



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Stainless Steel and Aluminium Welding Academy Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 27 October 2010

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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

Location:	Christchurch
Type:	Private Training Establishment
First registered:	1999
Number of students:	Domestic: 13
Number of staff:	Two; a full-time owner and one full-time tutor
Scope of active accreditation:	Unit standards: 497, 2395, 2396, 2670-2677, 2688, 2824, 4433, 21907, 21911, 21912
Sites:	Christchurch only
Distinctive characteristics:	Stainless Steel and Aluminium Welding Academy Limited (SSAWA) provides Training Opportunities and Youth Training courses funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). The programme is designed to give students practical foundation welding skills. Provides training towards New Zealand Standard 4711.
Recent significant changes:	The business was purchased by the current owner in 2007.
Previous quality assurance history:	SSAWA was previously quality assured by audit in 2007 and did not meet 12 requirements of QA Standard One, the standard then in force. At the most recent audit in 2008, SSAWA did not meet two requirements of the standard. These related to governance and management and internal moderation.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas chosen for this scope were the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy, and the unit standards available for training.

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 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 EER team was composed of a lead evaluator, an external evaluator, and one observer. The observer was observing the EER process and was not involved in any decision-making.

The team spoke to the owner/manager and the welding tutor. The lead evaluator also spoke by phone to three external stakeholders. Two stakeholders operate engineering businesses, one having employed an SSAWA student; the other is a programme coordinator for Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ).

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Stainless Steel and Aluminium Welding Academy Limited**.

SSAWA's mission statement states that the academy is committed to providing quality training in welding to the level required to be employed as a trainee welder in manufacturing industries. The vision of the academy is to develop the welding skills of trainees to enable them to get a job. Students stay at the academy from two to 12 months plus, depending on their entry-level skills and needs.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) allow the academy to measure its performance relative to other, similar organisations. Student outcomes in 2009 have risen to 72 per cent. The TEC target was 60 per cent. The occupancy rates at the academy have also improved and are now more than 95 per cent. The TEC target was over 75 per cent. The only KPI where SSAWA is below the national average is in unit standard credit achievement per student. This is currently at eight, with a target of 20.

Since 2008, nine full-time students have sat the New Zealand Standard 4711 welding qualification, with one failing to pass. Results for students attending night classes at SSAWA showed that of 17 people who sat New Zealand Standard 4711, 15 passed on their first attempt, two on their second attempt, and one failed. Of these, seven were sponsored by WINZ through a short course developed by SSAWA and WINZ. In addition, two welders sat and passed 4703, a stainless steel pipe qualification.

In 2010, of seven trainees who have completed their course, six have gained employment, indicating SSAWA is meeting its mission and vision statements well.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Stainless Steel and Aluminium Welding Academy Limited**.

Since 2007, when formal record-keeping began, the current owner has initiated a thorough system of recording and updating student records and collecting evaluations from students every two to three months and has used information from exit interviews to make changes.

SSAWA understands that it is the only trainer of its kind in the South Island. It is committed to staying relevant to industry and has an informal advisory committee of local engineering firms, one of which has employed an SSAWA student. These stakeholders commented that the students are well prepared, with a broad range of relevant industry skills.

Students spoken to by the evaluation team said the learning was self-paced and that they were provided with ongoing, constructive feedback about their progress. The standard of work the tutor expected was very high. Students needed to be self-monitoring and to only

approach the tutor to be assessed when they were certain that their work was at the standard required by industry.

The academy runs a scholarship system to assist students who would be unable to continue their training without pastoral and financial support. The evaluation team was impressed with the regard and commitment shown by the academy to minimising barriers to learning and supporting students with disrupted personal lives.

TEO response

Stainless Steel and Aluminium Welding Academy Limited has confirmed the factual accuracy of this report.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

SSAWA's mission statement states that the academy is committed to providing quality training in welding to the level required to be employed as a trainee welder in manufacturing industries. The vision of the academy is to develop the welding skills of trainees to enable them to get a job. Students stay at the academy from two to 12 months plus, depending on their entry-level skills and needs.

In the past, the academy has had difficulty meeting the key performance indicators for the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). The academy has also had a poor compliance record with the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). However, this has now changed, with student outcomes having risen to 72 per cent. The TEC target was 60 per cent. The occupancy rates at the academy have also improved and are now more than 95 per cent. The TEC target was over 75 per cent. Key performance indicators (KPIs) allow the academy to measure its performance relative to other, similar organisations.

