

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Fire and Safety Training Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 13 June 2012

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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:	Fire and Safety Training Limited
Location:	30 Holmglen Street, Washdyke, Timaru
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1 October 2010
Number of students:	1,800 trainees completed training in 2011
Number of staff:	Nine full-time and three part-time staff across two sites.
Scope of active accreditation:	Fire and Safety Training Limited is accredited to deliver unit standards at levels 2-5 in areas that include fire control and rescue, transporting dangerous goods, incident management, and specialist driving.
Sites:	The organisation operates from two sites: the head office site in Timaru and a Napier site located at 99 Niven Street, Onekawa and which was opened in October 2011.
Distinctive characteristics:	Fire and Safety Training Limited provides safety training and driving courses. Safety training includes training in the areas of emergency response team training, confined spaces, fire warden and fire extinguisher training, and ropes and heights. Driving courses include heavy vehicle and four-wheel drive training. The length of training ranges from half-day through to seven

days. Emergency Response Team training is delivered to the dairy industry and includes training to a large industry organisation across 11 sites. Training is delivered either at learners' places of employment or on site at Fire and Safety Training Limited.

Recent significant changes: The organisation's registration as a private training establishment is recent (2010). Its operation has recently expanded substantially (including the opening of a North Island site) with growth potentially ongoing.

Previous quality assurance history: Fire and Safety Training Limited was monitored by NZQA as part of the post-registration process in August 2011 and met nearly all requirements of the Policies and Criteria for PTEs. The two areas not met related to the need to consolidate risk management activities and to carry out self-assessment of activities relating to the objectives and goals of the organisation.

In 2010 and 2011 the organisation did not fully meet the New Zealand Industry Training Organisation's post-moderation requirements for two unit standards. Assessment materials were immediately redeveloped by Fire and Safety Training Limited following the 2011 moderation outcome and were approved at pre-moderation, subject to two amendments.

The Emergency Management Qualifications Industry Training Organisation is yet to review moderation at Fire and Safety Training Limited, with moderation likely to occur later in 2012.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the external evaluation and review included the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy. In addition, the following focus areas were evaluated:

- Emergency Response Team (ERT) training
- Confined Spaces training.

These focus areas were selected as they represent two core programmes of significance to the organisation, are unit standard-based, and are taught in both the North and South Islands.

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.

The external evaluation and review was conducted over two days by an external lead evaluator and a NZQA lead evaluator and involved engagement with:

- The business owner
- The North and South Island managers
- The administrative manager
- Trainers from both the North and South Islands
- Trainees
- Stakeholders, representing both large and small employers.

Documents sighted included learner and stakeholder feedback, analysis of student evaluation forms, and staff meeting minutes. The evaluators also viewed video footage capturing learner feedback, and viewed the organisation's central database.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Fire and Training Safety Limited**.

Fire and Safety Training Limited (F&ST) has a core focus on providing high quality training. This is demonstrated by the tailoring of training to meet learner and stakeholder needs, the passionate, specialised, and highly experienced staff, an extensive range of training equipment, and the provision of practical training that has immediate utility and relevance in the workplace.

Learners acquire the core skills necessary to respond effectively to safety requirements in their places of work. F&ST identified that nearly all learners completed assessments at their first attempt for the courses they enrol in. Trainers adapt their teaching to accommodate different learning styles and needs, and adopt different approaches to support learners who struggle.

Learner and stakeholder feedback demonstrated the significant personal attributes learners (particularly ERT trainees) developed as a result of completing training, including confidence, self-pride, and leadership abilities. Examples were shared of graduates stepping up to new roles, job promotions, and career changes.

Two recent unit standards did not fully meet external post-moderation requirements. In the absence of a formal internal moderation process, this leaves some doubt about the robustness of assessment across the organisation. However, this is an area that F&ST is developing, including the recent redesign of assessments that met subsequent external pre-moderation requirements.

The training at F&ST is strongly valued by key stakeholders, who identify F&ST as a preferred provider because of its adaptability, professionalism, responsiveness, and provision of not just a training package, but one which is adapted to their needs. The value provided is further evidenced in the number of word-of-mouth referrals and repeat requests for training received.

F&ST is a collegial organisation. Staff input and knowledge is valued and a core part of business developments. In response to growth, the organisation has invested in technology (e.g. a central server, iPhones, laptops, cloud technology) to ensure consistency of training at its two sites. Daily discussions between management and staff across sites, and co-training in a number of courses, also facilitate consistency, shared knowledge, and quality improvements.

F&ST has demonstrated very strong performance to date. However, it is only entering its second year as a PTE and some of its systems and processes are still being implemented and developed.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Fire and Safety Training Limited**.

