



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Step by Step Training Limited

Date of report: 1 August 2024

About Step by Step Training Limited

Step by Step Training provides one-to-one, tailored computer and vocational training to individuals who are returning to employment, or to small groups within businesses requiring upskilling for their roles. Training can be fully online, fully face-to-face or a blend and is available throughout New Zealand.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Level 1, 114 Bright Street, Gisborne
Eligible to enrol international students:	No
Number of students:	2024: domestic 246 students (33 equivalent full-time students) Māori 15 per cent, Pasifika 5 per cent, disabled 100 per cent International: nil
Number of staff:	Six full-time, two part-time Seven full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	Step by Step Training Limited – provider page on NZQA website
Last EER outcome:	In February 2020, NZQA was Confident in both Step by Step Training’s educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vocational skills training including the Computer Essentials micro-credential [ID:115053] and Literacy and Numeracy training• Most of the training completed by Step by Step is for students referred by ACC or other organisations. These students are often completing rehabilitation and moving back into work, primarily in different, more sedentary employment.

They require new or additional technology and literacy and numeracy skills.

- Step by Step has also moved into providing contextualised computer training to businesses throughout New Zealand.

MoE number: 8367
NZQA reference: C55660
Dates of virtual EER: 7-9 May 2024

Summary of results

Step by Step Training stakeholders gain highly valued, relevant outcomes through contextualised, individualised training programmes. Step by Step has developed self-assessment frameworks that effectively use data and information to support review of most priority need areas.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- The high percentage of students completing courses and gaining improved digital skills and literacy and enhanced wellbeing, contributes to high-value outcomes for students and stakeholders.
- Step by Step meets students' emerging needs and ensures the relevance of the training through contextualised and individualised training. The structured nature of the training material engages students toward successful assessment. The validity of assessment is assured through comprehensive moderation.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Step by Step's support mechanisms are appropriate for the type of students in training. The PTE understands students' needs and goals. Strong processes enable flexibility to respond to students' changing contexts and emerging needs. Informing staff and students about their obligations and rights under the Code of Practice could support future self-review.
- Strong academic leadership and clear organisational purpose and direction supports business sustainability and effective staff management. Involving staff in operational reviews supports staff to feel valued and promotes teamwork.
- Step by Step Training has begun work on understanding the needs and aspirations of Māori and Pasifika communities. This work aims to support the current work of developing inclusive training material and staff cultural understanding.

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- Effective use of data and information sources informs comprehensive self-assessment and deliberate, informed decision-making. A few areas of self-assessment need to be strengthened to maintain high quality educational performance.
 - Most of Step by Step's compliance accountabilities are managed and monitored appropriately. Some areas relating to self-assessment of programme delivery could be strengthened.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Most of Step by Step’s students are mature second-chance learners looking to retrain after a period of being unable to work due to injury. Each student’s needs and goals are met through a tailored computer training package aimed at providing the appropriate technology, skills and knowledge to enable graduates to undertake relevant employment. Feedback enables Step by Step to understand that the training is also giving the students a sense of accomplishment, increased confidence, increased self-esteem and digital literacy. A comprehensive monitoring of attendance provides prompt support and promotes greater chances for success.</p> <p>Some training packages have embedded unit standards. Achievement of unit standards is high and consistently above 97 per cent. For those training programmes where unit standards are not assessed, Step by Step uses a rubric to gauge the level of competence shown in using the acquired skills and knowledge. The ability to competently show skill acquisition is consistently above 99 per cent. The internal moderation of every assessment validates such high achievement.</p> <p>For the few students who do not achieve, Step by Step captures their reasons. Step by Step has used this information to create an impact framework which has supported operation management, staff professional development and programme and support review. Step by Step has also shared their understandings with ACC to support future referrals.</p> <p>Completion rates among priority group learners (Māori, Pasifika, disabled) are on par with the other students.</p>

