students
Number of staff:	Two; two owner-directors, one of whom is the part-time director-manager-tutor
Scope of consent to assess:	http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=785500001 Fundamental Induction to Health & Safety (Level 3) (Training Scheme)
Distinctive characteristics:	AA Solutions delivers health and safety short

courses that range in length from four hours to two days. These courses are targeted to client company needs for staff training, to meet health and safety requirements, and for promoting safety practices and a culture of staff safety on a range of worksites. Courses are custom-designed to target individual company needs and specific industry requirements.

Recent significant changes:	AA Solutions recently relocated from Auckland to the Tasman district. However, training is still delivered at client company premises and worksites across New Zealand.
Previous quality assurance history:	The most recent NZQA evaluation in 2012 resulted in NZQA being Confident in both the educational performance and organisational self-assessment of AA Solutions. External moderation of assessment was carried out in 2013 by the New Zealand Industry Training Organisation and no concerns were noted. The next external moderation is due in 2016 and will be conducted by The Skills Organisation (the current standard-setting body responsible for the health and safety sector).

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of this evaluation included two focus areas:

- The mandatory focus area of governance and management, which provides an overview of the strategic and operational levels of the organisation
- This evaluation also reviewed all health and safety training currently delivered. In effect this was an evaluation of the whole organisation and all courses. This whole-of-organisation approach was taken due to the very low volume of training and small trainee numbers.

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.

Before this evaluation, AA Solutions submitted a self-assessment summary and supporting documents. The NZQA evaluators reviewed these documents along with information from the organisation's website, NZQA's database, and quality assurance reports from the standard-setting body for health and safety, The Skills Organisation.

This evaluation was conducted by two evaluators at NZQA over one day, based on the documents submitted by AA Solutions, supplemented by phone interviews with the owner-director-tutor. Further phone interviews were conducted with client companies for whom training is delivered, and with two course trainees. Documents from the standard-setting bodies, New Zealand Industry Training Organisation for 2013 and The Skills Organisation were reviewed to confirm AA Solutions had engaged in external moderation of assessment material.

The evaluators reviewed a wide range of organisational records and documents to confirm and validate information gathered from the organisation's self-assessment and interviews.

Summary of Results

Statements of confidence on educational performance and capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of **AA Solutions**.

The main reasons for this level of confidence are:

- AA Solutions tailors its courses to meet each client company's specific needs, and has effective processes to ensure and confirm that course content is matching trainees' roles and learning needs.
- Between 2007 and 2015, all course completion and achievement rates have been 100 per cent, except for three years when a small number of trainees did not complete their course.
- Satisfaction rates reported by trainees are consistently very high.¹
- Trainees interviewed confirmed this satisfaction. Trainees also said they gained added value from the courses, including increased awareness of others' actions (e.g. wearing a harness when working at height), and improved job safety analysis skills.
- Employers interviewed at this evaluation likewise reported that AA Solutions delivered training that closely matched their site requirements, as well as being available for 'free advice whenever I call the trainer'.
- All courses are short (four hours to two days), are well planned to engage trainees, and involve them in discussions of real workplace scenarios. This was confirmed by employer and participant interviews.
- Assessment is fair, valid and reliable as confirmed through internal and external moderation of assessment. The tutor has relevant experience and training for the tutor and assessor role.
- AA Solutions has a range of appropriate and effective processes for reviewing its educational performance. Self-assessment is fit-for-purpose for the organisation's current small size and few course offerings, and includes, for example, analysis and review of participant completion and achievement data, satisfaction ratings and repeat business.

¹ 4.5–5 on a 1–5 scale, with 5 excellent.

- There are some areas that may need to be strengthened to make self-assessment practices more robust if the number or length of courses increases, as is planned. This is mainly related to having more documentation of verbal feedback.
- This evaluation finds sufficient evidence for NZQA to have confidence in the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of AA Solutions. This level of confidence is based on a limited number of courses that have run in recent years (three in 2014 and four in 2015), few client companies, and the small number of trainees (20).

