

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Life Care Consultants Ltd

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 2 February 2012

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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:	Hamilton
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1997
Number of students:	Over 10,000 domestic students per year on half-day and one-day first aid courses. No international students
Number of staff:	Managing director plus approximately 30 salaried staff. Other contractors as required
Scope of active accreditation:	Course Accreditations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First Aid Refresher Course (level 2)</li><li>• Work Based First Aid Course (level 2)</li></ul> Unit standard consent to assess: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Various domain and unit standard accreditations up to level 3, in the areas of first aid, health, and well-being.</li></ul>
Sites:	Head office and training centre, as above. Other training occurs at multiple sites throughout New Zealand, depending on client needs.
Distinctive characteristics:	Life Care Consultants Ltd (Life Care) is a private training establishment based in Hamilton, but operating nationally, providing first aid, health, and well-being training and consultancy for a variety of corporate, public body, school, prison, and

individual clients.

Recent significant changes: N/A

Previous quality assurance history: No history of non-compliance. At the last quality assurance visit by NZQA, an audit in 2008, and at the previous audit (2005), the provider was fully compliant.

Other: N/A

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope for the external evaluation and review consisted of the mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management, and strategy.

The following focus area includes all of Life Care's training activity:

- Training needs analysis, design, and delivery.

## 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 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 external evaluation and review (EER) was conducted in June 2011. Prior to the site visit, the lead evaluator conducted telephone interviews with a sample of eight of Life Care's corporate clients. A one-day site visit was made to the Life Care head office in Hamilton where a course was in progress. The EER team, consisting of the lead evaluator and one other evaluator, met with the managing director and company owner, the sales manager, administration manager, training and development manager, administration staff (six), teaching staff (four), and students (12) from a public first aid course. Subsequent to the EER visit, NZQA also surveyed a number of recent participants in Life Care Consultants' courses.

Life Care has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received were 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 **Life Care Consultants Ltd.**

Life Care Consultants Ltd (Life Care) delivers and assesses first aid and occasional short courses in health and well-being as requested by its clients. Learner achievement is almost 100 per cent. Life Care has sound assessment tools and a robust moderation process used to confirm that assessment outcomes are valid.

Feedback from clients indicates that courses have an appropriate mix of theory and practice and that courses are delivered in a manner that enables learners to understand and achieve.

Life Care has student support structures that are appropriate to the needs of the students and minimise barriers to achieving.

Discussion with stakeholders and sample checks of staff CVs indicated that Life Care employs trainers who have sound skills and experience; it engages well with its clients and profession and is valued for the positive contribution it makes to the organisations and communities in which it operates.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of Life Care Consultants Ltd.

Life Care has established a highly reflective organisation which has embraced the self-assessment process and is using it effectively. Records indicate that self-assessment is well embedded and has been practised for many years. Life Care has comprehensive systems to gather and collate feedback from learners and client organisations. This information is then used to inform improvements to teaching practice and course delivery.

Staff at Life Care demonstrated a good understanding of the factors that lead to student achievement and rigorously analyse and discuss ideas for maintaining achievement and making the courses more useful and enjoyable for clients and students.

Life Care identifies the learning needs of individual organisations and students and addresses these needs well through responsive customer service, good teaching techniques, and appropriate student support.

## TEO response

Life Care's submissions on the draft version of this report were considered by NZQA before the report was finalised. However, Life Care wishes to note that it still disagrees with some of the findings made and the processes that led to them.

# 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**.

Both the organisation and its staff have a strong focus on learner achievement. The courses that Life Care delivers are structured with the presumption that every learner will pass. For instance, fewer than five learners have not passed the course so far this year, and an explanation as to why those learners were not able to pass the assessment was available. Learners who do not pass the assessment on the first attempt are offered opportunities to re-sit assessments or attend another course free of charge.

In addition to a thorough internal moderation programme, Life Care has complied with and met all NZQA external moderation requirements. Life Care uses scenario-based assessment with individuals who demonstrate their competence in a manner aligned to their workplace or community situation.

Staff at Life Care demonstrated a good understanding of the factors that lead to student achievement and regularly analyse and discuss ideas for improving achievement and making the courses more useful and enjoyable for students.

Life Care has a sophisticated “dashboard” which enables all staff to easily access key performance information around student achievement and satisfaction. The dashboard information is refreshed at least once a month. The dashboards are accessible to all staff and the information is discussed, analysed, and acted upon regularly.

## 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**.

Evidence from stakeholders, including learners, indicates that Life Care engages well with its industry clients and is valued for the contribution that it makes.

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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.

Client organisations interviewed reported high levels of satisfaction with Life Care's services, and Life Care believes that its reputation is centred around the long-term benefits that the training it provides will have for the client company and the New Zealand public.

Most of the learners attending Life Care courses are in employment. The courses are directly related to that employment which is often in high-risk occupations or takes place in remote locations. Through the courses, learners acquire useful skills and knowledge which they can apply within their workplace. Clients spoken to reported that the first aid courses delivered by Life Care helped staff to gain confidence. The Department of Corrections, to whom Life Care is contracted to provide first aid courses to inmates, reported that first aid qualifications helped inmates to gain employment on release.

