

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Training in Action Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 19 June 2015

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MoE Number: 8282
NZQA Reference: C18198
Date of EER visit: 3 and 4 March 2015

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:	Training in Action Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	4 October 1999
Location:	567 Beechey Street, Pirongia
Delivery sites:	Courses are delivered at the company sites of the clients.
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Essential First Aid• Safe Space Training• Essential Fire Fighting at Rural Events <p>Bespoke courses are also designed and delivered to suit individual client requirements.</p>
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: approximately 1,000 trainees per year on short courses
Number of staff:	Nine staff, one of whom is full-time
Scope of active accreditation:	Use the following link: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=828244001
Distinctive characteristics:	Training in Action offers training and refresher courses for individuals and organisations in the safe and correct response to fire, chemical and other associated emergencies, including first aid.

Courses are tailored to meet clients' equipment and requirements and as much as possible are delivered in the workplace at the clients' premises. Training in Action delivers training in two specific areas of safety and emergency response and management. These areas are: industrial environments and emergency response environments.

Recent significant changes: The previous owner of Training in Action sold 100 per cent of the shares to the current owners, who assumed directorship of the PTE in July 2014. The location of the central office of the organisation was changed from Tauranga to Pirongia when the sale was complete.

Since the sale, a number of additional standards and domains have been accredited to Training in Action to extend the range of safety training that is available for the PTE to offer to its clients.

In response to new NZQA requirements, Training in Action had three short courses approved in 2012.

Previous quality assurance history: Recent moderation of the assessment of unit standards through NZQA Tertiary Assessment and Moderation has produced good results for the period 2011-2013.

Minor adjustments were required following the moderation of assessment of unit standards by EmQual (the industry training organisation responsible for arranging training for emergency management qualifications) and NZITO (New Zealand Industry Training Organisation, now part of Primary ITO) which have all been rectified in a timely manner.

The previous external evaluation and review (EER) of Training in Action was held in August 2011 and NZQA was:

- Highly Confident in educational performance
- Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The agreed scope of the EER of Training in Action included the following mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management and strategy.

The other focus area was:

- Short courses including:
 - Essential First Aid (Level 2, 2 credits)
 - Safe Space (Level 3, 14 credits)
 - Essential Fire Fighting at Rural Events (Level 3, 9 credits)

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 EER consisted of a team of two evaluators, who visited the Training in Action central office located in the owners' residence at Pirongia in the Waikato over one and a half days. Prior to the EER, Training in Action supplied the lead evaluator with descriptive information about the organisation and a summary of its self-assessment activities, including the changes that have occurred since the previous EER. This assisted the lead evaluator in developing the scope of this EER. An observer from NZQA also attended the EER visit.

During the on-site visit, the evaluation team interviewed the directors of Training in Action, tutors and trainees of the short courses, and some of the clients. The directors were interviewed on the premises and the others by telephone. A range of documents was examined to confirm items that arose from these discussions.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

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

The confidence in educational performance is supported by the following factors:

- The 100 per cent trainee achievement pass rates which is consistent with other providers offering similar courses.
- The valuable skills attained by the trainees which are useful in local contexts and workplaces.
- The PTE is willing to deliver on site at the clients' premises, allowing the training to be accessible to suit clients' needs.
- The PTE is able to tailor the programme of training to suit local conditions and resources.
- The trainers are very experienced and qualified, and have the skills to impart a meaningful training session.
- The directors are open, transparent and have direct involvement with all aspects of the business.

However, the following area could be improved to facilitate better results in educational performance.

- Fulfilling the PTE's obligation to inform the trainees of academic rules and the penalties for plagiarism, in a standardised way.

Overall, Training in Action is meeting the needs and expectations of client organisations for designing, developing and delivering courses that enable their employees to gain the certification that complies with relevant industry requirements.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

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

The confidence in self-assessment is supported by the following factors:

- Careful collection and collation of trainee assessment results and attendance figures to assist with reporting credits, understanding demographics and the development of marketing strategies.
- The systematic collation and analysis of trainee feedback on the courses, teaching and resources, which gives valuable information to help improve programme delivery and resources.
- Reacting in a timely manner to any issues that are revealed in the analysis of trainee and employer feedback.
- Incorporating feedback into course development and improvement.
- Keeping abreast of industry and sector trends to maintain currency and relevance in the training.

