

Report of External Evaluation and Review

ACT Safety Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 6 July 2016

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	5
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	6
Findings	7
Recommendations	12
Appendix	13

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Final Report

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:	ACT Safety Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	61B Water Street, Otahuhu, Auckland
Delivery sites:	Short courses delivered nationwide at temporary locations
First registered:	August 2010
Courses currently delivered:	ACT Safety delivers a variety of customised training courses in the subject areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health and safety (up to level 4)• Extractives industry (up to level 6)• Fire and emergency (up to level 3)• Crane operations (up to level 3)• Working with heights (up to level 3)
Code of Practice signatory?	No
Number of students:	Over 11,000 trainees for the four years between 2012 and 2016, all for short courses of one or two days in duration (equivalent to approximately 25 EFTS (equivalent full-time students) per annum)
Number of staff:	Four full-time (management, training and support); four contractors (training)
Scope of active accreditation:	ACT Safety holds consents to assess over a range of domains and standards in relation to health and safety at high-risk workplaces:

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=794820001>

The approved training scheme is Certificate in Incident Investigation (Level 5).

Distinctive characteristics: ACT Safety specialises in tailor-made, workplace-based health and safety short courses (usually of one or two days) to suit the needs of its clients.

Recent significant changes: As a result of the Pike River Mine disaster, health and safety requirements within the mining industry were tightened up and new certificates of competence requirements became effective in December 2013, with the additional unit standard requirements gazetted in 2015.¹ All mine workers are required to attend further training to refresh their certificates of competence. ACT Safety was one of the providers who were able to deliver the new Extractives Certificates of Competence and has largely focused its delivery in 2015 on meeting the demand from the mining industry.

Previous quality assurance history: The previous external evaluation and review of ACT Safety was conducted in 2012. NZQA was Highly Confident in the educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment of ACT Safety.

In 2015, in response to the findings of the Royal Commission on the Pike River Mine Tragedy², NZQA conducted an extensive investigation into the operations of providers who offer health and safety courses in the extractives industry. ACT Safety was among 10 organisations that were subject to the investigation. The outcome of the investigation for ACT Safety was highly favourable.

Other: ACT Safety does not currently directly receive any government funding. However, from time to time, Worksafe New Zealand has employees enrol on selected short courses delivered by ACT Safety.

¹ <http://www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/information-guidance/guidance-by-industry/extractives/board-of-examiners/certificates-legislation-mito>

² <http://pikeriver.royalcommission.govt.nz/>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Governance, management and strategy is a mandatory focus area. The other focus area selected was:

- Extractives Certificates of Competence

This has been the focus of ACT Safety's delivery in recent times, due to a surge in industry demand arising from a new compliance requirement (see 'Recent significant changes'). Seven unit standards are included in the new certificates of competence requirements.

ACT Safety also operates as a consultancy to commercial operators, which falls outside the jurisdiction of NZQA and is excluded from the scope of this review.

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.

Self-assessment materials were delivered to NZQA to inform the scoping of this external evaluation and review. Prior to the scope being finalised, the lead evaluator met with ACT Safety's representatives at its Otahuhu office to agree on the focus areas. Given the highly positive findings from the NZQA 2015 investigation into the extractives industry, as well as taking the nature of corporate training providers into context, an option was offered to ACT Safety to have this evaluation conducted on a paper basis. That is, instead of drawing most evidence from evaluative conversations, the evaluation team derived the majority of primary information from documentation. ACT Safety agreed to this option.

The evaluation team comprised two evaluators. Extensive evidence was delivered to NZQA in answering the key evaluation questions. The evaluation team examined the evidence, alongside materials collected during the NZQA 2015 investigation, and followed up with supplementary questions to the owner/director by phone. Five other stakeholders were contacted for triangulation purposes.

Summary of Results

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

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **ACT Safety Limited**.

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **ACT Safety Limited**.

