

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Fire Rescue and First Response Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 8 March 2011

Contents

Purpose of this Report	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review	4
Summary of Results.....	5
Findings	7
Recommendations.....	13
Further Actions	13
Appendix.....	14

MoE Number: 7882
NZQA Reference: C03509
Date of EER visit: 14 December 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.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Location:	Head office, 45 Manly Park Avenue, Manly, Whangaparaoa
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	2009
Number of students:	Domestic only: 11 full-time equivalent students (1,268 students p.a.)
Number of staff:	Two full-time equivalent staff
Scope of active accreditation:	78 unit standards at levels 1-5 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, including safe work practices, pre-hospital emergency care, workplace emergency risk management, fire and rescue services, urban search and rescue, rope rescue, and first aid.
Sites:	Head office only as above
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Fire Rescue and First Response is a specialist training company run by a husband and wife team, specialising in offering training in the fields of first aid, first aid for childcare workers, pre-hospital emergency care, fire extinguishers, fire warden training, health and safety, and rural fire fighting.</p> <p>Training is specifically tailored to the requirements of individual client companies and delivered on client sites or in appropriate hired rooms.</p> <p>The two company directors are also the trainers and have extensive backgrounds with the New Zealand Fire Service; one is also a registered nurse.</p>

Recent significant changes:	None
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>The most recent quality assurance visit by NZQA was an audit in 2009, where all but two requirements were met of the quality standard in place at the time. That audit was the first NZQA visit after initial registration as a private training establishment, and the requirements not met related to the achievement of goals and objectives, which had not yet been reviewed at the time of the audit.</p> <p>The organisation is actively involved with the standard-setting bodies responsible for ensuring the validity and consistency of assessment material and assessors' judgements. In all cases, Fire Rescue and First Response has been judged as assessing at the national standard and using assessment material that is fit for purpose.</p>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

This external evaluation and review included two focus areas. Governance, management, and strategy is a mandatory focus area; safety and first aid short courses were chosen as a focus area because they comprised all of the training offered by Fire Rescue and First Response.

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/>

This external evaluation and review included two NZQA lead evaluators and comprised a one-day visit to the office of Fire Rescue and First Response. The evaluation team interviewed the two owners and trainers and reviewed a sample of the organisation's documents to confirm and validate the evidence discussed. Subsequent to the site visit the evaluation team interviewed by telephone key personnel from a number of organisations, to provide an external view of the organisation's performance in delivering training. Telephone interviews were also carried out with staff from the standard-setting bodies that Fire Rescue and First Response engages with.

Fire Rescue and First Response Limited had had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received were fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Fire Rescue and First Response Limited**.

Across all short courses offered by Fire Rescue and First Response, approximately 99 per cent of trainees are completing and achieving competence. Students and training managers from client organisations have expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the training offered. Student satisfaction ratings are consistently between 92 and 98 per cent. Training managers' comments have included reference to the training being specifically designed for the needs of their organisation, and that the training has been effective in changing how staff think about safety and how they respond during an incident.

Fire Rescue and First Response is a small organisation where the two owners are also the trainers. Together they have extensive experience with the New Zealand Fire Service, including as trainers and assessors, and one is a registered nurse and contract moderator with NZQA in the field of Core Health. This experience has contributed well to establishing and maintaining their breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding of technical aspects of their fields as well as with the practice and theory of adult education and training.

External input to the organisation is sought and gained from the New Zealand Fire Service as well as the standard-setting bodies FRSITO (Fire and Rescue Services Industry Training Organisation), ETITO (ElectroTechnology Industry Training Organisation), NZITO (New Zealand Industry Training Organisation), and NZQA. This input has included observations and feedback on teaching sessions and checks on the validity and consistency of assessment material and assessors' decisions. All standard-setting bodies have confirmed that Fire Rescue and First Response is assessing at the national standard.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Fire Rescue and First Response Limited**.

Fire Rescue and First Response uses effective processes to monitor how well it is meeting the needs of trainees and client companies. These processes are mainly based on maintaining contact with industry networks, ongoing informal contact, as well as feedback from clients and past trainees. While many of these processes are undocumented, they are appropriate, are used effectively, and are suitable for the current size of the organisation. Formal trainee surveys are completed at the end of every short course and these are consistently very positive. The two owner-trainers review these and monitor the trainees' responses.

Fire Rescue and First Response currently maintains accurate and complete course records in paper format. These are reviewed immediately after each course and results sent to the client organisation within seven days. While course results are not yet collated as a whole to review how well courses are performing, the organisation is small and the owners know that the overall trainee achievement rates are approximately 99 per cent. The evaluation confirmed this rate as accurate.

The owners are continually making improvements to all aspects of their business, such as to presentation material and course construction and timing to better meet trainees' needs and the requirements of client companies.