The following areas could be improved to enhance capability in self-assessment.

- Wider comparisons within the sector to gauge the effectiveness of performance.
- Attention to the monitoring of sub-contracting arrangements to ensure that the educational and administrative processes and outputs are in line with Training in Action's own quality management system requirements and the requirements of the memorandum of understanding with the sub-contractor.
- A reinvigorated focus on self-assessment of the quality of training and support practice within the expected high achievement rate is recommended to ensure that the trainees are consistently receiving the best-quality training possible.

Findings¹

Background

Training in Action was founded in 1999, with ownership transferred to the current owners and directors in July 2014. Training in Action specialises in offering safety and emergency response-related programmes to a range of client organisations so that their employees can gain new skills and achieve compliance with industry requirements. Training in Action designs programmes specifically to suit the client's needs. The programmes may include unit standard-based learning. Training in Action has a significant scope of accreditation to assess safety and emergency response unit standards, so can offer programmes in a range of disciplines.

Achievement rates at Training in Action are very high, with all trainees who complete the course gaining competency, which is usual for this type of corporate training.

Governance and management

The new owners of Training in Action are proving to be as capable in running the organisation as the erstwhile owners whose help and support allowed the changeover to occur without any disruption to the normal operations of the organisation or disadvantage to its clients.

Changes to the administrative system have been implemented but the effectiveness of these changes cannot yet be determined.

The management and staff have background and experience in safety and education. This allows the organisation to collaborate with its clients to develop suitable courses and adds credibility to the organisation.

Training in Action keeps abreast of developments within the sector through the owners' ongoing involvement with the industry and the organisation's consultancy and commercial arms (which operate as a separate entity).

The high achievement rates are validated by assessment moderation results which show that Training in Action meets the requirements of standard-setting bodies. The directors are involved in the NZQA-led Targeted Review of Qualifications. These activities show positive engagement with the sector. However, further external benchmarking with other, similar providers would be useful to help the PTE understand how effective it is comparatively, and to help it keep abreast of market and educational practice developments.

Training in Action has a responsibility under the conditions of its registration as a PTE to actively supervise and monitor the performance of any sub-contractors that

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

it employs, to ensure that the standards of training are being appropriately maintained. The new owners are not yet monitoring this to the level that would be expected of a high-performing organisation and so do not have a full understanding of how good the training provided by its sub-contractors is.

Value of the training

Clients are satisfied with the quality and nature of the programmes their employees undergo. These are designed to meet the needs of the clients and their employees in that they:

- meet workplace needs
- satisfy statutory and regulatory body requirements
- add to the employee's record of learning
- contribute to career advancement.

These values, along with the fact that the employer most often pays for the programme, contribute to the motivation of attendees to complete the programme and gain the certification. The most common reasons for non-completion are illness and unavoidable family issues.

Training in Action keeps good records of all trainee achievement by cohort, which is valuable for tracking achievement. Attendee feedback is overwhelmingly positive, but any issues that may arise are identified and remedial action is taken in a timely manner. The instructor is required to supply an end-of-programme report in which they can share reflections on how well the training was received, and if any improvements could be made to delivery. To add value for the client, a short report is issued to the client organisation outlining the effectiveness of the training, and at times advising on the maintenance of equipment and other areas of importance.

The evaluators note that some of the self-assessment initiatives of the new directors are still in the developmental stages and the benefits of these are yet to be seen. For instance, the collection of structured feedback from clients is a new implementation at Training in Action and it is too soon to gauge the long-term effectiveness of the training through this initiative.

The value of the training has also been shown in accounts of where workplace practice and safety strategies had been modified as a result of the training, and the ensuing raised safety awareness. To further endorse the value of the training, Training in Action gets an increasing amount of repeat business and revalidation training from organisations that offer emergency services, such as Red Cross and New Zealand Fire Service.

Meeting needs

Training in Action meet the needs of its various stakeholders in a number of meaningful ways, example of which are:

- Unit-based training and customised training courses specific to the clients' needs. A list of its clients highlights the degree to which the PTE meets clients' needs.
- The PTE's community-based training and advice to local organisations which is highly appreciated by the community and endorses how the PTE meets the community's needs.
- The PTE continues to maintain its place as an important training organisation in the field of safety and emergency response.
- The PTE's development as a unique and niche provider in specialised fields such as Rope Technician and Rope Responder.

