

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Training in Action Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 20 October 2011

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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:	Bradley Avenue, Pyes Pa, Tauranga
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1999
Number of students:	Domestic: approximately 1,000 trainees p.a. on short courses (three hours to 1.5 days) International: NA
Number of staff:	Nine staff, one full-time
Scope of active accreditation:	Core Health, Community and Workforce Fire and Emergency Management, Fire and Rescue Services
Sites:	Short courses are delivered at client company sites with practical training delivered at a purpose-built training facility based at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic.
Distinctive characteristics:	Training in Action (TIA) offers initial training and refresher courses for individuals and organisations in safe and correct response to fire, chemical, and other associated emergencies, including first aid and pre-hospital emergency care. Courses are either tailored to meet clients' equipment and requirements, or are offered as standard courses.  Training courses include: use of breathing apparatus, confined spaces, fire wardens, use of fire extinguishers, chemical handling, evacuation schemes, rural fire fighting, marine fire safety, and

dangerous goods licence.

Recent significant changes: NA

Previous quality assurance history: TIA was last quality assured by NZQA by audit in 2007 and met all but one requirement, relating to incomplete policies.

TIA has fully engaged with, and is demonstrating that its assessment materials and assessor judgements are meeting, the national standard for the relevant standard-setting bodies, including the New Zealand Industry Training Organisation (NZITO), Emergency Management Qualifications (EMQUAL) – previously known as Fire Rescue Services Industry Training Organisation (FRSITO) – and NZQA’s Tertiary Assessment and Moderation unit, for the moderation of assessment materials and assessment processes. This is confirmed through correspondence with these organisations.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

This external evaluation and review included the mandatory focus area of governance, management, and strategy, as well as fire and emergency response training, which comprises all training offered by TIA.

## 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/>*

This evaluation involved two NZQA lead evaluators and took place at TIA’s head office in Tauranga over one and half days. The evaluation team interviewed the owner-manager, tutors, stakeholders, trainees, and reviewed a range of the organisation’s documents and electronic records.

Training in Action Limited has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Training in Action Limited**.

Over the last three years and across all courses, participants are achieving competency at very high levels, between 93 and 100 per cent. While there are no national published figures to compare this with, TIA has well-established tracking systems confirming this level of educational performance over a number of years. Participants, including client companies interviewed at this evaluation, confirmed a high level of satisfaction with the training and the course success rate.

Staff have extensive experience in the New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS) or as registered nurses, hold qualifications in adult teaching, and maintain effective industry networks and engage in professional development, thus maintaining current knowledge and skills. These factors add significantly to the quality of the training outcomes.

Courses offered by TIA are tailored to focus on client company fire fighting equipment or workplace context. This has ensured that the course content is relevant and engages the trainees effectively. The quality and validity of assessment materials and judgements have been validated externally by all the relevant standard-setting bodies. TIA's internal processes to check and validate its trainee assessments are robust and lead to ongoing improvements in assessment practice.

Course material is regularly updated and renewed, resulting in improved variety and currency. TIA has built a practical training facility, which adds considerable value to industry clients and is used and valued by NZFS.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Training in Action Limited**.

TIA is a small, owner-operated company which monitors its performance using a combination of informal and formal data-gathering and analysis. Complete and rich data is readily available electronically and in hard copy, and is regularly reviewed and used to make improvements, for example by changing the timing of training to better suit clients, and by the addition of non-toxic smoke generators. The data provides the owners with ready access to information such as course success rates, follow-up alerts for certificate renewal, and feedback from client companies and trainees.

The organisation regularly surveys course participants and client companies and receives reports from tutors, providing a rich source of data which informs programme development, rates of satisfaction, and areas for improvement.

Improvements resulting from TIA's self-assessment activities include the introduction of spreadsheets for tracking all aspects of the business including course success, updating fire fighting equipment, building a practical training site, providing reader-writers, and reviewing and renewing teaching material and DVDs.

TIA has a well-developed and well-established system for identifying trainee and client company training needs, has robust policies and procedures for its operation, closely monitors trainee success, and is clearly focused on continual improvement. The organisation's ability to research industry needs and develop effective and timely training in response was confirmed in TIA's documentation reviewed and by all groups spoken to during this evaluation.

