

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Fire and Safety Training Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 1 December 2015

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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
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	1 October 2010
Location:	30 Holmglen Street, Washdyke, Timaru
Delivery sites:	As above and 99 Niven Street, Onekawa, Napier
Courses currently delivered:	Fire and Safety Training provides safety training and driving courses. This includes training in the areas of emergency response, confined spaces, fire warden and fire extinguisher training, and ropes and heights. Driving courses include heavy vehicle and four-wheel driving training. The length of training ranges from half a day to seven days. Emergency response training is delivered nationwide to dairy and farming industries.
Number of students:	Domestic: 2013, 101.58 EFTS (equivalent full-time students); 2014, 184.89 EFTS
Number of staff:	10 full-time equivalents (seven Timaru, three Napier)
Scope of active accreditation:	As above
Distinctive characteristics:	Training is delivered at trainees' workplaces or at the Timaru or Napier sites. Most trainees are in employment. The training is required by their employers to maintain compliance. In 2013, in addition to its training function, Fire and Safety

Training established a service and consultancy business called FAST Access Solutions Ltd, which services height equipment and provides installations. The sister company separates the industrial consultancy from the PTE. It has 'A grade' preferred contractor status with an international quality accreditation organisation called ISNetworld. Fire and Safety Training services extinguishers, and diving gear is managed by a separate entity, FAST Diving Ltd.

Recent significant changes: New purpose-built classrooms have been built at both the Timaru and Napier sites as a result of increases in learner numbers and the demand for on-site courses (since 2012 the PTE has gained NZQA's consent to assess against 49 additional unit standards). Between 2013 and 2014 there was an 80 per cent increase in trainees in unit standard-based courses. New vehicles have been upgraded and rebranded and new equipment for confined spaces (a tunnel) and heights (an extension to the tower) added since 2012. Napier and Timaru are now equally well-equipped, enabling consistency of training between sites. In 2013 a moderation and academic support person was appointed. This person has experience in the institutes of technology and polytechnics sector and as an NZQA moderator.

Previous quality assurance history: Fire and Safety Training has met relevant industry training organisation moderation requirements. Some NZQA national external moderation has not met the required standard over several years and an action plan is being developed with NZQA to address this. NZQA-managed unit standards represent 2.5 per cent¹ of the units for which Fire and Safety Training has consent to assess, and currently just 2.6 per cent² of the units routinely delivered.

¹ This figure is based on five NZQA units out of the 200 for which Fire and Safety Training has consent to assess. The five include three first aid unit standards that are now part of the Skills portfolio. When the First Aid unit standards were moderated in 2013 and 2014, they were NZQA units.

² This represents the two remaining NZQA units Fire and Safety Training assesses for a very small cohort: 1277 Communication (level 2, three credits), and 26623 Numeracy (level 1, *Final Report*)

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas selected were the mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy and the training areas of Working at Heights and Elevated Work Platforms. These were selected because many tradespeople now require training in both these areas to comply with WorkSafe New Zealand regulations and contractor requirements for sites where they may work. These courses are also taught at both the Timaru and Napier sites and account for the recent rapid growth in trainee numbers.

three credits). These represent 2.6 per cent of the 78 unit standards Fire and Safety Training delivers with reasonable frequency.

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.

A team of two evaluators visited the Timaru site over two days. They met with the general manager, academic manager, office manager, three Timaru tutors, and a small group of trainees on a one-day course. They also spoke with the Napier manager, a Napier tutor and a small group of Napier trainees on a Working at Heights course. The evaluators spoke with a range of external stakeholders and sighted a variety of documentation, including trainee feedback on the course and the trainer, minutes of staff meetings, training materials, and the internal moderation schedule. They also viewed the database where trainees' achievements are recorded and the electronic staff folders where training materials are kept updated.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

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

- Training is effective for both trainees and their employers. The training uses up-to-date equipment and is provided by highly motivated, well-qualified trainers, all of whom have relevant industry and adult teaching experience.
- Training is mostly compliance-driven, closely matched to respective workplace contexts and in most cases leads to unit standard achievement. Trainees successfully complete because they are already employed, have some prior knowledge and skills related to the training, are paid by their employers to attend, require the training to maintain their job and are mostly over 20 years of age.
- There is a significant amount of repeat business, including regular refresher courses, indicating satisfaction with the training received. Internal and external moderation occurs regularly and mostly validates trainee achievement.
- The training, service provision and consultancy functions make Fire and Safety Training a 'one stop shop' for employers. It also facilitates networking which ensures that the training is well-informed by industry needs and current requirements.
- Stakeholders verified that the organisation has a strong reputation within the industry, describing the PTE as responsive, flexible and dynamic. They also reported that, post-training, trainees had greater safety awareness, improved attitudes to work, increased confidence and the ability to work more effectively in a team. These attributes indicate that the training adds value beyond meeting compliance requirements alone.