Self-assessment at F&ST is developing, with current processes involving all staff and providing the organisation with solid information which is used to understand and respond to learner and stakeholder needs.

Trainers analyse and respond immediately to different learner needs during training. Co-teaching in a number of courses, and the ongoing discussion that occurs across the organisation, assists staff to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching and to continuously learn from one another. Trainers also use travel time together to talk about their delivery of training.

Learner feedback is gathered by debrief sessions and the completion of student evaluation forms at the end of each class. This dual approach provides 'hard' data as well as facilitating in-depth information to review the training. The organisation has captured learner feedback by video with this personalised approach, enabling an additional perspective on the value of the training for trainees.

Learners have mostly expressed strong satisfaction with the training at F&ST through student questionnaires. Where this diverged, the organisation was able to demonstrate the steps that had been taken to investigate possible reasons for dissatisfaction. This process established that overall results were affected by feedback from just one learner who was not dissatisfied with the training but rather with other, external factors.

Stakeholder input and feedback is obtained through discussions with employers prior to, during, and post-training. Specific meetings are scheduled with stakeholders for whom ERT training is delivered, and this contributes to an ongoing review of training to ensure it is of value and meeting needs.

While F&ST engages well with its different stakeholders to understand their training needs, it is yet to develop a systematic process to proactively seek feedback from all key stakeholders about the value of the training and how well it has met their needs. Therefore, it is not able to comprehensively demonstrate the value added.

F&ST has established and is developing a database which is currently recording and analysing student evaluation data, recording learner enrolments and their completion of unit standards, and identifying the different stages of ERT trainees' progression. Moreover, it is continuing to review how the database and other self-assessment tools and processes can be developed to enhance efficiencies and inform ongoing performance.

Findings¹

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 **Good**.

F&ST identifies that it is rare for learners not to pass and complete courses the first time. This is because trainers spend extra time working with individuals who struggle, and they adapt ways of presenting information to accommodate different learning styles. Trainers talked about a sequential journey they take learners on to address barriers to learning, involving the development of trust and confidence and the provision of additional support.

Across all courses, learners achieve the core skills necessary to respond effectively to safety requirements in their places of work (and to meet industry compliance requirements). Learner and stakeholder feedback demonstrated the significant personal benefits attained by trainees, particularly from the ERT training. This includes the development of confidence, self-belief, pride in achievements, feeling able to lead (in contrast to being 'followers' in the past), career changes and promotions, acquiring a new workplace whānau, and team-building.

F&ST prides itself on teaching beyond a standard training package. Its focus is on ensuring learners acquire necessary practical knowledge and demonstrable competencies which can be immediately applied.

F&ST implements multiple activities within each course, requiring learners to demonstrate competence in different situations to ensure that they have acquired the necessary skills. For example, in the confined spaces course, learners identify not just how to read gas detection monitors, but how to adjust readings to take into account variances caused by different depths and situations. This approach is highly valued by one key stakeholder, who has worked closely with F&ST to ensure learners are achieving specifically defined core competencies in addition to relevant unit standards.

Two recent unit standards reviewed did not fully meet external post-moderation requirements. In the absence of a formal internal moderation process, this leaves some doubt about the robustness of assessment across the organisation. However, this is an area that F&ST is developing, including the recent redesign of assessment, which met subsequent external pre-moderation requirements.

¹ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

Self-assessment of learner achievement to date is effective because it is immediate, consistently occurs across the organisation, and is used to adapt teaching to support diverse learning needs. Information is collected through formative assessment, ongoing discussions, learner debriefs, and analysis of learner questionnaires consistently undertaken at the end of each course. In the ERT training programme, competencies are reviewed with the relevant employer, as are learners' responses to real incidents post-training. Resulting information is used to inform the ongoing development of training.

F&ST is continuing to develop how it captures and reviews data pertaining to learner achievement, including how the student evaluation form may be further developed to understand the extent of learner achievement, and how the database will be able to capture learner progression against defined competencies.

1.2 What is the value of 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**.

Key stakeholders identify the high value they place on the varied, specialised training provided at F&ST by highly experienced, knowledgeable trainers. They view the training as highly relevant. Their employees can apply what they have learnt immediately in the workplace. For some stakeholders interviewed, this has been a point of difference in the training provided by F&ST. As one key stakeholder indicated: 'I haven't met another organisation who delivers to the extent that F&ST does. They keep it alive'.

The specialisation and expertise at F&ST is further evidenced by the fact that employers not only value the training provided at F&ST, but also seek ongoing safety and emergency response advice from F&ST staff. Accessing the training and advice is recommended by existing clients, with many examples shared with the evaluation team of word-of-mouth referrals and repeat business.

