



# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Fire and Emergency Training Solutions  
Limited

Date of report: 6 April 2010

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MoE Number: 8260  
NZQA Reference: C01123  
Date of EER visit: 28 January 2010

# 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.*

## Brief description of TEO

Location: 10a Holland Crescent, Naenae, Lower Hutt

Type: Private Training Establishment

Size: Small to medium

Sites: As above

Fire and Emergency Training Solutions Limited (FETS) offers short courses over half a day to six days with the majority being one to two days. Courses offered include working at heights, working in confined spaces, use of fire extinguishers, evacuation warden training, using breathing apparatus, wearing splash/gas suits, and first aid. Courses can also be tailored to meet corporate clients' specialist work requirements.

FETS predominantly provides short courses for a wide range of industry clients. Clients range from large farming and mining organisations to educational institutes such as polytechnics, and secondary schools using Gateway programmes.

# Executive Summary

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Fire and Emergency Training Solutions Limited**.

FETS course outcomes are strongly being met. These outcomes relate to the educational achievement of trainees and the satisfaction of industry, including trainees and clients. High achievement rates are maintained using follow-up from instructors and liaising with clients to ensure that trainees have opportunities to meet the course requirements. The value of the courses is very high which is reflected in the number of word-of-mouth referrals and requests for repeat courses. The programme and activities are tailored to meet the clients' needs. The courses are practically focussed and delivered using trainee-centred teaching practices. In addition, instructors have industry experience as well as adult teacher training to enable them to deliver the training to help meet the needs of trainees.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Fire and Emergency Training Solutions Limited**.

FETS has an established culture of review including the use of course evaluations, instructor reports, and verbal feedback gathered from clients. This course information is regularly analysed by the directors and management team to see where improvements can be made. The directors also support innovation in training methods, which has been demonstrated by individual course reviews. This has led to more comprehensive, accessible (to trainees) training packages, and a more trainee-centred approach to training delivery. However, FETS could use course achievement data from year to year to formally analyse whether its training is consistent overall and is effective in the field in reducing accidents or improving emergency response actions.

# 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 (ITPQuality) 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](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)).*

# Findings

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

*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/for-providers/keydocs/index.html>*

## Outline of scope

The agreed scope of the external evaluation and review of FETS included the following mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management, and strategy.

The following focus areas were chosen to ensure the external evaluation and review sampled from the range of short courses available as well as a training course of a longer duration developed to meet the specific needs of a client and incorporating a number of short courses. The courses selected were:

- Working at Heights
- Emergency Response Training ERT Recruit Course.

## Part 1: Answers to Key Evaluation Questions across the organisation

*This section provides a picture of the TEO's performance in terms of the outcomes achieved and the key contributing processes. Performance judgements are based on the answers to key evaluation questions across the focus areas sampled. This section also provides a judgement about the extent to which the organisation uses self-assessment information to understand its own performance and bring about improvements, i.e. capability in self-assessment.*

### 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**.

#### **Context**

FETS courses are delivered over a short period of time, usually one to two days in duration. Some courses are delivered over a longer timeframe, as it takes longer to gain on-the-job experience to complete the practical components of this course. The outcomes are related to employers' needs as well as the trainees' needs to meet workplace requirements.

## **Explanation**

FETS is meeting the clients' and the trainees' expected outcomes. Clients require employees to complete the FETS training successfully so that they meet external compliance requirements. Trainees could, for example, be fire wardens or people working in confined spaces or providing first aid on the job.

Almost all trainees who sign up for a course complete the course within the timeframe available. Course reports for 2009 show that nearly all students who attended a course were assessed as competent. The main reason identified by FETS for trainees not achieving competency is due to lack of on-job experience. FETS reports this finding to the employer and will take the trainee on again once they have gained the appropriate experience. Trainees that are unable to attend a course due to other work commitments are able to attend another training session to provide them with an opportunity to complete the course. This has led to the high achievement rates.

The short duration of courses enables the organisation to monitor its educational performance closely and respond immediately to any concerns or to update trainees' progress. At the end of each course the instructor provides a course report to the client as well as the FETS training manager. This report contains a summary of course results and observations on what happened during the course, and identifies further work experience required by trainees before they can be assessed as competent.