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

Conclusion:	Step by Step provides an essential service to ACC. Students achieve unit standards and skills and knowledge. Step by Step has a strong understanding of the factors that influence achievement and non-achievement. The PTE uses this knowledge effectively for further improvement.
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Step by Step provides tailored training that has a proven record of high value to their stakeholders. The trainers have a clear focus on individual goals and students' changing needs during rehabilitation. This ensures student wellbeing is front and centre. Step by Step understands that their training supports whānau and communities, with students willing to engage with their families and feeling supported to overcome their limits. Such feedback supports programme review.</p> <p>The preferred provider status with referral organisations and the expansion into private business clientele indicates an organisation that is consistently delivering valued outcomes. Step by Step is listening to its stakeholders (including trainers) and uses feedback to introduce new courses, develop programmes, and make effective decisions for ongoing work.</p> <p>Step by Step's governing group has developed training partnerships with Māori iwi throughout New Zealand, as well as with industries where Māori and Pasifika are a predominant workforce. Step by Step is using these relationships to better understand the needs of Māori and Pasifika. The PTE is also working alongside Māori and Pasifika staff to embed cultural connections in the training delivery.</p>
Conclusion:	Step by Step provides highly valued training outcomes that support individuals to re-engage with family, work and community, and also respond to emerging workplace needs. Effective use of feedback and information has led to valued improvements throughout the PTE's operation.

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:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Step by Step maintains regular contact with stakeholders to ensure the training remains relevant and meets current and emerging needs. The collaborative approach between trainers and training co-ordinators ensures that the regular capture of progress is used in review of the whole training process², as well as for each individual student.</p> <p>Students remain engaged and their wellbeing is enhanced in several ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step by Step trainers are using a delivery mode that best meets the needs of the client or student. The PTE responds promptly when changes are needed. • The training and resources are introduced in easy steps to promote learning. • Activities are practical in nature, enabling immediate practice/application of the skills and knowledge gained. • Contextualised activities reflect the needs of the workplace or type of work that students are in or moving to. <p>Assessment occurs when the students have shown competency in the component skills (attested through an appraisal form) and feel comfortable with the pre-assessment practice. Assessments are internally moderated. As student numbers increase, the move to quarterly moderation of 5 per cent of assessments may prove to be a more sustainable amount. This comprehensive internal process and positive external</p>

² As Step by Step purchases its training and assessment material from other providers, the PTE relies on those providers to update the material. Step by Step focusses on reviewing and updating delivery of the training and assessment to ensure students gain current knowledge and skills.

	moderation ³ supports and validates the assessments. It also supports the regular delivery review process.
Conclusion:	Programme review is ongoing and responsive, supported by regular interactions with stakeholders and comprehensive moderation. The training provided is authentic, engaging, relevant and responsive to current and emerging needs.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Step by Step completes a training needs analysis at the beginning of every training programme. This process captures the needs and goals of each student and the referrer or client. Once the training is approved, students are provided with all the resources needed, a student handbook and their course and assessment outline. These materials are clear and are used.</p> <p>Fortnightly progress reports and completion of an acquisition of skills (appraisal) form (captured at every training session) ensures students are aware of their progress. Such regular capture also informs progress reporting to the purchasing client. Any emerging barriers to learning can be addressed quickly – often with more practice time.⁴ Step by Step also uses this information in staff and programme review.</p> <p>Regular feedback from stakeholders has highlighted areas where review needs to occur – such as an improvement in literacy and numeracy assessment and training. Experienced staff have designed new profiling, training and support tools, with positive effect. Further expansion to understand the impact of learning difficulties on learning</p>

³ Only one external moderation finding in September 2022 was ‘not met’ due to an incomplete sample being provided. A few recommendations made in the other external moderations are around marking clarity and capture of all feedback, including those in observations.

⁴ Step by Step immediately informs the referring client if external support services are needed.

	<p>uptake could be considered to further inform current levels of support.</p> <p>Additional feedback from trainers and students has highlighted the lack of training material tailored to Māori and Pasifika contexts. Step by Step acknowledges this as a gap and has begun engaging with Māori and Pasifika stakeholders to support Step by Step’s cultural capability.</p> <p>The regular feedback from stakeholders is used by the chief executive to inform Step by Step’s self-review of activity required by the pastoral care of tertiary and international learners Code of Practice. Informing students and staff about their obligations and rights under the Code could further inform this review.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Step by Step staff provide appropriate and flexible support to identify and promptly respond to emerging needs. Barriers are actively minimised through regular progress monitoring. Stakeholder feedback supports ongoing development, and the PTE has plans to rectify recognised gaps.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Step by Step is part of a wider group of organisations focussed on the sustainability of communities. Governance has set strategic priorities for the group with this focus in mind. Step by Step has developed its own strategic action plan to respond to the training priority, and formally and informally reports on progress to governance.⁵ This supports the future growth and sustainability of Step by Step.</p> <p>Step by Step is preparing to undertake further training opportunities such as providing bespoke training to businesses. A recent restructure to build a stronger</p>

⁵ The wider group, Two Tales, is owned and operated by the directors of Step by Step. These directors operate out of the same head office and are therefore in daily informal contact. This is supported by quarterly formal, minuted meetings.

