External Evaluation and Review Report

Fire Rescue and First Response Limited

Date of report: 5 April 2019

About Fire Rescue and First Response Limited

Fire Rescue and First Response Limited (FRFR) delivers short courses in emergency management and health and safety nationwide.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	18 Arklow Lane, Whangaparaoa, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	Not a signatory
Number of students:	Approximately 2,700 domestic students (97 equivalent full-time students) in 2017; 20 per cent Māori, 16 per cent Pasifika
Number of staff:	Six full-time staff and 20 contracted trainers
TEO profile:	See: NZQA – Fire Rescue and First Response
	Most training is delivered on client company premises. Scenario-based training for the emergency response sector is delivered at a new training centre in Kirikau Valley, Taumaranui.
Last EER outcome:	At FRFR's previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2014, NZQA was Confident in the PTE's educational performance and Confident in its capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	The EER looked at the following focus areas:
	• Civil Defence programmes
	• Fire Rescue programmes; much of this provision is under contract to Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ)
MoE number:	7882
NZQA reference:	C31235
Dates of EER visit:	9 and 10 October 2018

Summary of Results

Fire Rescue and First Response Limited specialises in training staff and volunteers of client organisations in health and safety, fire, emergency response, first aid and other related topics.

Not Yet Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Note: Fire Rescue and First Response does not agree with the findings in this report

- Courses ensure client organisations are meeting compliance obligations and increasing their capability for responding to emergencies.

- Learners are motivated and supported to complete courses. Course completion rates range between 95 and 97 per cent.

- Students gain practical skills and knowledge which they use in their paid and/or volunteer roles.

- Trainers have extensive and relevant industry experience.

- FRFR needs to improve processes and staff capability in assessment and moderation. This was also noted as a weakness at the previous EER.

- Training delivery is well resourced and closely monitored. FRFR is responsive to stakeholder feedback and identified needs.

- Self-assessment would be strengthened by more effective analysis of learner achievement data and systematic capture and review of stakeholder feedback.

- The PTE has a clear vision and effective communication and management processes. Greater attention to the maintenance of academic standards and integrity is required.

- While FRFR is effectively managing most of its compliance responsibilities, the moderation gap (noted above) currently remains.

Key evaluation question findings[1]

1.1 How well do students achieve?	
Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The average successful course completion rate for 2015-2017 is 97 per cent. A pass rate of 97 per cent has also been achieved in all courses delivered for Te Puni Kōkiri, including Māori wardens. Although the PTE has the capacity to monitor completion data for Māori and Pasifika students, it currently does not do so. FRFR monitors successful course completion on a day-to-day basis. Reasons for non-completion are well understood, although not currently documented. Trainee and client feedback, gathered by FRFR and triangulated by EER interviews, confirms the successful outcomes of training for achieving unit standards and gaining practical skills and knowledge. There is also good evidence of improved communication skills and confidence to deal with emergencies and respond to incidents. However, some unsatisfactory external moderation results in 2018 undermine confidence in the results data (refer 1.3). FRFR maintains a spreadsheet of trainee achievement data (2010-2018), with a particular focus on trainer and client activity. FRFR has not made much progress in benchmarking achievement or using data to understand completions of unit standards or courses, across clients or over time, since the previous EER.
Conclusion:	FRFR has maintained a successful average course completion rate of 97 per cent since the previous EER. However, better data analysis is required for a deeper understanding of achievement for all groups. Robust internal moderation would increase confidence in the validity of achievement data.

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[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 students?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	FRFR training is highly effective in supporting client organisations to meet their compliance obligations. These include legislative requirements, such as the Health and Safety at Work Act, and industry requirements to increase the capability of paid and volunteer staff to respond to emergency situations. FRFR has trialled various approaches for gathering client feedback, but generally relies on anecdotal feedback gathered through regular conversations and emails. A review of a sample of emails and EER interviews confirmed the currency, relevance and utility of the training. Clients, who may sit in or observe training, report that the value of the training is augmented by the expertise and credibility of the trainers, many of whom are working in the field. Te Puni Kōkiri continues to contract FRFR to deliver the Māori wardens course to build emergency response capability within iwi and communities. A more systematic approach to structuring and capturing feedback from client organisations would strengthen the evidence of FRFR matching needs and delivering value for employers and the wider community. Trainee feedback, gathered immediately post-course by FRFR, shows increased confidence in completing practical tasks and handling emergency situations. It could be useful to gather further evidence to understand trainees' post-training experience and use of the skills gained. Course materials are useful resources for future reference.
Conclusion:	Positive feedback and repeat bookings are evidence of FRFR's effectiveness in delivering valued outcomes. A more systematic approach to gathering and reflecting on feedback would enable FRFR to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of individual programmes and identify improvements.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	**Marginal**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	FRFR is flexible and responsive in designing and delivering courses to meet the identified needs of clients. Course delivery is closely monitored by management. Content is revised as required, taking into account legislative and industry changes and stakeholder feedback. The advice of subject matter experts is sought from time to time.
	Courses provide a good balance of theory and practical activities. FRFR is investing in specialised delivery sites for scenario-based training; this provides trainees with a real-world experience of the circumstances likely to be encountered by first responders in emergency situations.
	Trainers are employed or are volunteers in emergency services and draw on this experience to bring the course material to life. A small number of trainers have adult education qualifications.
	Managers observe courses regularly to monitor the effectiveness of delivery and practical assessments. Evidence of this activity is inconsistent; usually verbal feedback is provided to trainers.
	There is no evidence of an effective, systematic internal moderation of assessment materials or assessor judgements. During 2018, the outcomes of external moderation by NZQA and The Skills Organisation have been unsatisfactory and confirm the ineffectiveness of internal moderation. FRFR has developed improvement plans to address issues identified and is engaging proactively with Skills Org to address these matters. Internal moderation processes and templates are being implemented. FRFR needs to further develop staff capability in assessment and moderation. This weakness was identified at the previous EER and has not yet been fully addressed.
Conclusion:	Stakeholders are very satisfied with the design and delivery of programmes. The PTE is flexible in responding to client and learner needs and trainers are highly regarded as experts in their field. A comprehensive internal moderation system is required to provide greater assurance that assessment is fair, valid, consistent and appropriate.