Since 2007, when formal record-keeping began, the current owner has initiated a thorough system of recording and updating student records and collecting evaluations from students every two to three months. It has used information from exit interviews to make changes to, for example, administration processes around assessing unit standards.

The academy has succeeded in meeting most of its TEC and NZQA goals, having moved from a non-compliant situation when the current owner bought the business, to exceeding targets in all key performance indicators except for the average unit standard credit achievement per student. It is addressing this issue by adding more unit standards to the programme. In 2010, of seven trainees who have completed their course, six have gained employment in industry and one has withdrawn, indicating SSAWA is meeting its mission and vision statements well.

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

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

SSAWA understands that it is the only PTE of its kind in the South Island. It is committed to staying relevant to industry and has an informal advisory committee of local engineering firms, one of which has employed an SSAWA student. These stakeholders commented that the students are well prepared with a broad range of relevant industry skills.

The owner and one full-time employed tutor at SSAWA appear to have an excellent working relationship where they support each other and are committed to meeting the diverse needs of the student group, who range from school leavers to mature workers, several of whom have experienced redundancy. The student group was positive about the training they were receiving and appreciated being trained by people who had close links with and understood the industry well. They also said the staff were approachable and assisted them with both pastoral and work-related matters.

SSAWA has close links with Competenz (the New Zealand Engineering, Food and Manufacturing Industry Training Organisation), which provides the student unit standard booklets and teaching materials and assessments, and externally moderates the academy's student assessments. The academy also works with WINZ to offer short courses in the evenings where trainees work towards achieving New Zealand Standard 4711, a recognised industry welding qualification.

Since 2008, nine full-time students have sat the New Zealand Standard 4711 welding qualification, with one failing to pass. Results for students attending night classes at SSAWA showed that of 17 people who sat New Zealand Standard 4711, 15 passed on their first attempt, two on their second attempt, and one failed. Of these, seven were sponsored by WINZ through a short course developed by SSAWA and WINZ. In addition, two welders sat and passed 4703, a stainless steel pipe qualification.

The WINZ programme coordinator commented that WINZ appreciated the academy's proactive support of these – mostly mature – students who had extensive work experience but did not have the "ticket" required to rejoin the workforce. Subsidised block courses for the Motor Trade Association are also offered. These courses help to raise the academy's profile in the sector and provide an upskilling opportunity for those employed in the motor trade industry.

Of the 13 students currently at the academy, 11 are looking for employment; one found employment on the day of the EER visit and one student has decided to go on to further study at a polytechnic.

SSAWA has appropriate and effective, mostly informal, links with its key stakeholders. New developments and opportunities are welcomed by the academy and any decisions made have current and future trainees' interests as a priority.

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 **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Previously, the academy focussed on the practical skills of welding and was less concerned with students acquiring unit standards in welding. As a result, the TEC key performance indicator that the academy had most difficulty with was the average number of unit standard credits achieved per student. The TEC target is an average of 20 credits per student.

In 2009, the core teaching content was three welding unit standards and four general engineering standards. In 2010 the academy added seven welding unit standards to the programme. This has increased the possible unit standards available per student significantly. The 2010 student group has already surpassed the average unit standard credits per student total for all of the 2009 students. SSAWA has also applied, in 2010, for accreditation from NZQA for three further unit standards. These unit standards are able to be offered because the academy has purchased the necessary machinery and equipment to assess these unit standards.

While the New Zealand industry standard for welding is Standard 4711, the academy is committed to providing a wide skill base for its students to increase their employment opportunities across the engineering sector, where welding skills may comprise only a small part of a job. Unit standards provide this wide skills base. They are complemented by the teaching methodology which makes the learning meaningful by encouraging students to use their theoretical knowledge to manufacture something that will be useful for them, as well as meeting the assessment for a unit standard.

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**.

One full-time tutor is employed at the academy. This tutor and the owner hold the National Diploma in Adult Education (Level 5). The tutor has experience as a manager, has been self-employed, and has completed study in the field of small business.

All learning is unit standard based, although there is also demand for New Zealand Standard 4711 to be gained prior to employment; otherwise, this qualification would need to be completed at the employer's expense. The workshop environment is planned and structured for the benefit of the students, and students have opportunities to apply their theoretical knowledge by undertaking self-selected projects to complete assessments for a standard. Because students start the course at varying times throughout the year, learning is tailored to individual needs and levels of prior competence.