F&ST indicated that the value of its training and advice is also confirmed by stakeholders now proactively identifying when expert assistance is required. This adds to the safety of workplaces overall. Furthermore, examples were shared to show how F&ST's training of employees is leading to overall improvements in workplace safety, with appropriate equipment and responses being introduced.

Trainees referred to the cost-saving that the ERT training at F&ST has provided to their employers, and confirmed that as employees, they have benefited from this realisation, including receiving ongoing employment during off-season periods.

F&ST has demonstrated its strong community commitment. This extends to providing safety education and provision at community events such as stockcar and truck-racing events, and providing use of its extensive rescue and response equipment following the Christchurch earthquakes.

F&ST's close working relationships with key stakeholders ensures that it is mostly aware of the value it is contributing, with stakeholder feedback a core focus of F&ST's ongoing review of its training. However, F&ST is yet to develop a systematic process to proactively seek feedback from all key stakeholders about the value of the training and how well it has met their needs. Therefore, it is not able to comprehensively demonstrate the value added.

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 **Good**.

The subject expertise of trainers at F&ST is diverse and well regarded and means F&ST can meet stakeholders' individual training needs. Each trainer takes responsibility for keeping up to date professionally in their area of expertise, and this expertise is shared with stakeholders to inform their training and safety needs. Examples included refocusing refresher training to full training after an assessment of learner competencies identified this need, identifying safety concerns in a workplace to be addressed, and advising on emerging trends in ERT training.

As identified in section 1.2 above, F&ST is focused on providing training tailored specifically to the needs of learners and employers, and which is facilitated by time spent with employers to identify their training needs.

An ERT employer described how F&ST worked closely with the client organisation to develop training based on core competencies required, with training continuously reviewed using learner feedback, observation of learners' responses in real situations, and ongoing discussions with the employer.

Most people engaged with during the evaluation visit discussed the extensive range of equipment owned by F&ST, and which assists F&ST's responsiveness to diverse industry training needs. This also contributes to learners acquiring hands-on knowledge which is important to applying their training in the workplace.

Learner needs are well identified and responded to through the use of co-training in a number of courses, experienced and skilled trainers, and ongoing activities and assessment to ensure that necessary skills and knowledge are acquired. This approach also ensures, despite the short nature of courses, that individualised support needs are identified and responded to (see sections 1.4 and 1.5 below).

F&ST use a range of methods to understand how well it is meeting learners' needs, including a course evaluation, learner debriefs, and videos of learner feedback to capture learners' experiences of the training.

While F&ST engages closely with key stakeholders to tailor training to their needs, there is room for F&ST to develop a process that will systematically enable it to capture post-training feedback. Currently it has a specific process in place to

gauge this with one key stakeholder. Having this in place with all stakeholders will not only provide evidence of the value of the training (as verbal discussions between the evaluators and stakeholders affirmed), but will also provide a body of information that can be analysed to inform ongoing self-review.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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 **Excellent**.

Learner feedback (reviewed through student evaluations, learner videos, and graduate interviews) consistently attested to the effective teaching provided at F&ST. Typical feedback included: 'best training we ever had', 'they engaged us the whole day', 'really practical', 'the teaching style related to everyone'. Examples were also shared of a haka being performed by learners in appreciation of the training received, alongside hugs and letters of appreciation.

It was evident to the evaluators that the training provided at F&ST is effective because of the knowledge, experience, and passion of the trainers, and their ability to blend theory with practice to ensure learners are actively engaged. Trainers encourage learners to recount real-life workplace experiences and scenarios to bring relevance and realism to the training.

A further strength of the teaching at F&ST is trainers' responsiveness to different learning needs (including trainers' use of group work and mentoring), one-to-one support, and verbal assessment when learners struggle with paper-based learning.

Trainers identified how they adapt learning materials to meet different levels of comprehension (e.g. introducing different scenarios or translating elements on the periodic table into everyday terms). The organisation supports co-training which helps trainers to identify and to respond to different learning needs – one trainer observes while the other is teaching and works individually with learners who require additional support. Co-training also enables tutors to observe and provide feedback on each other's teaching.

As identified in section 1.1, moderation is an area where the organisation needs to develop its expertise, with the effective teaching observed somewhat undermined by an absence of robust formal internal moderation processes and two recent adverse moderation results. F&ST has redeveloped assessment materials and is currently developing an internal moderation plan. However, as the organisation grows there will be a need to develop in-house competency in adult learning and teaching to ensure assessment and moderation processes maintain consistency.