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 is day to day, mostly informal, and occurs as part of business as usual. There is an open, family atmosphere that encourages regular, honest communication between all staff, including with the general manager.
- Trainees evaluate the course and the trainer at the conclusion of each course. Most feedback is positive and exceptions to this pattern are followed up immediately.
- There is a central computer database that trainers can access remotely. It contains current training materials and the most up-to-date health and safety information. Teaching materials are informative and reviewed regularly, with changes being clearly documented in the database.
- The organisation shares its expertise, equipment and documentation willingly as part of its wider commitment to improving health and safety in the community. This includes contributing time and personnel to community events.
- Every other year staff from both Timaru and Napier are brought together at a conference that is part social and part work-focused. Actions to be taken are recorded and followed up.
- Staff turnover is low, and trainers have high job satisfaction. The academic manager undertakes tutor observations every two years; however, this has been inconsistent and of varied value for some staff. Staff reported that they were well-resourced and encouraged to take professional development opportunities.
- Self-assessment is ongoing, authentic, involves all staff, and has led to some worthwhile improvements. The organisation is responsive and flexible; however, opportunities to stand back from day-to-day activities and reflect in more depth about the PTE could provide greater awareness of trends and patterns and areas for future development.

Findings³

1.1 How well do trainees 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**.

There is a 99 per cent pass rate for trainees who complete a course and undergo unit standard assessment. This is reflective of the compliance-style training offered where most trainees are already in related employment. Many trainees already have the knowledge or skills the unit standard assesses but require formal recognition of their capability, or their employer requires formal assessment of workers for health and safety workplace requirements. Trainees mostly attend in work time and are paid to attend by their employers.

Trainees' evaluations sighted consistently reported that the training was well organised and results were reported to NZQA promptly. However, while the database records trainee achievement accurately, there is no analysis undertaken of trainees' achievements over time, such as gains in personal attributes and attitudes. Analysis of this information might enable a deeper understanding of trainee achievement and show areas where improvements could be made to the training.

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

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**.

Valued outcomes occur for both trainees and employers. Trainees are certified to continue in their work and employers gain qualified staff and maintain health and safety workplace compliance, essential for operating within the law. Other outcomes include trainees having greater safety awareness (at both work and home), feeling valued by their employer and enjoying enhanced personal confidence from successful completion of a course, as many trainees have not succeeded academically in the past. The training can also open other opportunities for trainees, such as becoming a rural firefighter volunteer.

The organisation is part of the health and safety industry. It shares its expertise, equipment and documentation willingly as part of its wider commitment to

³ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

improving health and safety in the community. This includes volunteering time and personnel to community events.

Stakeholders reported that, post-training, trainees had greater safety awareness, improved attitudes to work, increased confidence and the ability to work more effectively in a team. These attributes indicate that the training adds value beyond meeting compliance requirements alone.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of trainees and other stakeholders?

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**.

Training needs are discussed with stakeholders to ensure the training is focused, customised to the respective workplace, and meets the needs of each trainee. This matching includes no minimum class sizes, being flexible around delivery dates, providing a specific trainer if requested, and gaining consent to deliver new standards in response to market demands, for example Elevated Work Platforms.

Ongoing business comes from refresher training every two years, by trainers providing consultancy and support services to industry when there are difficult-access jobs to be done, and through providing equipment, such as gas detection equipment, rope access and height equipment and breathing apparatus. Fire and Safety Training is able to provide stakeholders with a comprehensive range of functions covering all aspects of the industry. This has contributed to the PTE's growth and high regard from industry.

Evaluations of the trainer and the training occur after every course. However, these mostly involve ticking boxes and have few comments, making them not very useful. All trainers have a debriefing time with each class, but these discussions are not recorded, even though ideas from the discussions have led to changes to delivery. Developing a way to capture information from these useful discussions would enable tracking of changes made and more formalised comparison of feedback between trainers and courses. This could enrich the information available for self-assessment and contribute to more effective matching of trainee and stakeholder needs.