While there are no significant gaps in Fire Rescue and First Response's self-assessment processes, the absence of aggregated data in an easily accessible format hinders the organisation conducting in-depth analysis on specific aspects of their training. Due to the small size of the operation, this is not a significant issue, but with plans to grow significantly it could inhibit effective self-assessment in the future. The owners have a plan to invest in appropriate software to support the aggregation and analysis of data in order to improve capability in self-assessment.

TEO response

Fire Rescue and First Response Limited has agreed the factual accuracy of this report.

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 **Good**.

In all but a few cases, trainees complete and achieve competence in the short courses for which they enrol. This pattern is common across all courses, with success rates at or above 99 per cent. Very few trainees do not succeed. Trainees report success not only in terms of achieving competence in the unit standards but also in their improved confidence to deal with emergencies and respond to incidents.

The courses offered by Fire Rescue and First Response are all short courses and are provided to employees of client companies and organisations. The courses are specifically designed to meet clients' particular requirements and are adjusted to suit the individual trainees who attend. These processes have ensured that trainees receive highly targeted training, and this has contributed well to both the trainees' satisfaction with the training and their ability to apply the theory and skills learned, with one organisation's training manager commenting, *"They are absolutely fantastic they get through to our people, into their minds"*.

Organisations interviewed during this evaluation spoke of the depth of knowledge and the increased confidence that their employees have gained from training with Fire Rescue and First Response.

Students complete evaluation forms at the end of each course, and these consistently rate their experience very positively, with between 92 and 99 per cent of trainees being highly satisfied with their experience.

The organisation monitors trainee achievements and trainee satisfaction course by course, and currently all records are maintained in a hard-copy format. Data is not currently collated across all courses. While this makes it difficult for the owners to track patterns and trends over time, the organisation is currently very small and the owners know their individual course completion rates and student satisfaction rates in detail. Planning is in place to set up an electronic database to cater for future growth.

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 **Excellent**.

Training offered by Fire Rescue and First Response is of significant value to the trainees who attend, their employers, and to the wider community. Trainees often require specific certificates such as in first aid training, or specific training such as with fire extinguishers for their current jobs. Employers hold the training in high value, in part due to legislative requirements but also in relation to how the training is delivered. Employers interviewed at this evaluation noted, for example, how their staff were typically reluctant to attend the training initially, but came back saying, *“This was the best course I’ve been to in 20 years”*. Employers noted that their staff are able to apply the skills learned in real situations on the job.

The training is also of considerable value to the wider community, for example by increasing the number of people in the community with up-to-date skills such as first aid and emergency care.

Fire Rescue and First Response has established a good reputation with a range of companies which have established repeat contracts based on the value added to their businesses. The organisation was invited to offer specific training to the New Zealand Fire Service, which proved successful and valued and has been considerably extended and widened in scope.

Student evaluations are formally collected and reviewed for each course and are used to make ongoing improvements. The organisation has well-established networks within their industry sector, and assessing value is largely based on ongoing informal discussions and feedback from individuals within this network. The combination of student evaluations and informal industry feedback works well for the current size of the organisation. A more formal or documented approach may be required as the organisation grows in size and complexity.

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**.

All courses offered are specifically tailored, initially to the individual contracting organisation’s requirements, but also to meet individual trainee’s needs, such as literacy and numeracy or for trainees with English as a second language. Trainees’ survey comments, and client organisation training managers interviewed at this evaluation, confirmed that courses have been designed and delivered very well and trainee and organisational needs have been very well matched. The trainers record oral questions and answers, collect photographic evidence, and provide reader-writers where necessary.

Fire Rescue and First Response’s owners have extensive professional experience in the fields in which they are offering training, and they actively use this to illustrate training scenarios and to match the trainees’ needs. This fact was confirmed at this evaluation through the documents reviewed and by the external personnel interviewed.

Training is delivered using client organisations' tools and equipment, ensuring the trainees are familiar with and trained in equipment they will be using in everyday employment. Training is also delivered across New Zealand at sites that best suit organisations' needs. Fire Rescue and First Response delivers an appropriate balance of theory and practical, with sufficient time for trainees to practise new skills.

The organisation reviews how well it is matching trainees' and client companies' needs, as already noted above, through a mixture of informal discussion and trainee surveys. These processes are suitable for the current size of the organisation, are resulting in a good level of understanding of how well needs are met, and are leading to meaningful improvements such as to course structure and improvements to written training materials.

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 **Good**.

Fire Rescue and First Response facilitates highly effective learning environments. The tutors are clearly very passionate about safety and emergency care. They have extensive and relevant industry experience and are effectively minimising barriers to learning. This was confirmed at this evaluation through interviews with tutors and was supported by student survey comments and satisfaction ratings and comments from client company training managers.

