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# Report of External Evaluation and Review

## Stainless Steel & Aluminium Welding Academy Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 3 July 2018

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*Final*

# 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 (SSAWA)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	1999
Location:	Unit 7, 97 Shakespeare Road, Christchurch
Delivery sites:	Unit 2, 6 Raycroft Street, Christchurch
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Certificate in Welding (Level 3)</li><li>• National Certificate in Welding (Level 4)</li><li>• Welding certification (AS/NZS2980)</li></ul>
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic – approximately 150 industry employees attend each year for welding certification; a small number of hobbyists attend evening classes.  International – during 2017, 34 international students enrolled in the National Certificates in Welding; most students are Indian and male.
Number of staff:	Two full-time and four part-time staff
Scope of active accreditation:	<a href="http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/details.do?providerId=824129001">http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/details.do?providerId=824129001</a>
Distinctive characteristics:	SSAWA is a small provider, preparing students for employment in industry as welders. SSAWA primarily trains international students.

Recent significant changes:	<p>Up to the end of 2015, SSAWA's primary focus was the delivery of self-paced welding training to up to 52 students per annum under contract to the Ministry of Social Development.</p> <p>SSAWA received NZQA approval to deliver the National Certificates in Welding (levels 3 and 4) in August 2015, and became a signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice (the Code) in December 2015.</p> <p>The chief executive/director retired during 2017 and a manager/senior tutor was appointed. A full-time tutor was appointed shortly before the external evaluation and review (EER).</p>
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>SSAWA meets the external moderation requirements of the industry training organisation (Competenz).</p> <p>The previous EER of SSAWA was held in June October 2014, when NZQA was Confident in the PTE's educational performance and Confident in its capability in self-assessment.</p>
Other:	<p>SSAWA is developing a new programme to replace the national certificate courses (final date for enrolment is December 2018).</p>

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

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

- International students: support and wellbeing, which is a mandatory focus area
- National Certificates in Welding (Levels 3 and 4), which is the majority of the 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 over two half-days. Interviews were conducted with the SSAWA owner/director, owner/administrator, manager/senior tutor, tutor, five students and one member of the advisory group. Phone interviews were also conducted with four employers (including a further member of the advisory group).

#### *Disclaimer*

*The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.*

*For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:*

- *Identify organisational fraud<sup>1</sup>*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

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<sup>1</sup> NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

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

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

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

SSAWA has historically performed well against contractual obligations to the Ministry of Social Development for course completion and work outcomes. The contract ceased in mid-2016 and SSAWA has successfully transitioned to delivering international education.

Students are acquiring practical skills and knowledge of a wide range of welding processes. As at December 2017, nearly all of the students enrolled for the National Certificates in Welding successfully completed the programme. Good assessment and moderation practices provide assurance of the validity and reliability of results. All but one student have gained employment in New Zealand as welders. During 2017 and 2018, 15 out of 16 students successfully achieved industry certification.

Industry feedback confirms the value of SSAWA's training and ongoing demand for welders who are work-ready and have the required practical skills, as well as upskilling and re-certification of current employees.

SSAWA engages regularly with industry to remain current with industry needs and to identify employment opportunities for graduates. An industry advisory group meets quarterly. SSAWA has begun to record feedback gathered informally, although it is not yet clear how this will be reviewed.

SSAWA meets learner needs through a good level of academic support and pastoral care, offered in a small and well-equipped learning environment. SSAWA reviews and responds to student feedback.

SSAWA is a small organisation which responds effectively to changes, accessing external input as required (for example, in new programme development) and investing in facilities and equipment. Since late 2015, SSAWA has developed its capability and related processes for delivering international education. Over recent months, SSAWA has begun to streamline processes to achieve efficiencies, to improve information sharing, and to better monitor student progress.

While no significant breaches were identified during this EER, some processes for managing compliance accountabilities require strengthening (refer 1.6).

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# Findings<sup>2</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students 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**.

SSAWA has been delivering welding training to international students since February 2016. As at December 2017, only one student has withdrawn before completing the programme. Twenty-nine students have achieved the National Certificate in Welding (Level 3), and 23 students have achieved the National Certificate in Welding (Level 4). This represents excellent performance for a PTE which has only recently begun delivery to international students.

There is good evidence of robust assessment and moderation practices (refer 1.3), which provide assurance of valid and reliable achievement data.

Students' progress through unit standards and practical tasks is tracked on wall charts, and computer records are maintained. While SSAWA has a good understanding of individual student achievement and the average time it takes to complete unit standards, further review and analysis of this data (over time and across intakes) could identify aspects of the training delivery that could be improved. There is also an opportunity to better gather evidence and understanding of the personal skills and attributes that trainees are gaining in addition to technical knowledge and practical welding skills, because these are essential skills for gaining employment.

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

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 training provides international students with a valued pathway to employment and residency. A graduate destination spreadsheet shows that all but one of the international graduates has achieved employment as a welder. The requirement for certification depends on the type of employment/workplace. During 2017 and the 2018 year to date, 15 out of the 16 graduates who attempted it,

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<sup>2</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

successfully completed assessment for AS/NZ2980<sup>3</sup> to become certified welders. This shows SSAWA's training is consistently meeting industry standards.

SSAWA training has historically provided good value for trainees referred by the Ministry of Social Development and performed well against contracted outcomes for course completion and employment. However, more recently, although initial employment rates were strong, maintaining employment outcomes at six months proved challenging and the contract ceased in June 2016.

Employers interviewed during the EER confirmed that while a national certificate is not required for employment, SSAWA's formal training provides graduates with appropriate welding skills across a range of welding processes and useful knowledge of the background theory. In addition, graduates are well prepared for joining a New Zealand workplace, including an understanding of health and safety requirements. Employers are satisfied with the assessment and training offered to employees needing to upskill and re-certify (required every two years).