The organisation has a student management system for tracking results, which also helps FETS to follow up with trainees if there are any further training needs or gaps. Any negative results are identified by the instructor and training manager, who develop a plan to ensure that the learner has an opportunity to complete the course. However, comprehensive achievement information was not available on this visit to demonstrate that courses are achieving consistent results and that instructors are maintaining their performance. This data could be obtained using the new student management system.

## **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 **Excellent**.

## **Context**

The courses offered by FETS are predominantly focussed on providing health and safety training for New Zealand industries. The course content is focussed on working safely in factories, mines or other industries that have risk-associated activities.

## **Explanation**

The directors and managers maintain a close relationship with clients to ensure the training is highly valued. The training manager and instructors analyse course evaluations to formally monitor trainee satisfaction. Clients will often use the course evaluations to determine whether they will continue using FETS for their training requirements. The ongoing training delivery for clients demonstrates that FETS meets stakeholder needs.

An indicator of the value of the FETS training is the number of clients who request repeat courses for their employees. The trainee feedback also shows very high satisfaction with the course content and instructors. A number of trainee course evaluations sampled across a range of short courses delivered show that trainees' ratings are above four out of five for the course content and instructors' delivery style.

The ongoing provision of training for Fonterra over the years shows that the training is valued by them. Information that this training is valued by Fonterra is also gathered from course evaluations and from other stakeholders such as the New Zealand Industry Training Organisation (NZITO). NZITO administers a national certificate for Fonterra employees, of which FETS delivers emergency response training (ERT) components such as breathing apparatus, confined space entry, working at heights, floor wardens etc.

FETS believes it continues to be the preferred training provider to industry because it provides a range of follow-up training support such as refresher sessions, manuals, emergency management advice and ERT site-specific processes.

### 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**.

#### **Context**

Programmes need to be up to date with industry trends and equipment in order for them to be relevant to stakeholder compliance requirements, in particular health and safety needs.

#### **Explanation**

FETS is committed to delivering courses that are relevant and meet the needs of its clients. The directors encourage innovative methods to achieve these objectives. They use a variety of information sources to gather feedback on their performance to develop appropriate training packages.

First, the instructors and managers gather information from industry clients on training expectations. Secondly, FETS uses instructors who have had experience in the area they are teaching, or uses part-time instructors who are currently working in a specialist area, which helps to align to current industry practices. In addition, feedback from trainees on courses helps to ensure that the training is relevant to their needs.

An example of this is when FETS reviewed the Fonterra training in early 2009 and found that the current national certificate offered did not cover all on-job training needs. In addition, trainees were asking for more practical rather than theory-based activities. As a result it developed a discussion document outlining changes to the content and delivery, which will take effect from 2010. Changes to the training include developing integrated training modules that were less focussed on unit standard achievement and more about learning what was required on the job, with unit standard assessment as an additional product of the knowledge gained. The review also led to the inclusion of more practical



exercises than theory learning, as well as a shift to a more trainee-centred delivery method (see 1.4 for more information).

FETS management and instructors are over halfway through the process of reviewing all training course content and training materials. The review has involved listening to trainee feedback (mostly verbal) and meeting with the client to identify their requirements, then checking that the activities and resources are suitable to meet them. Previously, courses were reviewed on an individual basis in response to feedback. This comprehensive review aims to ensure that all materials are consistent and allow for learner-centred training delivery.

As a result of this review, the new training packages have been updated to include a lesson plan, marking guide, and assessment guideline for instructors, and more accessible training and assessment materials for the trainee (including more graphics and oral assessment opportunities).

FETS has also revised its course evaluations to make them more specific to each course to gather better quality information on how well the training is meeting needs. Trainee feedback on the training packages and course results provides evidence that the review of materials has been successful in increasing trainee performance.

Overall there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the current processes used to gather information on course content and delivery are effective in meeting the needs of trainees as well as the clients who contract FETS to carry out the training.

## 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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**.

### **Context**

The organisation has employed people with practical backgrounds in the fields they are providing training for and who understand the need to relay the information effectively for trainees to understand and carry out the correct procedures while on the job in a risky situation.