With the 99 per cent achievement rate, all trainees who complete a course are highly likely to successfully achieve competence. Further to this, as already noted, trainees gain more than just competence; they gain the confidence and depth of understanding to effectively apply their skills and knowledge in real emergency incidents.

The owners have been working with assessment specialists exploring best-practice options such as the use of "professional conversations", a model of assessment and evidence collection. The organisation has also welcomed teaching observations by the New Zealand Fire Service and the Fire and Rescue Services Industry Training Organisation, to validate the quality of teaching and learning and provide expert input to the organisation. The trainers are also actively updating their technical and trainer skills through NZ Fire Service "train the trainers" workshops and via the requirements on registered nurses for ongoing professional development.

Training material, course delivery scenarios, and timing and teaching strategies are continually updated and renewed in response to written comments in trainee surveys and the more informally collected feedback from client organisations. Fire Rescue and First Response has in particular ensured that courses are designed to minimise barriers to learning, such as minimising dependence on written text, the inclusion of colour and humour, interactive strategies to better engage trainees in exploring the material, and responding to emerging classroom issues for individual trainees, such as literacy or fear of blood. These strategies have been highly successful.

Assessment material and assessor decisions are checked internally, and checked externally by the standard-setting bodies FRSITO (Fire and Rescue Services Industry Training Organisation), ETITO (ElectroTechnology Industry Training Organisation), NZITO (New Zealand Industry Training Organisation), and NZQA.

Fire Rescue and First Response's self-assessment of its teaching effectiveness is sound, but limited to some extent by its small size. More structured and documented processes appropriate to the size of the organisation as it grows in size and complexity would add depth and provide a basis for future analysis of emerging patterns and trends over time.

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**.

Fire Rescue and First Response takes a very personal approach towards trainees, acknowledging that much of the subject matter they deal with can be very challenging. Trainers monitor students' reactions in class, in particular topics such as bleeding and the use of incident-related photographs. The guidance and support provided in these short courses is largely on a one-to-one basis and as needs arise. Student surveys confirm a high level of satisfaction; employer comments include, "*They are absolutely fantastic*".

Examples were given at this evaluation of specific situations where trainees were very well supported during courses as well as long after the course for specific incidents. This has included assessment in the workplace as well as emotional support following trauma incidents.

Training material is adapted to remove, as much as possible, the fear and anxiety associated with dealing with emergency incidents and focusing, for example, on the value of first aid skills rather than perceived dangers or risks.

Self-assessment in this area is effective in establishing trainees' needs, developing appropriate responses to those needs, and monitoring how well needs are met. This process involves informal discussions between the two trainers and feedback from individuals and includes feedback received via written student surveys.

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**.

The organisation currently has two owner-directors, who are also the tutors. There is a very strong focus on educational achievement as well as developing the trainees' practical abilities in their specific workplaces. This is an area of particular strength, in part due to the extensive professional backgrounds of the two owners.

Very strong and active professional networks are maintained within the core health and fire service sectors. Both trainers are active fire service trainer-assessors and one maintains current registered nurse status. This has ensured that the owners have stayed up to date with current industry best practice and adult teaching theory and practice.

Fire Rescue and First Response has an effective quality management system appropriate for the current size of the organisation and is actively exploring options for purchasing or developing an electronic database and student management system to cater for the planned growth in courses and an increase in staff. The organisation has a very clear and passionate focus on developing the hearts and minds of trainees, not simply focusing on skill acquisition. This is particularly valued by client organisations and was specifically referred to by client organisations interviewed at this evaluation. The organisation has clear and effective processes for reporting trainee achievements to their employers within a seven-day timeline.

Fire Rescue and First Response has been in business and registered as a private training establishment for two years but has already established ongoing repeat business and has been invited to develop programmes by significant organisations with a national presence. Feedback received by the evaluation team indicated that Fire Rescue and First Response is developing considerable respect in its industry sector, with one organisation representative stating, *“They are very highly thought of by industry”*.

The directors are actively monitoring the extent and success of repeat business and have revised their three-year business plan. There is currently a high reliance on paper-based records and informal feedback through industry networks, but this is effective for the current size. The planned development of more sophisticated systems to record and track educational achievements is well considered and occurring at the appropriate time for the planned growth. These developments are likely to contribute well to the organisation’s capability in self-assessment.

Focus Areas

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

[Explanation need only be provided if it is not already evident through the answers to the KEQs, or if some aspect of the focus area needs to be emphasised.]

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: Safety and first aid short courses

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

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

Recommendations

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

Further actions

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

Appendix

Regulatory 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 (ITP Quality) 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).

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/>

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E eeradmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz