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External Evaluation and Review Report

Step By Step Computer Services
Limited trading as Step by Step
Training

Date of report: 17 July 2020

About Step By Step Computer Services Limited trading as Step by Step Training

Step By Step Training typically provides vocational computer training for clients that is short, targeted, one-to-one and vocational. ACC or ACC vocational providers refer the clients, who are considered to be work-ready, so they can re-enter employment. Contract trainers deliver training to students living in their region.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Suite 2, Level 1, 399 New North Road, Kingsland, Auckland. This is the head office site.
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 231 (as at 19 December 2019) Māori 13 per cent, Pasifika 3 per cent, Other 21 per cent International: nil
Number of staff:	Four full-time, one part-time and 45 contract trainers throughout New Zealand
TEO profile:	Step By Step Computer Services Ltd
Last EER outcome:	Highly Confident/Highly Confident
Scope of evaluation:	Digital literacy, computer essentials and vocational skills training
MoE number:	8367
NZQA reference:	C37796
Dates of EER visit:	4 and 5 February 2020

Summary of Results

The organisation has a clear purpose and training model based on a comprehensive understanding of stakeholders' needs. The result is strong trainee achievement and satisfaction. The organisation needs more comprehensive monitoring of some compliance requirements.

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| Confident in educational performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students achieve well, meet their learning goals and are satisfied with the training. Step by Step does not currently analyse the achievement of priority groups.• Step by Step has a good understanding of stakeholder and student needs. This informs the training. Step by Step needs to capture more information to clearly understand the value of the training to stakeholders and students. |
| Confident in capability in self-assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The training model is well-honed and constantly refined. The developed structure allows for great flexibility to meet individual learner needs.• There is a solid core of well-engaged staff with suitable tools and processes. Step by Step needs to monitor staff activity more consistently and enable ongoing collaboration and development for staff.• The organisation's vision is clear and self-review is ongoing. This is reflected by the strategies to ensure sustained activity alongside growth.• Step by Step manages regular compliance accountabilities effectively, but needs stronger oversight of all regulations governing the PTE's operation to ensure more effective overall compliance. |

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Step by Step does comprehensive assessments of each student's training needs so they align with workplace requirements. The PTE measures student achievement primarily through students completing their individual training plans. Initially, Step by Step did not provide this student achievement. NZQA received data about the successful completion of assessments related to NZQA unit standards. When asked, Step by Step provided evidence that shows that 80 per cent of students fully complete their training schemes, and 4 per cent do not complete their training.</p> <p>Throughout the programme, as students acquire skills and knowledge, they are assessed on what they have learned. This allows the students to track their progress during training. It also allows Step by Step to adjust the training to minimise learning barriers. The PTE uses this information for progress and completion reports.</p> <p>The organisation understands Māori and Pasifika achievement. However, the PTE has not compared the pass rates of these students with other students and has not identified any areas for improvement. The evaluators found a few limitations in the data supplied both before the on-site visit and during the enquiry. Step by Step can and should strengthen analysis and reporting of all achievement, which is clearly of high value to students and stakeholders (see 1.2).</p>
Conclusion:	The knowledge and skills students gain are useful. Most students achieve their agreed training plans. Achievement and satisfaction data supports these findings; however, the PTE needs to further develop and analyse this information.

¹ 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 students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The PTE provides training that meets the requirements of the referral agencies and the potential employment pathways available to the students. All stakeholders understand this and plan and deliver the training to provide maximum value for the referral agencies. Step by Step gets repeat referrals for training, and informal, undocumented feedback on that training. The PTE does not have a formal way to collect feedback.</p> <p>When a student finishes their training, the PTE gives them a survey for feedback. Over the last four years, 21 per cent of students have responded, with a little over 63 per cent of them strongly agreeing that the training prepares them for employment.² This is the strongest evidence that the training matches students' needs. A rehabilitation plan adds lasting value for students. Due to provisions of the Privacy Act, Step by Step cannot provide analysis of improvements to wellbeing and the contribution to whānau and communities.</p> <p>Also due to privacy reasons, the organisation has not, since the last EER, been able to understand if their students have progressed beyond training to gain relevant employment or higher education. The PTE cannot tell if the skills and knowledge that students acquire have been used. Students who the evaluators interviewed indicated that they use the skills they learned in a range of work and non-work situations. Step by Step has been able to contact a few graduates and has a summary of their feedback, but use of this information is recent and the long-term benefits of changes made are still to be gauged.</p>
Conclusion:	The PTE knows who their stakeholders are and understands the value of the immediate outcomes for the students. However, the organisation has recently commenced capturing information about their contribution to longer-term student outcomes so their understanding of these impacts is still developing.