Findings²

Key Evaluation Questions	Educational performance	Capability in self-assessment
How well do learners achieve?	Good	Good
What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders including learners?	Good	Good
How well do the programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?	Good	Good
How effective is the teaching?	Good	Good
How well are learners guided and supported?	Good	Good
How effective is governance and management in supporting educational achievement?	Good	Good

AA Solutions is providing health and safety courses that have enabled virtually all trainees to achieve competence in the learning outcomes, over the past nine years.³ The PTE is currently contracting with client companies, and courses are tailored to meet these companies' specific requirements. The PTE's repeat business, and client company feedback to the evaluators, confirms AA Solution's self-assessment that their training courses are meeting the needs of the companies they work with and enabling trainees to achieve competence in the course content.

The evaluators found similarly corroborating evidence showing that the client companies and trainees are gaining significant value from the training. This was expressed as raised awareness of and care for co-workers' actions. An example of this was trainees paying closer attention to everyone wearing safety harnesses when working at heights, and safe working messages being front of mind. An example of this was given by a trainee interviewed who stated that 'when there is an incident while working in a confined space, our instinct is to immediately go in to

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

³ This evaluation reviewed educational performance data from 2007 to 2015.

help or rescue a colleague, but now I think, “*don’t rush in*”, as there may be toxic fumes and if I enter the workspace then two people may be in danger’.

Feedback from trainees is currently received through a post-course survey which focuses on satisfaction rather than the impact of training. Similarly, employer feedback is intended to be via a survey, but in fact is collected through conversations. There is scope here for AA Solutions to explore how to collect and record higher-level impacts or value resulting from the training, such as changed attitudes and safe work behaviours in the workplace, or improvements towards reducing accident rates or increasing reporting rates. The evaluators heard several such anecdotes of value gained, from the trainees and companies interviewed, which would potentially be of real value to the PTE’s self-assessment.

Employers interviewed noted improved knowledge and awareness of dangers when handling chemicals, and the confidence to pass this knowledge on to co-workers. Another employer (with 18 years professional association with the tutor) noted that the courses provide trainees with improved confidence and knowledge, with ‘near-miss’ reporting which provides more accurate tracking of potential accident rates.

Both the trainees and employers interviewed said the training was ‘very good’, or ‘awesome’ and they had no hesitation recommending AA Solutions to others. This is also noted in the PTE’s own self-assessment.

The tutor has ongoing professional development to stay current with industry requirements (one current client company is already booking courses months ahead to update staff on the new Health and Safety Act), and has appropriate qualifications for training and assessing adults on competency-based courses (most courses include assessment against one assessment standard).

The quality and reliability of assessment is managed through an internal moderation process involving the second director reviewing the assessment decisions to ensure they are at the right level and standard. External moderation of assessment was carried out in 2013 by the New Zealand Industry Training Organisation and no concerns were noted. The next external moderation is due in 2016 and will be conducted by The Skills Organisation.

Trainees have appropriate information prior to attending a course, and data reviewed by the evaluators indicated that no issues have been raised or brought to NZQA’s or AA Solution’s attention. Client company personnel interviewed noted that the tutor is very good at relating to all trainees, and in particular ensuring Māori and Pasifika trainees achieve. (This employer has high numbers of Māori and Pasifika staff who have been on training.) The near 100 per cent achievement rates confirm this.

AA Solutions is a very small, family-owned operation. The two directors are the only personnel; there are no employees or contracted tutors. The organisation has a detailed quality manual and systems in place which are used to plan courses and

monitor educational success as well as ensure compliance with matters relating to being a registered private training establishment.

The evaluators consider that NZQA can have confidence in AA Solution's educational performance and capability in self-assessment, for the current level and volume of training. This caveat is because some aspects of the organisation's self-assessment processes are informal or undocumented. While this is appropriate and working well for the client companies and approximately 20-30 trainees per year, should the number, level or range of courses lift significantly, AA Solutions will need to explore ways to lift the sophistication of its self-assessment.

Focus Areas

This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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

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

2.2 Focus area: Health and Safety courses

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that AA Solutions:

- Develop processes for recording the current oral feedback from client companies, and any other areas that are light on records or documentation, to support improved future monitoring and reflection on patterns or trends, should the organisation grow.
- Explore ways to gather higher-level feedback on the value of training outcomes, such as the impact of training on the trainees and employers.

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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Final Report