- In 2015, 99 per cent of trainees successfully achieved the unit standards they were enrolled in (see Findings 1.1). Such an outcome is made possible through the comprehensive support provided to trainees throughout the course and beyond, over and above what is expected from a corporate training provider (see Findings 1.5).
- The value of outcomes is clearly demonstrated – mine workers and operators gain enhanced knowledge of health and safety matters when operating in a high-risk industry. Meeting the new legislative compliance requirement for workers to achieve the standards identified in order to refresh their Extractives Certificates of Competence means employment is maintained and mines remain operational. The high value is further confirmed by the Motor Industry Training Organisation (MITO), as well as the government agency responsible for workplace health and safety, Worksafe New Zealand, contracting for or sending employees to ACT Safety courses (see Findings 1.2).
- ACT Safety performs strongly in understanding and meeting the needs of its client organisations and trainees. Course content is customised to client organisational processes and documentation, and is tailored to the learning abilities of the trainees (see Findings 1.3).
- ACT Safety largely relies on repeat business, growth and unsolicited feedback from clients as primary indicators for the purposes of self-assessment. The organisation operates an information system that holds thorough records of trainee achievement, where relevant analysis is conducted periodically. Self-assessment is further supported by trainee evaluations at the end of each course delivery.
- There are aspects of self-assessment that can be further enhanced (see Findings 1.1 and 1.4 in particular), but that do not diminish the exemplary performance of ACT Safety in terms of trainee achievement and value of outcomes.

Given the context of a specialised corporate training provider, the evaluation team considered ACT Safety's self-assessment sufficiently coherent and robust, which supports the very successful trainee outcomes that are valued by all stakeholders. NZQA therefore expresses high confidence in ACT Safety's educational performance and confidence in ACT Safety's capability in self-assessment.

Findings³

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**.

Educational outcomes at ACT Safety are highly satisfactory. In 2015, 99 per cent of trainees (i.e. 882 out of 884 trainees) successfully achieved the seven unit standards under the Extractives Certificates of Competence. Achievement is validated through positive moderation reports from the industry training organisation, MITO.

Trainees gain knowledge as specified in the relevant standards, including risk assessment, human factors, incident investigation, explosives, and creating a risk register for quarries (which is now a statutory requirement). Trainees are able to apply knowledge and skills immediately in their workplace.

ACT Safety monitors trainee attendance and achievement on a regular basis. The organisation currently does not analyse achievement by ethnicity (specifically Māori and Pasifika), despite the expectations expressed in the government's Tertiary Education Strategy. The evaluation team considers this factor to be immaterial to evaluating the educational performance of ACT Safety, as 99 per cent of trainees succeed in any event. However, in order to satisfy NZQA and government expectations, ACT Safety must enhance its self-assessment system to better record the achievements of priority learners.

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 **Good**.

ACT Safety is delivering outcomes that are valuable to its stakeholders. Mine workers and operators completing the seven unit standards contribute to safety in mines and tunnelling operations. Mines may not be operated if managers fail to fulfil the new compliance requirements, thus achievement is essential to maintaining employment at a personal level, as well as to ensuring jobs are not lost at a community level. On completion of the B Grade Certificate of Competence, graduates can commence A Grade training which may eventually lead to a promotion or career advancement.

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

MITO expressed a high level of satisfaction with ACT Safety as a provider of further industry training for A and B Grade quarry managers, to the extent that the organisation is now formally contracted to deliver a suite of training courses. Worksafe New Zealand inspectors also enrol from time to time on ACT Safety courses and, upon completion, apply the knowledge when carrying out inspections around the country. This points to a high level of satisfaction and the value of outcomes from ACT Safety's training.

As part of its self-assessment practice, ACT Safety relies on repeat business, growth, unsolicited feedback and testimonials to assure itself of the value of outcomes and the relevance of its courses. This could be further enhanced if ACT Safety were to conduct an analysis on how it contributes to overall safety improvements in the extractives industry (notwithstanding that ACT Safety courses are only one contributor among many factors leading to an overall improvement in industry safety).

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**.