TIA has well-developed and effective processes for self-assessment, providing up-to-date data on course relevance and progress. Patterns and trends within and across courses, as well as in relation to client companies, are monitored over time and adjustments are made on an ongoing basis to maintain a tight focus on industry best practice and educational performance.

## TEO response

Training in Action has confirmed the factual accuracy of this report.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 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 **Excellent**.

TIA runs approximately 90 short courses a year for more than 1,000 trainees. Across all of these courses, trainees are achieving success at very high levels. The common achievement rates at the first assessment are between 87 and 100 per cent, and with subsequent submissions this rises to between 93 and 100 per cent. These achievement rates have been consistently at this level over the last few years. TIA maintains, reviews, and regularly analyses complete and reliable data to determine these rates of achievement.

Many courses are designed to meet the requirements of unit standards on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, while others are designed to raise trainees' general knowledge and preparedness for emergencies. In both these scenarios, trainees are gaining useful skills and knowledge for the workplace as well as for their personal lives. The manager related many anecdotes where trainees had commented in surveys about training improving their knowledge and awareness of safety in the home and the community.

Some courses are specifically designed to familiarise trainees with company-specific emergency response equipment or apparatus. Client company feedback and interviews confirmed a high level of satisfaction with the training and of staff application of skills resulting from this training.

TIA maintains paper records and computer spreadsheets to track and monitor participation and success rates, as well as trainee and company satisfaction levels with the training. This information is continually updated and reviewed by the owner, shared with all staff, and used to make ongoing improvements, for example by changing the timing of training to better suit clients, building physical training facilities, and adding non-toxic smoke generators to improve the reality of the training.

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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 **Excellent**.

TIA is offering courses that meet the needs of its trainees and client companies, such as to meet mandatory training requirements and update participants' knowledge and skills in current best practice in fire fighting and equipment handling. This was evidenced by TIA's robust self-assessment processes, as well as by interviews at this evaluation which confirmed a high level of satisfaction with the outcomes of training, with many anecdotes of where the skills and knowledge learned had been applied in emergency situations. Management also noted the rise of "personal awareness" of emergency response skills, and increased knowledge was also noted frequently as a valued outcome, such as knowledge of fire speed increasing with new furnishing materials and leading to participants taking action on safety in areas such as installing smoke alarms at home.

The organisation has established considerable repeat business in its ten years of operation and is held in high regard by all personnel interviewed at this evaluation. An NZFS support officer uses the TIA practical training facilities to prepare fire service volunteers for their NZFS National Training Centre course, resulting in a higher rate of success than that achieved by other volunteers. TIA contributes well to its community by offering free training and free access to its training facility for some not-for-profit community groups. This was evidenced within TIA's self-assessment findings and confirmed through interviews.

The rural fire fighting course and qualification are now recognised and require any New Zealand fire fighters to be involved in international fire fighting crises in several countries, including Australia, France, USA, and Canada.

The organisation maintains effective industry networks, including regular contact with NZFS to monitor the value of outcomes from its training. Feedback is gathered both formally and informally. All trainee and client surveys reviewed at this evaluation showed a very high level of satisfaction with the training as well as with the ability of staff to apply the training in the workplace or community. This information is regularly reviewed and used along with informal industry input to continually review and improve course content and facilities.

### 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**.

Courses match the requirements for current industry standards and best practice as established by NZFS, EMQUAL, NZITO, and NZQA.

TIA tailors many of its courses specifically to match company needs, such as using company-specific fire fighting equipment and breathing apparatus or through training in confined spaces.

Prior to running the courses, TIA collects information from companies about any specific learning requirements for staff, such as physical disabilities or learning barriers, and adapts the course accordingly. Course surveys sighted, and interviews conducted at this evaluation confirmed TIA's self-assessment findings, that courses and activities are adapted to match the needs of learners and client companies exceedingly well.

Tutors interviewed at this evaluation discussed how they involved trainees in providing context and examples from their work or home to effectively personalise the training and provide relevant and client-focussed training.

The practical training site provides a realistic experience for training, such as for using the breathing apparatus in a smoke environment, working in confined spaces, and experiencing fire speed and heat. The value of this facility as an effective training venue to match client needs was confirmed by all personnel interviewed.

