

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

## Stainless Steel & Aluminium Welding Academy Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 30 October 2014

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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:	Stainless Steel & Aluminium Welding Academy Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	7/97 Shakespeare Rd, Christchurch
Delivery sites:	As above
First registered:	1 May 1999
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welding and Workshop Training (Level 3)</li><li>• Welding certification (AS/NZ2980)</li></ul>
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: approximately 200 learners per annum (the majority of learners are male, aged between 18 and 55 years; approximately 40 per cent of learners are Māori or Pasifika)
Number of staff:	Three full-time staff (CEO, administrator, tutor) and one part-time tutor
Scope of active accreditation:	Welding and Workshop Training (level 3) (39 credits) (formerly Preparation for Welding)
Distinctive characteristics:	Stainless Steel & Aluminium Welding Academy (SSAWA) is a small provider, providing self-paced welding training to up to 52 students per annum under contract to the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) (during the day), and up to approximately 150 self-funded or employer-funded clients (during the evening for short personalised

programmes). Welding certification is required for employment in the welding industry.

Recent significant changes:	Casual tutors have been employed during 2014 because of the ill health of the full-time tutor. A full-time administrator was appointed mid-2013.
Previous quality assurance history:	SSAWA meets the external moderation requirements of the industry training organisation (Competenz).  The previous external evaluation and review (EER) of SSAWA was held in October 2010, when NZQA was Confident in the PTE's educational performance, and Confident in its capability in self-assessment.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the EER consisted of the following focus areas:

- Governance, management and strategy, which is a mandatory focus area
- Welding training, which is the only training offered.

## 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 organisation submitted self-assessment material to inform the scoping, and also provided additional evidential material prior to the site visit.

Two evaluators visited SSAWA for one day. Interviews were conducted with the SSAWA owner/director, tutor, administrator, eight trainees and one member of the advisory group. Phone interviews were also conducted with a representative from Competenz, a representative from MSD, two employers (including one who was a member of the advisory group) and two ex-students.

A variety of teaching and procedural documents (including digital records of assessments) and trainee information, records and feedback were sighted.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

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

The reasons for this judgement are as follows:

- SSAWA is meeting the most important needs of learners and other key stakeholders.
- There is good evidence that many learners are acquiring practical skills and knowledge of welding, as well as improved well-being and self-management.
- SSAWA consistently performs well against contractual obligations to MSD, for course completion and work outcomes. Furthermore, most trainees also achieve industry certification, which is a prerequisite for employment.
- Industry feedback confirms the value of SSAWA's training, which is also reflected in the demand for certified welders in the Canterbury region.
- SSAWA has established practical management, academic and administrative processes that contribute to learning and other outcomes and are generally fit-for-purpose for the size and nature of the organisation.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

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

The reasons for this judgement are as follows:

- SSAWA has made good progress since the previous EER (2010) in developing a more systematic approach to teaching and administration. This is evident in improved record-keeping (such as better tracking of learner achievement) and procedural documentation. Regular internal moderation practices have been established to provide assurance of the validity of learning outcomes.
- Effective self-assessment practices have been developed to focus attention on trainee needs and learning outcomes. Examples include regular collection of learner and stakeholder feedback which is shared and discussed. There is some evidence of findings being used to make improvements.
- SSAWA is engaging regularly with industry (including quarterly meetings of an advisory group) and planning to ensure the continued relevance of the

training. This is reflected in the recent introduction of training for a new welding process.

- Achievement data is collected and collated for reporting purposes. Greater analysis of this data would provide SSAWA with a fuller understanding of learner achievement (including the achievement of Māori and Pasifika trainees) which could inform further decisions or improvements and enhance educational performance.