² See Appendix 1

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Step by Step provides one-to-one training³ to students referred by an agency so they can return to work. Training is structured to meet the current and emerging needs of each student: i.e. delivering student-centred training, monitoring progress through appraisals and reports, allowing for adjustments. This ensures the students and other stakeholders receive feedback at every session. Student and stakeholder feedback confirms that this works well.</p> <p>The individualised approach is supported by 45 contract trainers, based in training facilities around New Zealand. Step by Step rigorously checks the facility when the trainer starts, to ensure they have the correct hardware and software and a suitable learning environment. Feedback from students confirms this.</p> <p>The head office controls all course-related decisions. From this central point, the three training co-ordinators check the integrity of the training plans, monitor progress, store resources (updated annually), and validate assessments.</p> <p>Step by Step conducts internal post-assessment moderation, checking 5 per cent of completed assessments for fairness and validity. The PTE tracks this and monitors any follow-up actions. Step by Step also completes external moderation annually (if required). Recent external moderation with NZQA and ServiceIQ has raised questions about the strength of the internal moderation. Step by Step has not replied to these concerns.</p>
Conclusion:	Programme design and delivery is effective and constantly refined so training is current and meets stakeholder needs. Step by Step still needs to address inconsistencies found through external moderation.

³ Based on the delivery of one or an amalgamation of 13 courses – each has an outline which has course duration information (no. of weeks, no. hours for teaching and assessment), what is to be covered (both unit standard and non-unit standard based) and potential job pathways at the conclusion of training.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student support and involvement in learning is strong. The PTE identifies the needs of the referral agency and the student before training starts and matches this to tailored learning goals and activities during the training plan. Step by Step accommodates the students' wellbeing when timetabling the sessions. Trainers understand that ongoing progress depends on the student acquiring and retaining skills and knowledge. Trainers will revise, provide relevant training resources and align activities to make them relevant, meaningful and engaging for the student. Trainers put in a great deal of effort to help students complete their training plans.</p> <p>Step by Step also monitors the training, during and after each session, making adjustments as requested and as issues arise. If students do not positively engage, Step by Step may adjust the training or develop a new training plan. In some cases, the students do not complete their training.</p> <p>If students do not attend sessions it can mean there are issues with engagement. Since the last EER, there has been an average of 80 per cent attendance. The PTE monitors this and other reasons for non-engagement with the training. This information, along with the reports and feedback, enables the PTE to understand the effectiveness of its training.</p>
Conclusion:	The one-to-one focus of the training enables Step by Step to tailor learning, minimise learning barriers and meet students' learning goals and needs as they emerge. The PTE gathers feedback and makes improvements where needed.

1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The PTE is clear that its purpose is to provide training in response to referrals. All the PTE's policies and procedures support this. Step by Step recognises the danger of having a large commitment to one source of training. They have a strategic plan to reach a wider market while delivering digital training.</p> <p>Step by Step has clear training processes that allow tight control. The PTE has a lot of information to analyse, informing improvements. Step by Step needs to be clear about what they want from this analysis.</p> <p>The academic management team is three training coordinators and the general manager. The co-ordinator oversees the trainers and learning and teaching resources. There are rigorous recruitment, induction and appraisal processes for trainers. Step by Step understands why trainers are leaving or dropping out.</p> <p>Many of the contracted trainers do not meet the PTE's training requirements: i.e. holding Unit Standards 4098 and 11281. Out of 45 trainers, 17 (38 per cent) hold 4098 and two (4 per cent) hold 11281. Only 40 per cent (18 trainers) hold the Adult Teaching Certificate and 22 per cent (10 trainers) hold the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education qualification.</p> <p>The PTE has a monthly newsletter for trainers, but could give them more opportunities to gain the relevant skills.</p> <p>This, along with issues of monitoring academic quality, means that Step by Step is not fulfilling some of its obligations.⁴ Step by Step has started to address this, but the changes will need time to have results.</p>
Conclusion:	Step by Step has a clear purpose and direction. Their processes enable them to successfully train students in a well-defined but limited area. However, not all areas have been monitored closely enough, resulting in gaps in practice.