ACT Safety understands and meets very well the needs of the industries it operates in. The organisation interacts with prospective clients to understand their training requirements and organisational processes, as well as with individual trainees prior to course commencement to identify any specific needs for learning and support. Each course is customised and tailored towards the client organisation, with actual scenarios and client organisation documents used as part of course content. In addition to the owner/director and trainers being current practitioners within the industry (and thus keeping its knowledge and practices relevant), ACT Safety has a range of subject matter experts to be called upon when required, as the organisation fully acknowledges it does not hold expertise in every field. Customised training materials are also tailored according to trainees' learning abilities, such as the use of simple language to ensure readability and understanding, and are always signed off by the client organisation before being delivered.

Programme review is ongoing because of the tailoring and customisation of contents for each course. A reflection is carried out by trainers at the end of each delivery, and learnings are recorded and incorporated for future courses. ACT Safety has thorough records and comprehensive processes in place for updating course materials and ensuring the relevance of its course content.

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 **Good**.

Teaching is generally effective at ACT Safety. The owner/director, who has over 30 years experience in the extractives industry, is the primary trainer for ACT Safety and holds an adult education qualification at level 5. Other contracted trainers have appropriate backgrounds and experience in both the industry and in training, including one with particular expertise working with speakers of other languages. Peer observation between trainers is conducted periodically. In-house professional development sessions are arranged on technical topics, but not on teaching practices.

Class sizes range from six to 24, with a second trainer assigned when the class size exceeds 15 trainees. A variety of modes are used in training delivery, such as presentations, reference books, photographs, video clips, self-reading, quizzes, individual exercises and team-based scenarios. Pre-course work is required and materials are sent to trainees before course commencement.

Assessment practices are effective and contribute to the learning process. Assessments take place daily on completion of modules and are marked on the same day. Where minor modifications are required, the trainer may ask the trainee to review a particular answer or reference a section of a book. Additional support (sometimes beyond the assigned course times and outside normal business hours) is provided to trainees in need.

ACT Safety engages in MITO moderation, the results of which were not perfect for 2015. However, the organisation met national moderation requirements overall and is continuing to work through the minor issues identified, with strong support expressed by MITO.

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**.

As a workplace training provider, ACT Safety is doing more than is expected to support trainee achievement. As mentioned in Findings 1.4, one-to-one coaching is provided to trainees. Interpreters and/or reader-writers are allowed where appropriate, which is a suitable compromise in an industry training environment. ACT Safety also assures itself of its effectiveness in teaching, guidance and support through trainee evaluations and informal feedback from stakeholders. These are forwarded to and processed by the owner/director, with ideas for improvement recorded for future delivery and discussed within the organisation. This has led to updates in course content, as well as the diversity of delivery modes.

The fact that all trainees except two achieved in 2015 is an indicator of effective provision of guidance and support.

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**.

ACT Safety is a family business, operated primarily by a husband and wife team (with the support of an administration officer and contracted trainers). As such, the function of governance and management is merged. Trainers are carefully selected based on industry experience and possessing the right attitude. Turnover is very low. New contracted trainers are thoroughly supported and observed for a period of time before delivering independently.

ACT Safety positions itself well and successfully fills a market gap. It is one of very few providers who have consent to assess the full set of seven unit standards associated with the Extractives Certificates of Competence and have successfully passed scrutiny in NZQA's 2015 investigation into the industry. NZQA found that ACT Safety delivers quality training and the organisation is well governed/managed.

While ACT Safety largely relies on repeat business, growth and unsolicited feedback as primary indicators for the purposes of self-assessment, the organisation does operate a fit-for-purpose information system and conducts relevant analysis on trainee achievement, supported by trainee evaluations at the end of each delivery. Given the context of a small, specialised corporate training provider, the evaluation team considers ACT Safety's self-assessment to be sufficiently coherent and robust.

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 **Excellent**.

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

2.2 Focus area: Extractives Certificates of Competence

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

NZQA recommends that ACT Safety Limited:

- Collect and record trainee ethnicities, as well as periodically review trainee achievement by priority group as per government requirements.
- Continue to improve on the minor issues identified during national external moderation conducted by MITO.
- Consider the benefits of engaging in professional development of teaching practices.
- Consider whether it is practical to analyse health and safety trends within the extractives industry, as further evidence of the value of outcomes.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.

The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz).

The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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Final Report