	<p>management and administration team has occurred to support this.</p> <p>Step by Step's organisational purpose and direction is clear and supports strong academic leadership. Ongoing use of data and information to inform decision-making ensures that effective change and improvement is occurring and emerging needs are recognised and responded to promptly.</p> <p>Resources to enable current training are comprehensive and targeted. A significant investment to increase laptop computers for loan to students ensures that the training is accessible and meaningful. Feedback from stakeholders supports further effective resource management.</p> <p>Step by Step employs staff to manage the training, while all tutorial staff are contracted. A rigorous induction supports the tutors into their roles. Step by Step pays for the professional development that ensures the tutors meet the requirements of unit standard consent and moderation. Comprehensive training resources ensure consistency of practice, and regular staff reporting enables review. Management use of tutorial experience and knowledge in supporting programme design and development results in staff feeling they can contribute and are valued.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Strong, innovative governance and strategic priorities support the embedding of a clear organisational purpose and direction. Strong academic leadership ensures data is used effectively to inform improvement and change. A pool of experienced, passionate teaching staff feel valued and able to contribute to the development of Step by Step.</p>

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Comprehensive policies and procedures guide effective monitoring and management of compliance accountabilities and all aspects of the operation. Step by Step uses its student management system to track when reporting or when attestations are due. Policies and procedures are</p>

	<p>regularly reviewed to ensure continued alignment with changes in regulations or practice.</p> <p>Step by Step understands the compliance requirements around training and maintaining the business. Step by Step values engagement with external bodies as it enables them to further fine-tune their operation and understanding. Step by Step responded promptly to address concerns NZQA raised, such as: needing to inform NZQA of the change to the head office address; separating out complaints and incident summaries from the Code review; and updating the unit standard version numbers on the website.</p> <p>Step by Step captures formal/critical and informal/non-critical incidents as well as negative feedback or near misses in registers for complaints and health and safety matters. These sources of information inform programme and support review as well as further compliance management.</p> <p>Step by Step has outlined learning, assessment and self-directed learning hours for the micro-credential and each unit standard delivered. The PTE monitors the learning and assessment hours of the training. However, self-directed learning hours are not monitored. Step by Step is investigating the purchase of a learning management system that would allow tracking of engagement with the set 'homework' activities. To alert students to the need to practise after class, Step by Step needs to advertise the full breakdown of hours associated with the courses.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Step by Step monitors and manages its compliance accountabilities relatively effectively. It uses information arising from this monitoring to support operational review. Continued engagement with external partners may support the strengthening of procedures relating to minor compliance expectations.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 Vocational skills training including the Computer Essentials micro-credential [ID:115053] and Literacy and Numeracy training

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

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 Training Limited:

- Develop staff and students' understanding of their obligations and rights under the Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Students Code of Practice to support future self-review.
- Advertise all of the time approved for the training provided. This will ensure clients and students are aware of the expectation of practising between classes and will support Step by Step in collecting data about self-directed learning for review purposes.

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.

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

Appendix 1

Table 1. Unit standard completion

	US assessments sat	All achieved	Māori achieved (%)	Pasifika achieved (%)	NZP achieved (%)	US not achieved
2020	358	99.7%	100	89	100	1
2021	297	98.1%	100	95	97.5	6
2022	367	98.1%	100	100	99	5
2023	405	97%	100	100	95	12

Source: Step by Step completion data

Table 2. Non-NZQA course achievement

Learning outcome	Excellent (achieved all)	Good (achieved some)	Not achieved
All	84%	16%	0 (0.8%)
NZP	82%	17%	1%
Māori	84%	15%	1%
Pasifika	83%	16%	1%

Source: Step by Step completion data

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 2022, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

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 excluding universities, and*
- maintaining micro-credential approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022, the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022 and the Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2022 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, micro-credentials 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 2022. 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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