Three of the eight clients interviewed during the visit were able to identify specific incidences where a life had been saved as a direct result of intervention by a staff member who had previously completed a first aid course.

Given the shortness and specificity of the courses it is unrealistic to measure other benefits or forms of achievement from the training provided.

### 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 **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Life Care's regular and ongoing interaction with its stakeholders is a stand-out feature of the organisation. Mechanisms employed include ongoing contact with clients and students, student satisfaction surveys, client surveys, and meeting with industry. Life Care has developed and uses a customer relationship management database to capture feedback and provide information for analysis and improvement.

Life Care has, over time, developed a delivery style which is largely practical, scenario-based, and includes a minimal amount of written material. This delivery style is in direct response to ongoing analysis of the needs of clients and what works best for them. Life Care has developed, and has had approved by NZQA, a workplace first aid course which includes pre-course reading and self-directed study to enable the course to be delivered and assessed in one day. Corporate clients and individual students indicated that the pre-course work and shorter class time were significant determinants in their choice of first aid provider. Subsequent to the EER visit, NZQA surveyed 119 Life Care graduates and found that forty five percent of them had either not received, or not read, the pre-course material. It was of concern to the EER team that Life Care's own systems had not already identified this issue and sought to rectify it as the course was approved by NZQA

with the clear understanding that all students would receive pre-course material and that Life Care would, at the beginning of every course, ascertain that all students had engaged with the pre-course material.

First aid courses in schools are offered over a longer period to match the learning needs of school students.

Training is delivered where and when the client requires it. In most cases, teaching premises are hired on a casual basis or provided by the corporate client. Life Care has systems and processes to ensure that premises are fit for purpose and that the learning environments it creates are suited to the needs of learners.

Life Care has a number of trainers available, and for any given course uses the trainer who will best match the learning style and industry background of the target group. Trainers reported that they start every course preparation with an introduction to the background and work of every learner so they can then tailor delivery and examples to those specific industries. Trainers also work with client organisations to develop teaching scenarios that are contextualised to the workplace environments of learners.

#### 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**.

Life Care's trainers and learners relate well to each other. Trainers create an open, friendly teaching environment and make learning activities interesting and challenging. Life Care has developed a "toy box" of teaching ideas, tools, and scenarios which are shared among the staff who are also encouraged to contribute their own ideas. Staff gave examples of several innovative methods of delivering first aid that they have used successfully.

Trainers provide learners with effective, timely feedback about their learning progress, and all assessments are completed on the day of the course. Course results are entered into Life Care's database within 24 hours of completion and uploaded to NZQA the following day.

Life Care has a comprehensive induction and on-job training programme for its trainers. Additionally, the organisation ensures that all staff hold the minimum professional and adult teaching qualifications specified by NZQA.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> As prescribed in the document "First Aid as a Life Skill: Training Requirements for Quality Provision of Unit Standard Based First Aid Training" (December 2010).

All staff are formally performance reviewed on an ongoing basis. The dashboards provide performance data against key indicators and this information is accessible and transparent.

Life Care brings all trainers from throughout New Zealand together at least twice a year and again at least twice in each region (North, South, and Central). At these meetings, much of the discussion is centred around teaching practice.

Life Care has comprehensive systems to gather feedback from learners and client organisations. This information is systematically used to inform improvements to teaching practice.

## 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Life Care does not face the same learner support requirements as providers of longer courses, but what support services are provided are appropriate to the courses delivered. Learning support is focused on enabling learners to achieve immediate success. Learners with reading and writing difficulties are able to complete the assessment verbally or practically. In these cases there are formal processes to ensure that the assessment is valid and consistent. Staff recognise and support learners experiencing “test anxiety” by offering the opportunity to undertake the assessment after the class is finished for the day.

Pre-course information and guidance is appropriate to the programmes offered and learners commented that they found the enrolment process very friendly. All learners are sent pre-course reading and internet links. Corporate clients who were interviewed indicated that they ensure that the pre-course information is distributed to all students. Life Care has worked with some of its client organisations who have less academically able employees, to ensure that a member of the client’s staff takes employees through the pre-course work prior to course commencement.

Life Care has recognised and regularly discussed among staff the needs of the various cultural groups who attend the courses and makes a sincere effort to be sensitive to those needs. To date, Life Care has not formally collected data regarding ethnicity.

## 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**.

Life Care has a very good understanding of its business. Its purpose and direction are clear and articulated throughout the organisation. The business has adopted a set of core values that are embedded into everyday practices and culture. The organisation is aware that the success and sustainability of its business is dependent upon meeting the needs of clients.

Life Care has detailed and robust procedures for resolving complaints. Feedback from clients was that any complaint or feedback was addressed promptly and appropriately.

Effective resourcing is planned and provided for all courses. The quality of course material is good and the training environments support learning.

The organisation has, over time, employed, developed, and retained a competent, well-qualified, and dedicated group of staff whom it supports effectively to improve educational achievement. Courses are scheduled to ensure that there is always a back-up trainer available in the event of sickness or other unplanned unavailability.

Monitoring of performance within the organisation is regular, systemised, transparent, and robust.

## 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: Training needs analysis, design, and delivery.

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

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

# Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from this 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 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/>*

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

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

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