TIA has effective systems to monitor and track how well its programmes match the needs of its trainees and client companies, and provided examples of resulting improvements, such as improving a delivery site for events centre training at Mystery Creek Events Centre in Hamilton, and improvements to training and assessment for rural fire fighting courses, resulting in higher completion and success rates.

### 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 **Excellent**.

Tutors employed by TIA engage well with the trainees and ensure the materials are up to date, refreshed, and reflect current best practice. All but a few trainees achieve success, and feedback from trainees and client companies confirms that

the skills and knowledge gained can be applied in the workplace and in emergency situations.

Assessment materials and assessment practice are well monitored and checked within TIA and externally validated through national moderation processes by NZITO, EMQUAL, and NZQA, confirming that assessment material is valid and fit for purpose, and assessment practice meets the national standard.

Tutors have extensive experience with NZFS or as registered nurses and hold qualifications in adult teaching. Interviews with tutors and students at this evaluation confirmed that tutors use a range of teaching strategies and vary their course material with successive courses to maintain trainee interest and engagement. New tutors are mentored and supported effectively to gain confidence and competence in their role. Tutors interviewed by the evaluation team said they felt valued in their role and able to draw on their life and work experiences to provide a sense of reality to the training.

TIA uses an appropriate range of processes to monitor and review its teaching effectiveness, including informal regular meetings with staff, observations, team teaching, lead trainer course reports, and surveys. These are analysed and reflected on to develop improvements to teaching, for example to course materials, and to refresh DVDs.

## 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**.

Support is provided that is appropriate to the short nature of the courses offered. Trainee and client company special needs are researched and addressed prior to each course. The courses occasionally bring personal issues to the surface, such as dealing with fatalities or working in smoke or confined spaces, and these are dealt with on a one-to-one basis. The organisation employs staff who are sufficiently experienced and able to support trainees in these situations.

Reader-writers have been provided for trainees who require this support, and opportunities to resubmit assessments are provided. Issues were noted with rural fire service volunteers not completing assessments following distance learning, and support has been implemented to lift their motivation and to support them to complete and succeed. The organisation is continuing to explore further support, such as an electronic platform for online discussions and for accessing learning materials.

Tutors present the courses using appropriate processes to socialise the group and prepare and lead the trainees into the start of the course. Trainee and client surveys are carried out regularly and reviewed by tutors and the owners. These

have led to improvements, for example breaking courses down into smaller steps, mixing practice and theory and group and one-to-one work, to better support the trainees.

## 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**.

TIA is a small business with no governing board or trustees. The owners actively seek input from professionals in the emergency management field. Client companies interviewed at this evaluation acknowledged and valued this aspect of TIA.

The owners have developed a reflective culture within its small team and are clearly focused on trainee achievement and meeting the needs of the emergency response services and organisations.

Effective policies and processes have been developed and implemented to monitor and track how well courses meet sector needs and how well trainees succeed. Close communications with NZFS are maintained, and the contracted tutors delivering first aid maintain their nursing registration and professional development as required.

TIA is aware of NZQA's current focus on quality provision for first aid training and has demonstrated its commitment to quality through its responses to requests for information from NZQA in a timely and appropriate manner. No issues were noted at this evaluation regarding the delivery and assessment of first aid. The organisation has consistently met the assessment moderation of the first aid unit standards for the last three years, with no modifications required or any issues noted regarding assessment judgements.

The organisation is currently exploring options to ensure effective succession planning for personnel and for expanding into higher-level training in cooperation with the local polytechnic.

TIA has well-developed and effective processes for self-assessment, providing up-to-date data on course relevance and progress. Patterns and trends within and across courses, as well as in relation to client companies, are monitored over time, and adjustments are made on an ongoing basis to maintain a tight focus on industry best practice and educational performance. The development and improvement of the purpose-built practical training facility is a key example of this.

Interviews with tutors confirmed that they are involved in all aspects of the business and integrally involved in ongoing improvements such as to course design, teaching strategies, and course materials.

## 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 **Excellent**.

### 2.2 Focus area: Fire and Emergency Response Training

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

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

# Recommendations

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

# 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 non-university TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses 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 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)).*

*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-eeer/introduction/>*

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