# Findings1

## 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**.

Most learners at SSAWA are completing courses, achieving certification and acquiring practical skills and relevant theoretical knowledge for employment (a small number attend for personal interest). MSD trainees are, on average, achieving 24 unit standard credits during their enrolment (maximum of 13 weeks). In 2013, 82 per cent of trainees completed the course, which exceeds the MSD target of 80 per cent. Between July 2013 and May 2014, 85 per cent of trainees successfully completed assessment for AS/NZ2980 to become certified welders. This represents excellent learner achievement, taking into account the academic and personal backgrounds of the learners. The validity of the learning outcomes is confirmed by external moderation by Competenz and the 99 per cent success rate in external testing of the practical work required for AS/NZ2980.

There is good evidence that trainees are gaining useful study skills and improving their time management and teamwork skills. They are also gaining in confidence and motivation. For some individuals, the course has been significant, providing a fresh start and opportunity for employment and, in some cases, apprenticeships.

SSAWA has improved its systems for tracking learner progress, maintaining individual records and spreadsheets, which are used for regular reporting to funders. However, further analysis of data, over time and across cohorts, would provide a better understanding of achievement (particularly for Māori and Pasifika learners) and could usefully inform improvements.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 **Excellent**.

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

SSAWA is delivering valued outcomes to trainees and external stakeholders.

Most trainees achieve certification, which is a prerequisite for employment. Fifty-eight per cent of the trainees referred by MSD gained employment within eight weeks of the end of the course (compared with the target of 64 per cent), and MSD confirmed their satisfaction with this result. SSAWA was not able to provide confirmed data for employment outcomes at six months, although they indicated that the trainees achieve close to the target of 70 per cent. The demand often exceeds the places available, which is further evidence of the value of the training for these trainees.

Competenz and industry support for SSAWA is strong. Certified welders are in demand for the rebuilding of Christchurch following the earthquakes of 2010 and 2011. Employers confirm that graduates have the required practical skills (including machine set-up) and understand basic theory, and are able to operate safely in their workplaces. They regularly send staff to SSAWA who need refresher training or renewal of their certification (a requirement every two years).

SSAWA engages regularly with industry to find placements for trainees and to provide follow-up support. An industry advisory group meets quarterly and provides useful advice and support. The recent introduction of a new welding process is one example of an improvement that will further enhance employment outcomes for trainees.

## 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**.

SSAWA is meeting the most important needs of learners and other key stakeholders. SSAWA delivers a full-time, 13-week programme to MSD clients during the day, and short personalised programmes to a smaller number of learners who attend in the evening. The evening learners are generally referred by employers for skills extension or to achieve certification, or are hobbyists seeking to develop their skills for personal projects. A group of high school teachers recently completed a customised five-week programme to learn how to use new equipment. In this case the tutor also visited the school to help with the set-up of the equipment.

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MSD trainees are selected following an interview in which their motivation and ability to participate are assessed. An interview checklist has been developed to support this process. An individual programme is established for each learner, depending on their background and goals, commencing in every case with health and safety units and workshop practices. A range of unit standards are available which prepare trainees for different work environments, such as workshops or outdoor construction sites, or support their personal hobbies or interests.

In addition to ongoing interaction with the tutor, feedback is sought regularly from all learners through evaluation sheets (at the end of each unit standard and at mid-course and on exit). The SSAWA owner also meets regularly with the MSD trainees, to monitor their progress and to provide encouragement and support, and records are maintained of these discussions. Feedback themes include learners requesting longer courses and newer equipment. While SSAWA has responded by purchasing some new equipment, SSAWA advises that older machines provide important opportunities for learners to gain a full understanding of the underlying concepts.

Training is delivered using teaching and assessment resources which have been sourced from the Heavy Engineering Research Association, and varied opportunities are provided for practical application of skills. Whenever possible, SSAWA allows trainees to work on real jobs (such as furniture or boat trailer repairs). Learners are encouraged to bring in their own welding equipment and learn how to set it up properly. SSAWA is currently working with an industry partner to develop the required site-specific procedure to accompany the new welding process that is being introduced. In these ways, SSAWA is meeting the needs of learners to practise their welding skills in real-world activities and meeting industry needs for a skilled workforce with knowledge of all the currently used welding processes.