Minutes of the advisory committee meetings show that SSAWA is gathering industry input to strengthen programme development and delivery. Staff reported ongoing ad hoc contact with employers to discuss their workforce needs and graduate performance. Record-keeping of this activity has just begun, although it is not yet clear how the information will be reviewed or used.

### 1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant 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**.

The programme is well matched to the needs of the students, many of whom have no practical welding or workshop experience. Health and safety units and an introduction to the workshop are followed by a range of unit standards (theory and practical tasks) which introduce students to most welding processes and prepare them for different work environments. Tutors also report augmenting the programme with real-world examples to broaden students' understanding beyond the core curriculum. SSAWA has improved resources since the previous EER, including new welding equipment, to provide a range of opportunities for the practical application of skills, and access to a temporary classroom for theory sessions.

SSAWA is effectively maintaining academic standards in its teaching and assessment practices. Teaching resources and pre-moderated assessment tools

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<sup>3</sup> <https://shop.standards.govt.nz/catalog/2980%3A2007%28AS%7CNZS%29/view>

are externally sourced. Staff are experienced in industry and training, and have, or are working towards, an adult education qualification. There is good evidence of robust assessment and internal moderation practice, including double-marking of all workbooks and moderation of a sample for each unit standard by an industry advisor. Following the identification of some cheating, SSAWA introduced closed book texts and uses challenge questions to check student understanding; practical samples are photographed before being discarded. SSAWA has met national standards in Competenz external moderation for the last two years.

SSAWA has updated all welding procedures to match industry standards. Recently, SSAWA has developed and documented some modules for industry clients and hobbyists. This is a useful response to frequent requests for information and will provide structured training for clients who do not want or need a qualification.

#### 1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

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 has effective processes for recruitment and selection, including interviews and a brief workshop experience. This ensures that prospective students understand the nature of the programme and allows SSAWA to assess their suitability and motivation for employment as welders. A small number of students have received recognition for prior learning – this process is undertaken on behalf of SSAWA by an independent assessor. When enrolment is confirmed, a comprehensive orientation takes place, including health and safety requirements and review of the student handbook. Students understand the attendance requirements, and any absences are noted and followed up. Attendance records are now computerised which means weekly reports can be easily generated.

SSAWA is a small provider, which means staff know each student well and tutors are able to monitor individual student progress closely. Students have multiple opportunities to learn and apply welding skills, attempt practice theory tests, and receive individualised feedback prior to formal assessment. The rate of completion of practical tasks varies depending on experience and personal attributes. The tutors provide additional support and access to evening sessions, as required, to ensure intakes (of up to four students) progress as a group through the programme. Student folders are maintained which include all completed workbooks and records of achievement.

SSAWA is responsive and effective in supporting students to achieve their goals. Toolbox meetings are held regularly and student surveys are administered during and at the end of the course. Feedback is usually positive, collated and discussed by staff. One-to-one meetings are being scheduled during 2018 to improve the

feedback process. Students are supported in their job search, receiving assistance with CV and interview preparation, and introductions to employers with vacancies.

### 1.5 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**.

SSAWA is a resilient organisation which responds effectively to changes in the funding environment while continuing to meet industry needs for welding training. SSAWA has largely been successful in establishing the processes and knowledge required to achieve good levels of international education provision. The retirement of the previous chief executive/owner during 2017 has been well managed. This involved restructuring and recruiting staff with appropriate skills and experience, which has enhanced academic leadership and ensured good organisational performance during the transition period. SSAWA has also invested significantly in facilities and equipment which has improved the learning environment. The organisation is now planning for the next stage, including developing a new programme and identifying opportunities to diversify the funding base.

SSAWA has implemented processes which are fit-for-purpose for a small organisation and meet the requirements associated with international education. SSAWA is now focussing on streamlining administration and reducing manual handling, including online rather than paper record-keeping, where practical. SSAWA is also reviewing processes such as attendance monitoring and maintaining notes on student progress. Other improvements since the previous EER include organisational goal-setting and an annual review of programme delivery. The tutors work closely together and regularly discuss student progress. However, a more systematic approach to monitoring performance and reflecting on teaching practice would further strengthen educational performance.

### 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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 a well-organised provider and its management of compliance accountabilities is generally good. However, there are several areas that require strengthening.

- The quality management system is generally adequate, but requires updating to better match the current provision and student population. For example, the evaluators found evidence of good practices and record-keeping for monitoring

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attendance, but there is no policy and procedures document in the quality management system.

- SSAWA's annual self-assessment against the requirements of the Code is comprehensive and detailed. A small sample of student files was reviewed during the EER. Overall, the record-keeping was found to be good and the required evidence was available. Several examples were found where insurance dates did not exactly match enrolment dates, indicating a need for a review of processes for insurance renewals.
- SSAWA tracks programme delivery to ensure that the total hours requirement set out in the programme approval is met. However, it is noted that SSAWA is delivering the programme over an extended period (47 rather than 26 weeks) and that this should have been formally notified to NZQA.
- Given the workshop environment, compliance with health and safety legislation is a priority. SSAWA has sought external advice to review its compliance with current legislation and has further strengthened its processes and record-keeping.

## Focus Areas

*This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.*

### 2.1 Focus area: International students: support and wellbeing

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: National Certificates in Welding (Levels 3 and 4)

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:

- Strengthen processes for collating industry feedback to ensure the programme addresses employers' needs
- Develop processes to monitor and analyse students' development of soft skills, to support the focus on students' preparation for getting work
- Review all policies and procedures to ensure the quality management system is robust and complete
- Review processes to ensure students' insurance covers the full period of study in every case.

# 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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