Self-assessment is a natural component of the teaching at F&ST and is used to enhance teaching and learning. Co-training is used to provide trainers with feedback on their teaching and to share different teaching methods. Learner

debriefs are used not only to review satisfaction with the teaching, but also to ensure learners have grasped the key competencies required.

Student evaluations are clearly used by trainers to reflect on their teaching, and this is assisted by the organisation's analysis of learner evaluation outcomes across courses. Learner feedback resulted in course improvements, for example increased practical activities in one course and revised materials in another.

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 **Good**.

A high level of guidance and support is provided to learners within the context of courses delivered in a short timeframe and to learners who have been selected for the courses by their employers. Staff are genuine and passionate in their focus on learner achievement and work closely with learners to support their progress and to provide an inclusive learning environment.

In the ERT programme, learning materials are provided prior to learners commencing the course, and at the beginning of all courses trainers discuss the training and demonstrate reasons for its importance. Graduates interviewed for the evaluation confirmed that the training had met, or even exceeded, their expectations.

Trainers undertake activities to gauge different learning styles and specific support needs. These include introducing practical activities requiring individual and pair or group completion, reviewing written work, and undertaking an assessment mid-way through the course. Trainers respond to different needs by adopting various techniques such as sensitively providing one-to-one support at lunch or at the end of the course, offering oral assessment, and adapting theory and practical activities to ensure relevance.

In the ERT programmes, video discussions with past trainees identified the family atmosphere that is created through the development of trust and the team-building activities incorporated into the training. The North Island manager also identified that his training facilitation stems from core concepts of manaakitanga and whānaungatanga, with a central focus on collegiality and the sharing of experiences and strengths between trainers and trainees.

Beyond the training provided, learners are encouraged to contact F&ST for advice around issues they encounter in the workplace, with a couple of examples shared where subsequent advice has been sought and has been of strong benefit to workplace safety.

The collegial, close working environment at F&ST involves ongoing peer review and discussion between trainers about challenges and responses to different learning needs. With a view to ongoing organisational growth, F&ST might look to how it

could capture this information for the benefit of all staff, and to identify where specific areas may require an organisational response to learners' support needs.

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 **Good**.

Staff describe the environment at F&ST as collegial and highly supportive, and it was clear that the input and knowledge of staff is valued and a core part of business development. Staff recruitment is carefully managed to ensure a good fit with the organisation. New staff appear to be well supported.

Professionalism and a focus on quality appear to drive much of the organisation's approach to supporting educational achievement. Training equipment is extensive and well maintained. Professional development is encouraged and supported.

Stakeholder engagement is focused on identifying and responding to needs. F&ST also uses its expertise to provide advice aimed at enhancing the safety and training of the clients. F&ST's sector expertise and knowledge of stakeholders' needs ensures F&ST is providing courses that are current and relevant.

The organisation has only been a PTE since 2010, and in the last year has also experienced growth and recently expanded to the North Island as well as to a new site in Timaru. This growth appears to have been managed well. The introduction of technology (e.g. one central server, iPhones, laptops, cloud technology) has facilitated consistency of training across both North and South Island sites (and confirmed by a key stakeholder with multiple training sites). Daily discussions between management and staff across sites has also been key to facilitating consistency, shared knowledge, and learnings.

A number of processes and activities remain in the development stage, reflecting the organisation's own development. In some cases, these processes, although still in development, are providing valuable information to the organisation in supporting educational achievement. For example, the analysis of student evaluation data has been actively used to review teaching and learning. In other areas, core processes need to become more of a priority to strengthen aspects of performance, as in the case of assessment and moderation.

There is strong potential for F&ST to continue to grow significantly, and this will require more systematic processes to maintain the strong performance already occurring across the organisation. For example, an established process is needed to proactively capture feedback from all key stakeholders. A clearly defined business plan would also ensure that all staff, including new appointments, are fully conversant with the direction of the organisation and their roles within it.

The organisation demonstrated a strong awareness of the areas it needs to focus on and strengthen, and already has plans in place to address these. Its genuine desire to continuously improve and develop was also clearly evident from its responsiveness to feedback and stakeholders identification that this is a strength of the business owner and his team.

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: Emergency Response Team 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**.

All assessments are pre-moderated within this programme. Stakeholder feedback is systematically obtained and is regularly used to inform programme development.

2.3 Focus area: Confined Spaces training

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

No recommendations are made other than those implied or expressed in the body of the report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of programme approval and accreditation (under sections 249 and 250 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Programmes established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act and published in the Gazette of 28 July 2011 at page 3207. These policies and criteria are deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under the new section 253.

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 programmes they own or provide. These criteria and policies are also deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under section 253. Section 233B(1) of the Act requires registered PTEs to comply with these rules.

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 EER process 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/>

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