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External Evaluation and Review Report

Wood Wise

Date of report: 17 September 2020

About Wood Wise

Wood Wise provides on-site training and technical assistance for New Zealand's solid wood processing industry. Courses are delivered to trainees in employment and are generally one to five days' duration and are customised to suit company, site and individual requirements.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	52 White St, Rotorua
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 130 trainees (part-time) enrolled in 2020
Number of staff:	2.5 full-time equivalents ¹
TEO profile:	See Wood Wise on the NZQA website. Wood Wise has an associate company, Grade Right (NZ) Ltd, which carries out product quality inspections and audits for the timber industry. Wood Wise and Grade Right have clients in common.
Last EER outcome:	The previous external evaluation and review (EER) of Wood Wise, held in March 2016, resulted in summative judgements of Highly Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	All training design and delivery ²
MoE number:	8454
NZQA reference:	C38418
Dates of EER visit:	20 and 21 July 2020

¹ This represents five staff working across both Wood Wise and its associate company Grade Right.

² Current training includes NZ Certificate in Solid Wood Processing levels 2-5 delivered on job and in block course format to industry trainees. This includes the NZQA-approved training scheme and, recently, various unit standards leading to these qualifications.

Summary of Results

Wood Wise is a high quality, specialty provider which produces graduates who are valued by employers and who contribute positively to the solid wood industry.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Wood Wise has high course and qualification completions, along with positive trainee satisfaction with their training. Trainees are achieving their vocational and personal goals. Long-term relationships with employers also signify that the outcomes for trainees are valued.
- Wood Wise is using its industry and community connections and relationships effectively to develop and deliver programmes that meet individual and employer needs.
- Courses are taught by experienced, qualified staff who use their significant industry experience to ensure the education is relevant and engaging. Staff are involved in some programme reviews, but greater participation in evaluation and discussion about teaching practice could lead to continuous improvement of teaching.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- The organisation is well managed and has a clear purpose that is reflected throughout the operation. Greater involvement of staff and minor shareholders in identifying and setting direction could solidify this. Educational delivery is well-resourced. Important compliance accountabilities are being effectively managed.
- Wood Wise has effective self-assessment that evaluates its programmes and activities on an ongoing basis. However, much of this self-assessment is informal and intuitive. While self-assessment is currently fit for purpose, given the small scale of the organisation, the challenge is to formalise processes, particularly for improved understanding of delivery performance to sustain current levels of achievement.

Key evaluation question findings³

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Wood Wise trainees have achieved excellent results. Course and qualification completion rates have consistently ranged between 95 and 100 per cent over several years. All trainees who remain in a traineeship eventually complete their qualification, including progression from level 3 to level 4. The few withdrawals occur when students leave the industry or cease their traineeship.</p> <p>The nature of the achievement at Wood Wise is a combination of completing whole or partial unit standards, with the balance of the learning and assessment taking place on the job, as is the nature of training managed by the industry training organisation, Competenz.</p> <p>Interviews with external stakeholders indicate that the trainees are acquiring useful skills and knowledge contextualised to the trainees' plant and equipment. This enables the trainees to apply their learning immediately in their employment. Wood Wise has a strong emphasis on the development of 'transferable skills' such as literacy and self-confidence. Employers report that these are valued outcomes from the training. Student evaluation feedback is positive regarding the integration of on-job and off-job learning.</p> <p>Achievement is supported by accurate recording and some analysis of progress, although more opportunity for staff to formally discuss trainee learning progress would be useful.</p>
Conclusion:	Wood Wise trainees are achieving strongly across the programmes it delivers. Achievement data is regularly monitored and can be further improved by analysing the reasons for the slower progress or non-achievement of a relatively small number of trainees.