#### 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**.

Learners at SSAWA benefit from effective teaching by an experienced full-time tutor who has both industry and adult education qualifications. He establishes positive relationships with learners who report that he is supportive and patient. He is effective at managing groups of learners who are at different stages of training and have different learning needs. He provides additional support for those who struggle with reading and writing, and uses illustrations to help explain basic concepts. In early 2014, several casual tutors were appointed (because of ill-health of the tutor) which also provided a variety of teaching styles for learners. SSAWA has developed a tutor's manual to ensure consistency in delivery. The

effectiveness of the teaching is further evidenced by the strong achievement by learners, many of whom have had limited prior experience of educational success.

SSAWA has established a range of practices to strengthen teaching and provide assurance of the validity of learning outcomes. These include regular opportunities for the SSAWA owner to observe and/or co-teach, six-monthly performance reviews, and funded professional development. In addition, SSAWA has developed procedures for the owner to moderate all unit standard assessment, although as yet there is only limited evidence that this is prompting any reflection on teaching, assessment practice or organisational learning.

### 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**.

SSAWA is highly effective in its provision of guidance and support. Staff members have a good understanding of the characteristics of their MSD referrals and support the trainees to make a fresh start and succeed, despite some evidence of low levels of motivation and preparation in some new trainees. SSAWA also continues to provide support and access to the PTE's facilities even after course completion, which is an effective strategy for helping trainees succeed and retain employment.

During the trial week, trainees complete a comprehensive induction process which includes an interactive video, completion of the health and safety orientation, and review of the student handbook. Learners who are identified as having literacy challenges are referred to other providers and/or receive additional support from the tutor, including reader/writer support for assessment. SSAWA's commitment to an inclusive learning environment is reflected in the support given to a trainee in a wheelchair, including lowering workbenches and providing additional protective clothing. Trainees receive help with curriculum vitae preparation and are supported by the staff members' industry networks in their search for work.

SSAWA monitors attendance and is firm about enforcing minimum requirements. However, the tutors recognise that some trainees have unavoidable family obligations and in those instances provide opportunities for catch-up. SSAWA provides support for social interaction among the trainees through weekly student meetings, which provide opportunities for information sharing and relationship building. Learner success is celebrated at barbecues, when learners receive certificates and their record of learning.

While there are many examples of effective guidance and support, there is little evidence that SSAWA is evaluating the effectiveness of interventions for improving learner outcomes.

## 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**.

SSAWA has adopted a more systematic approach to teaching and administration since the previous EER (2010). There is evidence of learner progress being closely monitored and of reliable and valid achievement data. Learner outcomes (including course completion and employment outcomes) are regularly reported to funders. SSAWA has the capacity to analyse achievement and outcomes data, but the evaluators found that this is not happening routinely. Building a better understanding of achievement, over time and across learner cohorts (particularly for Māori and Pasifika learners), would be useful for identifying improvements.

In addition to the monitoring of learner achievement, SSAWA has improved record-keeping, including maintaining records of meetings, plans and decision-making. Other improvements include procedural documentation (such as the tutor's manual and various checklists), form letters and templates, and a student handbook, all of which contribute to greater consistency in teaching, learner support and communication. SSAWA has also extended its collection of learner feedback, although as yet there is limited evidence of findings being used for improvement.

SSAWA is a small organisation which is clearly meeting industry needs. There is evidence of a realistic and pragmatic approach to planning and organisation, including business continuity, which has proven effective during 2014, and plans to extend the premises.

# 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: Welding courses

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 SSAWA:

- Further develop its capability in self-assessment by increasing the collection, analysis and use of data, from a wide range of sources, to identify trends and patterns that will provide opportunities for improvements in educational performance.

# 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](http://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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