⁴ To be discussed under 1.6.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Step by Step's management team meets to discuss annual compliance milestones and requirements, and how the training is delivered. There was no evidence of a monitoring tool, such as a compliance timeline or framework, to underpin the discussions.</p> <p>There are some areas where the PTE is not complying with some relevant rules and regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reporting a significant number of credits to NZQA outside of reporting timeframes.⁵ • An incomplete application for change of ownership (the result of a change of shareholders in 2015). • No submissions of Fit and Proper and Conflict of Interest attestations for the PTE's directors and shareholders since 2012. • All staff involved in teaching and assessing not having or working towards Unit 4098 and a qualification in adult education and training. • Not notifying NZQA of temporary delivery sites or getting approval for permanent delivery sites. <p>Since the EER visit, Step by Step has successfully completed the change of ownership application, provided the required attestations for the PTE's directors and shareholders, and notified NZQA of the temporary delivery sites additional to the known permanent site.</p> <p>Due to Step by Step's relationship with ACC, the PTE's processes, procedures and compliance activities are well defined, legal and ethical.</p>

⁵ Thirty-three per cent of the credit achievements were not reported within three months of completing the assessment. Most of these late-reported credits occurred during 2018 and 2019. A check on reporting durations from January 9 2020 till the day of this report indicates the issue is ongoing (87 per cent of reported credits are outside the 90-day timeframe).

Conclusion:	Step by Step's management meets to discuss regularly occurring compliance milestones and requirements. However, the PTE has sometimes overlooked less regular compliance activity. Step by Step needs to address this so they meet NZQA requirements.
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Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Digital literacy, Computing Essentials and vocational skills training

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that Step By Step Computer Services Limited trading as Step by Step Training:

- strengthen how they analyse and report achievement, to provide a more comprehensive picture across all demographics and sites
- implement a more structured monitoring of compliance and academic quality
- consider building a more collaborative community of practice among the contract trainers
- complete the required actions to update NZQA about additional and/or changes to delivery sites (temporary and permanent).

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

NZQA requires Step By Step Computer Services Limited trading as Step by Step Training to:

- report to NZQA any credits students achieve within three months of them completing the assessment (i.e. the unit standards used in the PTE's courses), as outlined in 'Requirements to be met to maintain consent to assess' ([Consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards Rules 2011 \(v3-2018\) – Part 2 – Maintaining consent and approval, 10.1 \(b\)](#))
- ensure all teaching staff obtain or work towards credit for Unit 4098 and a qualification in adult education and training as outlined in 'Staff selection, appraisal and development' ([Consent and Moderation Requirements Reference 0113 \(v11\) – Criterion 3 – Staff selection, appraisal and development](#)).

Appendix 1

Key Findings from student evaluation surveys between 2016 – 2019:

Statement	2013- 2015	2016 – 2019
Excellent or very good satisfaction with training	87.5%	96.2%
Strongly agreed that training prepare them for employment	61%	63.5%
Their trainer's instructions were always clear & easy to follow	87.4%	90.3%
(new question) - How well was the training tailored to meet your individual needs, including the use of real-world examples to assist your learning?	-	86%
Their trainer always had good knowledge for the subjects they were teaching	90.1%	96.3%
Their trainer was well prepared for lessons	92%	95%
The teaching environment was always professional and suitable for training	95%	97.4%
The teaching material was easy to follow	70%	81%

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. 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.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. 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 fraud⁶*
- *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.*

⁶ 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.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 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, training schemes and consents to assess and 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. 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). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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