The new directors have initiated new data collection strategies to help understand the demographic makeup of the trainees. This information will further help understand how best to structure learning and meet trainee needs. It is noted that the PTE does not focus on the learning achievement rates for Māori and Pasifika trainees as distinct interest groups. In light of the high achievement rate overall, which includes these groups, this is understandable.

Effectiveness of the teaching

The training provided by Training in Action is of a good standard. Training in Action engages instructors that are appropriately qualified and experienced. The high achievement rates of the trainees and the positive feedback from past trainees and client companies all support the finding of effectiveness in teaching. It is creditable that all instructors have some teacher training and most have adult education qualifications to level 4 or higher. All of the instructors are experienced and trained in the field of search and rescue and/or emergency response, and are employed in the sector. All of the instructors have passed the unit standards they are teaching to and assessing.

Management has a system of performance appraisal in place to help identify possible shortcomings in skills and teaching practice, with a view to improving them if necessary. The instructors undergo a formal peer review and observation of their teaching practice once a year. There is no formalised system of professional development as the instructors are contracted casually when work is available. They receive organised professional development from their primary source of employment, and this keeps the instructors current in and informed of sector developments, which will assist in teaching practice.

Training in Action has identified that the quality of its instructors is a central part to the effectiveness of its training. New instructors are carefully sought out using the directors' extensive networks in the search and rescue and emergency response

sector. The instructors are mentored through peer observation and team teaching with the directors before they are allowed to work alone. The directors insist on hiring trainers carefully as the nature of the organisation entails a lot of trust in the responsibility and integrity of the instructors to work alone. The trainers do not meet together often to exchange ideas, because of the nature of their regular work in emergency services.

Trainee support

Training in Action provides good support to its trainees. Most of this support is provided at an individual level involving the trainees and the instructors. As the training often takes place in the client organisations' places of work and is generally short in duration, there is a distance between management and what they know about the trainees, so trainee and instructor feedback provides the main source of self-evaluation on support processes and effectiveness. Generally, trainees said they and their classmates had been well supported throughout the training.

The ways trainees are supported include:

- Identification and support for trainees with learning difficulties
- Tutors are instructed in how to deal with trainees with learning difficulties
- Ensuring progression is dependent on acquiring all prerequisite skills and knowledge, especially where safety is involved.

Academic support is one area that Training in Action can improve on. Information regarding the academic rules and regulations in relation to the training is given verbally. In the interests of clarity, consistency and transparency it will prove useful to present these rules and regulations to the trainees in writing. Each trainee is given the appropriate course content information at the start of a course, but issues regarding cheating, plagiarism and the importance of attendance are explained verbally to the trainees, and these should also be given in writing.

While the health and safety of the trainees is largely the responsibility of the workplace, a formal survey is done before the training starts to ensure that the premises are suitable as a training environment.

Key Evaluation Questions and Focus Areas

Key Evaluation Questions are the overarching questions that form the basis for discussion between the evaluators and the TEO in order to reach evaluative conclusions.

Focus areas are selected because they are areas of interest to NZQA and/or are representative of the educational activities of the provider. The evaluative inquiry during the EER visit is based on the focus areas.

Key Evaluation Question	Educational performance rating	Capability in self-assessment rating
1.1 How well do learners achieve?	Good	Good
1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including learners?	Good	Good
1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?	Excellent	Excellent
1.4 How effective is the teaching?	Excellent	Excellent
1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?	Good	Good
1.6 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?	Good	Good
Focus Area	Educational performance rating	Capability in self-assessment rating
2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy	Good	Good
2.2 Focus area: Short courses	Good	Good

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Training in Action Limited:

1. Engage in wider comparisons within the sector to gauge the effectiveness of its performance.
2. Give attention to the systematic and regular monitoring of sub-contracting arrangements to ensure that the educational and administrative processes and outputs of the sub-contractor are in line with Training in Action's own quality management system requirements and the requirements of the memorandum of understanding.
3. Consider appropriate ways of fulfilling its obligation to inform the trainees of academic rules and the penalties for plagiarism, in a standardised way.

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).

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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