1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Trainees are very well supported in their learning in the context of short course delivery. Cultural and learning needs are identified and supported, including the use of marae. Pre-course materials are available, including course information and study guides. These introduce trainees to relevant theory and prepare them for the face-to-face sessions. The interactive and practical nature of the courses is engaging for students. Multiple opportunities are available to apply their knowledge and build practical skills until the required level of competence is achieved. Students benefit from small classes and a positive and inclusive culture which fosters participation and success. Trainers are responsive to students with different learning needs and backgrounds. Group work is set up to provide optimal conditions for students needing more support. Trainers are available outside class time. Additional assistance is provided for class work or assessments, as required, by students with low literacy levels or those with English as a second language. FRFR gathers useful information from student evaluations completed at the end of every course. Ratings and suggestions regarding trainer effectiveness and learning activities are collated and analysed for improvement. Informal discussions between FRFR management and staff, and with client companies, ensure that the PTE develops appropriate responses.
Conclusion:	Excellent support is provided to students in the context of short course delivery. Students are actively engaged in the learning. Student feedback is valued and acted on.

1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	FRFR has ongoing contracts with key stakeholders and is achieving steady business growth through understanding industry and community needs and responding effectively to change. Other contributing factors include recruiting and developing experienced and credible trainers and investing in new delivery sites and facilities to provide scenario-based training for emergency management in a realistic environment. Communication and management practices are effective for information sharing and maintaining consistency in delivery and administration across a distributed workforce. Course materials and resources are prepared by head office and dispatched to training sites. Key policies and 'how to' resources are accessible online. Regular newsletters and monthly training updates ensure staff and contractors understand organisational priorities and performance. The organisational culture and business opportunities have been reviewed during 2018. A professional advisor provides support with business and financial management. However, more effective academic leadership is required to maintain academic standards and integrity. Self-assessment processes are generally effective for identifying improvements to programme delivery, although some are informal and ad hoc. Better analysis of achievement data and more systematic capture and reflection on stakeholder value, by programme, would improve FRFR's understanding of strengths and areas for improvement.
Conclusion:	FRFR is effective in developing and delivering training that supports trainees to acquire knowledge and build practical skills for paid or volunteer roles in various emergency situations.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Marginal**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	FRFR is effective in managing many of its ongoing compliance responsibilities. Evidence includes: • Monthly web search for updates from key agencies and clients, such as Worksafe, NZQA, FENZ; legislative and regulatory changes and requirements reported in monthly updates to all staff • Robust processes for meeting the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act in all training activities and at all sites; these are underpinned by policies, templates and regular staff reminders • Regular reviews of the quality management system; adherence to policies and procedures supported by online resources and templates • Timetables for delivery of first aid courses which are aligned with the requirements of the relevant standard-setting body • A policy on ethical behaviour • Effective systems and checks to ensure staff maintain required licences and certification to deliver training. Concerns regarding moderation have already been discussed at 1.3, but these have had an impact on ratings here since assessment and moderation are also (in part) compliance requirements.
Conclusion:	Notwithstanding the improvements still required for moderation, no concerns with the management of other compliance accountabilities emerged during this evaluation.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Civil Defence programmes

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The use of scenarios allows students to gain confidence and get immediate feedback through role-plays and debriefing processes. Trainees interviewed during the EER confirmed their ability to use their skills and knowledge in emergency deployments, and increased confidence in working with other volunteers and paid staff in delivering emergency services.
Conclusion:	Courses are meeting the needs of councils and other civil defence organisations for increased staff capability to respond in emergency situations.

2.2 Focus area: Fire Rescue programmes

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory, but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that Fire Rescue and First Response Limited:

- Improve self-assessment of achievement data including benchmarking and analysis of achievement for all learner groups, including Māori and Pasifika trainees.

- Consider alternative methods for gathering meaningful feedback from client organisations.

- Consider implementing periodic reviews of key activities, drawing together information from a range of sources, to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

- Take immediate steps to improve and fully implement an internal moderation system, with a particular focus on building staff capability and engagement with internal moderation processes.

Appendix

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/. 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.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud[2]*

- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*

- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

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[2] NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1) (pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation 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 Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 are available at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/qa-rules/external-evaluation-rules-2016/1/, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/.

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