1.4 How effective is the training?

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**.

Training is effective for both trainees and their employers. It uses up-to-date equipment and is provided by motivated, well-qualified trainers, all of whom have relevant industry and adult teaching experience. Teaching is also informed by the consultancy and support service work trainers are involved in as part of their day-to-day duties.

Training is practical, with theory and practice closely interrelated, ensuring trainee motivation is maintained. Individual attention is given to each trainee. For example, trainees who are technically knowledgeable but who struggle with reading or writing can be assessed orally for theory components. Trainees can re-sit twice after the initial assessment. Trainers follow up trainees two to four weeks after training to explore whether the learning has been effective. Responses are usually positive; however, this information is not recorded for future review or comparison.

While conversations around teaching and learning are open and collegial, some trainers identified a need for extra assistance around teaching techniques and assessment and moderation practices. This is supported by NZQA moderation that did not meet the required standard. However The Skills Organisation moderation for four unit standards in the Cranes and Elevated Work Platforms, moderated at an on-site visit in September 2015, stated that Fire and Safety Training was applying best practice assessment principles to the unit standards that The Skills Organisation manages in the sector.

Trainers did not always understand the relationship between assessment and moderation. This issue was discussed with management and a recommendation has been made to address this (refer Recommendations).

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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**.

Guidance and support is appropriate for the mostly short courses offered. Trainers make trainees aware of different cultural needs that may arise in their workplaces, for example the most appropriate way to manage an on-site accident where there is a fatality.

Course materials are refreshed regularly. This is particularly important for refresher courses so that trainees remain engaged with the learning. There is good staff morale and low staff turnover, and the family environment, where staff are well supported and valued, is modelled in the trainer/trainee interactions.

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**.

The governance and management functions are appropriate for the size of the organisation. There is some external advice, largely financial. Stakeholders verified that the organisation has a strong reputation within the industry, describing the PTE as responsive, flexible and dynamic. Diversification of the business into equipment hire and consultancy minimises risk and strengthens the links between training and the industry. The recent significant growth of the PTE, in the context of many competing training providers, indicates that educational achievement is well supported and valued. Staff professional development is generous, resourcing is good and the regular industry interactions across all levels of staffing ensure training maintains relevance.

However, some areas for improvement include: greater use of the data and information already gathered to track trends across courses and trainers, more analysis of trainee achievement over time, greater emphasis on supporting staff around assessment and moderation, more effective ways to capture trainee feedback, and more opportunities to stand back and reflect on the PTE away from day-to-day demands (refer Recommendations).

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**.

Fire and Safety Training is up to date with impending legislative changes in health and safety, including the Health and Safety Reform Bill 2015 and new WorkSafe New Zealand regulations. The PTE updates course materials to reflect these changes and to ensure that trainees have some advance awareness of the implications of the new legislation for their work.

2.2 Focus area: Working at Heights

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

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

Fire and Safety Training recently revised assessments in basic height training and developed physical resources for delivering realistic practical sessions to comply with WorkSafe New Zealand regulations and contractor requirements for worksites. This ensures that assessments are appropriate and at the correct level and that trainees are well prepared for realistic work situations.

2.3 Focus area: Elevated Work Platform

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

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

Fire and Safety Training is proactive in its approach to assessment and works closely with The Skills Organisation, the standard-setting body responsible for these unit standards. For example, when trainee feedback indicated that the assessment materials for two Working at Height unit standards were not fit for purpose, Fire and Safety Training rewrote the assessment and had it successfully pre-moderated by The Skills Organisation prior to the next course being delivered.

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Fire and Safety Training Limited:

- Discuss ways to use data and information already collected to analyse trainees' achievements over time, such as gains in personal attributes and attitudes, to enable a deeper understanding of learner achievement and show areas where improvements could be made to the training.
- Develop ways to capture information from trainer/trainee end-of-course, in-class and follow-up discussions to enable more formalised comparison of feedback between trainers and courses and to enrich the information available for self-assessment.
- Develop greater internal expertise around teaching techniques and assessment and moderation practices to diversify and enrich teaching practice and develop greater understanding of the relationship between assessment and moderation.
- Discuss opportunities to stand back and reflect on the PTE away from the day-to-day demands to inform future changes and opportunities for improvements.

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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