### **Explanation**

FETS is in the process of updating its training package for each course to ensure that lesson plans, marking guides, assessment guides, and trainee workbooks are learner focussed and that evaluation forms and training resources are relevant. A new instructor said the reviewed training packages are very useful. The training packages support teaching effectiveness as they assist with consistent teaching and assessment practice among instructors.

The instructors check all materials to ensure they are practicable to deliver and that the materials align to current industry practices. In addition, FETS arranges for all of its assessment materials to be checked by the relevant industry standard-setting body (SSB), such as the Fire Rescue Services Industry Training Organisation (FRSITO) or NZQA, to

make sure that they are valid and meet the unit standard requirements. Moderation reports from the relevant SSB's demonstrate that FETS has met all moderation compliance requirements.

Most full-time and casual instructors have work experience in the industry which enables them to understand industry needs. In addition, the organisation looks to employ instructors who have good communication skills which help them engage with trainees and motivate learning. All FETS instructors must also be qualified in adult education teaching practices. This was supported by evidence from feedback from course reports, trainees' course feedback, as well as feedback from discussions held on site with instructors during the EER visit, demonstrating that instructors relate well to trainees and were effective in their teaching delivery.

FETS is currently in the process of using more trainee-centred teaching methods such as more peer-to-peer learning, reflection, and group work. The shift to trainee-centred training began in 2009 and will continue throughout 2010. Workshops have been scheduled for early 2010 to assist instructors requiring upskilling in this area. Trainee feedback from the one pilot course that has used this approach has been very positive.

The organisation has previously made very good use of verbal as well as written trainee evaluations, as well as instructor course reports. It is too soon to judge the effectiveness of the most recent changes in lifting achievement rates and meeting the safety needs of the industry. New course evaluation forms have been developed to provide more specific feedback on course content and activities to assist with this.

However, although instructors are adept at adapting their techniques to cater for students with learning needs, FETS has yet to integrate literacy and numeracy teaching practices into the training to support the trainee-centred approach. It was also difficult to review previous data on 2007 and 2008 achievement to see if teaching was as effective then as now. Therefore, the organisation's self-review of teaching effectiveness is not comprehensive.

## 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**.

### **Context**

FETS is not involved in the selection of trainees. The employer/client assesses the trainees' needs and if there is an appropriate fit for the training. Once on the courses FETS is responsible for the training and assessment of trainees to ensure that they are suitable to be qualified and able to operate safely in the respective field of work.

### **Explanation**

FETS provides relevant trainee guidance and support for what would be expected of a short-course training provider. This includes asking clients for information on attendees' learning needs, availability of oral assessments for those with reading difficulties, and providing feedback on trainees' achievements.

Instructors encourage trainees to approach them if they have learning difficulties, and they try to accommodate trainees' needs within the training. This could include demonstrating competency through either an oral assessment or a practical demonstration, whichever is appropriate.

FETS instructors write course reports identifying further training needs of any trainees who are not ready for assessment or who have not met the course requirements such as attendance. This report is then sent to the workplace employer or supervisor to ensure they know what they need to do to assist the trainee to meet the requirements on the job. An example of where this has helped was where a young student did not have enough confidence to respond to an incident. This was reported to the client in writing, suggesting that the trainee needed more hands-on experience managing a situation before he could be assessed. The student was also advised.

Instructors and students use an urban search and rescue technique for debriefing at the end of each training session to help individuals identify their own areas for improvement, followed by positive feedback from the instructor.

Overall, the organisation is ensuring that trainees are guided and supported in their learning. However, further literacy and numeracy training would help with adapting training delivery and materials to assist trainees with literacy and numeracy learning needs.

## 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 **Excellent**.

### **Context**

FETS has operated as a training provider for over eleven years in emergency response training and other related areas. FETS has two directors, one of whom fills the role of general manager and training manager. A quality manager has been employed to review course content and materials as well as oversee quality management processes. There are three full-time tutors with a pool of up to ten part-time tutors to draw on for their expertise.