A “buddy” system operates where students are able to help each other. For example, one student can weld and the other student can monitor the controls on the welding machine. The buddy system also encourages teamwork which is an important workplace skill.

Students spoken to said the learning was self-paced and that they were provided with ongoing, constructive feedback about their progress. The standard of work the tutor expected was very high. Students needed to be self-monitoring and to only approach the tutor to be assessed when they were certain that their work was at the standard required by industry. This high standard was respected and appreciated by all the students interviewed. Students also commented that the tutor was knowledgeable, approachable, had a friendly manner and was patient, tolerant, positive, and challenging. However, sometimes they had to wait to be assessed. While they understood the reasons for this, the students thought it would be better to have a second tutor to assist the current tutor and minimise student time lost. This suggestion has been actioned by the owner, increasingly relieving the tutor of assessment responsibilities and allowing the tutor to spend more time teaching in the workshop, thus reducing student time lost waiting to be assessed.

While all moderation requirements are being met, better documentation of internal moderation would assist the academy to keep ongoing, accurate records of moderation meetings and any issues arising from these.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

All students are interviewed prior to entry onto the course. After entry, students have a one-week trial before they are formally enrolled. All students participate in a comprehensive, formal induction programme which addresses health and safety issues, attendance requirements, complaints procedures, fire drills, student behaviour while on site, and workbook practices. The academy models as closely as possible the expectations of the workplace. For example, students need to sign in and sign out each day. This approach assists students to develop good habits and makes the transition to work easier.

Students are taken on field trips where they visit different engineering workplaces. This enables them to see a variety of small and large manufacturers in the region and gauge the type of workplace that would suit them best.

The owner of SSAWA tries to organise work experience when a student is near completion of the course. In these situations, a student would be at the academy in the morning and on the job doing work experience in the afternoon. The employer is encouraged to give the student homework to consolidate their work-experience learning. SSAWA also takes students to workplaces to introduce them personally to a prospective employer and to ease the transition from student to employee. The academy owner phones students’ employers six weeks after students leave the academy, as a general follow-up practice.

Every second year there is a Southern Machinery event in Canterbury. The academy receives complimentary passes and takes the students to this event.

SSAWA's strong links with the relevant engineering sectors in the region means they are aware of the sector's needs and upcoming employment options. The sector knows that the academy produces work-ready trainees with relevant skills and will contact the academy if vacancies occur. This close relationship means students know the academy is well informed about employment opportunities and employers are confident they can source good future employees from the academy.

The academy has a barbeque on site most Fridays, where current and past students can mix socially. Past students are also able to return to the academy to use the facilities if necessary. In addition, if in the process of a routine follow-up with an employer a gap is identified in an ex-student's training, the student can return to the academy in the evening to upskill, at no extra expense to the student or employer.

The academy runs a scholarship system to assist students who would be unable to continue their training without pastoral and financial support. The evaluation team was impressed with the regard and commitment shown by the academy to minimise barriers to learning and support students with disrupted personal lives.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The relationship between governance and management at the academy is very close. The owner is on site at all times and has an excellent working relationship with the tutor, to the extent that the tutor ran the academy when the owner was unable to do this for a short time. The owner has also provided a lot of support to enable the tutor to gain the National Certificate in Adult Education (Level 5). The tutor said completing the diploma had a significant impact on his teaching as it helped him to understand the different ways students learn and how to teach to these strengths. This awareness means the tutor sometimes acts as a reader/writer for a student. A literacy tutor is also available to support student achievement.

Feedback from trainees is important and factored into future decision-making, for example the need for an additional tutor. Students interviewed noted that they were treated with respect and that their ideas were listened to and acted on where possible and appropriate.

The academy currently has accreditation to assess against 17 welding and general engineering unit standards. If successful with the application to NZQA, the academy will be accredited to assess against 20 unit standards. This would allow them to work towards the target of an average of 20 unit standard credits per student. However, to enable this to become a reality, the academy might need to consider more staff and upgraded facilities.

The combination of the industry and life-experience skills of the owner and tutor, the open, honest communication between them and with the students means the students are not only provided with relevant, up-to-date engineering skills but are also successfully mentored and encouraged to achieve.

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: Welding courses

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

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review.

Further actions

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

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

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

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

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

Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>

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