### **Explanation**

The organisation has a structure in place to review its performance and develop new strategies to continue to meet the needs of its major stakeholders. Governance meetings take place between the two directors. Plans are discussed with other managers and presented at an annual staff forum for comment. Also discussed at this forum are course resource requirements, course results, and other operational matters. Staff are provided with opportunities for feedback at this meeting as well as throughout the year at regular staff meetings. The directors and management have made steady progress in the last year to improve course quality and delivery. This was demonstrated by the support that management gave to innovations in its training that will help the trainees to achieve their goals.

## Part 2: Performance in 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**.

#### **Context**

A range of qualitative and some quantitative data provides evidence that almost all trainees achieve the course requirements. This includes the achievement of unit standards as well as client company work-experience requirements and safety standards.

#### **Explanation**

Due to the short nature of courses, the results are easily accessible for analysis on course performance. This is presented in short course reports compiled by tutors after the course has run. In this way the organisation is able to detect where a trainee may need additional training or if any aspect of the course needs modifying. Any trainees that do not complete the course requirements are reported to the employer or client. Reasons may be that the trainee is new or that they did not attend that day.

However, the organisation has not recorded data over a period of time to identify any trends that may indicate areas of improvement for all trainee outcomes overall. Aggregated course data could be obtained from the new data management system, once this has been embedded.

### 2.2 Focus area: Working at Heights

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

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

#### **Context**

A sample of course reports containing assessment results showed high achievement. Almost all trainees completed the requirements, which indicate that the organisation's performance was excellent.

#### **Explanation**

The Working at Heights training package was reviewed in 2009, and as a result the training moved to a more practice-focussed delivery rather than theory-based, to suit actual industry practices while still covering legislative requirements. To accompany the change in content, the instructors trialled new delivery methods using more self-paced and peer-learning activities, and group activities rather than lecture-style delivery. Written feedback from trainees has been very positive, and included:

*“Instructor’s style of teaching made it easier to learn”; “[I enjoyed] the whole course”; “Well put together; “Learnt things I wasn’t aware of”.*

FETS also runs refresher courses required to keep certification within the industry, and feedback from trainees who have returned for refresher courses included:

*“I like how this information has been presented”; “I didn’t know that but now I know to be aware of that in the future”.*

The course had previously been of value to industry but instructors have noted that changes resulting from the review, such as incorporating more peer activities to engage the trainee, have definitely helped with the learning. As one instructor stated:

*“You can see the learning is going on by the types of questions asked by students – the lights kind of come on”.*

In addition, because FETS provides short courses to clients it is able to monitor and respond to industry needs using direct informal feedback or course evaluations, and a large number of clients return to FETS for refresher training.

Information on trends of achievement was not readily accessible to determine how much more effective the training has been or to gauge other measures of success of the training.

### 2.3 Focus area: Fonterra Emergency Response Training Recruit Course

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

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

#### **Context**

FETS delivers the Emergency Response Training (ERT) course which is a component of the national certificate that Fonterra employees enrol in with NZITO.

#### **Explanation**

FETS establishes an anticipated finish date with Fonterra. Instructors regularly review the success of each cohort to see what further training is required and where they can match trainees to a course to meet their goals. Where a trainee may not have completed course requirements, the cause may be other work commitments or lack of sufficient on-job experience to be assessed as competent.

This support process ensures trainees are consistently able to achieve the required standards, as demonstrated by the high achievement rates. FETS has also gathered feedback from Fonterra to ensure that its training is tailored to Fonterra’s specific requirements. This has resulted in a discussion paper which outlines how the training will change from a unit standard focus to more integrated learning modules. FETS has matched the work roles with the learning requirements for each new employee. A clear, integrated training pathway is mapped out which supports trainees to complete their required workplace training.

As previously mentioned, Fonterra continues to show that it values FETS training courses by the continuing use of its consultancy services. This demonstrates that FETS' training course meets the needs of Fonterra and its employees.

## Statements of Confidence

### Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Fire and Emergency Training Solutions Limited**.

### Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Fire and Emergency Training Solutions Limited**.

## Actions Required and Recommendations

### Further actions

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

### Recommendations

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

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E [eeradmin@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:eeradmin@nzqa.govt.nz)

[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)