³ 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>Wood Wise is strongly industry focussed and committed to ensuring that trainees and the industry receive high value from the training and services that they deliver. Evidence from stakeholders indicates that Wood Wise engages exceptionally well with its industry and is highly valued for the contribution that it makes.</p> <p>Valued outcomes are being realised across all programmes through producing graduates who are valued by employers throughout the solid wood industry.</p> <p>Wood Wise views repeat business with client organisations as a key measure of the value of the outcomes. The core of Wood Wise's business revolves around a small number of clients, most of whom have had a relationship with the PTE over a number of years (in some cases over 20 years). The continuing purchase of services from Wood Wise is evidence of the perceived value of the training.</p> <p>The clients spoken to during the EER were very satisfied with the value they received from the training provided by Wood Wise, although the determination of that value tended to be intuitive and anecdotal rather than measured. The informal practice of self-assessment of valued outcomes currently works well in Wood Wise's context. However, it is worth considering a more structured way of capturing and analysing valued outcomes in order to identify trends and possible concerns.</p>
Conclusion:	Wood Wise is strongly industry focussed and committed to ensuring that trainees and the industry receive value from the programmes and services they deliver.

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>Wood Wise’s regular and ongoing interaction with its stakeholders is a strong feature of the organisation. Mechanisms employed include ongoing contact with clients and trainees, trainee satisfaction surveys, client surveys, end of training discussions, and participation in industry forums.</p> <p>Wood Wise’s client focus is typified in the way the PTE schedules the training around the needs of clients and delivers training where and when it is needed. Trainers also work with client organisations to develop teaching scenarios contextualised to the workplace. For instance, when Wood Wise contracts to a new client they will visit the site to familiarise themselves with the plant and work style so that training can be contextualised to it.</p> <p>Wood Wise teaching staff have extensive industry and professional experience, and an obvious natural passion and ability to engage with a range of trainees. A limitation to this is that staff are not regularly participating in formal professional development relating to teaching, and there is limited opportunity for staff to discuss teaching practice. Peer observation of teaching is irregular and there were no examples of how it led to improvements. Most of the teaching staff hold an adult teaching qualification but they all completed it at least 15 to 20 years ago. Ongoing professional development for teaching staff will assist them to keep their teaching strategies current and ultimately lead to an improved experience for trainees.</p> <p>Assessment materials are externally moderated by Competenz before first use, and there is a schedule for external post-assessment moderation, the results of which were positive throughout 2016-2020. Internal moderation is sound and regularly conducted.</p> <p>Wood Wise has sound systems to gather feedback from trainees and client organisations. However, a more systematic approach following the gathering of feedback, which could include reporting back to trainees on the action taken, would be a useful</p>

	improvement.
Conclusion:	Wood Wise's courses are effectively designed and delivered to match the needs of the trainees, their workplaces and the solid wood industry.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Trainees at Wood Wise receive active and ongoing social and academic support from staff throughout the organisation. Trainees are engaged in their learning, and they have opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a range of contexts that are relevant to their needs.</p> <p>Trainee learning goals are well understood. Individual performance is closely monitored, and trainees are provided with useful and timely feedback on their progress.</p> <p>Tutors teach small groups of trainees which enables them to have a good understanding of progress and learning barriers and to provide individual support when needed. From experience, staff have developed a comprehensive appreciation of the needs of trainees and have developed strategies to address those needs. In particular, these strategies address the literacy, numeracy and language challenges typical of many trainees in the industry.</p> <p>Repeat business means Wood Wise staff often provide ongoing support to trainees over several years. This support often continues post-graduation as many graduates contact staff to seek advice when their roles or specialist equipment change.</p>
Conclusion:	From initial enrolment, through to and beyond course completion, trainees receive high quality pastoral and learning support from Wood Wise tutors and administrative staff.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Wood Wise employs and retains highly qualified and experienced staff, whose experience and know-how are valued. As previously discussed, a more planned approach to staff professional development, especially related to teaching practice, is needed.</p> <p>The PTE is well equipped with physical and learning resources, in addition to those provided by companies on site, for the current number of trainees. There are systems in place to monitor resourcing so that there are always sufficient resources of industry standard to meet the learning needs of the trainees.</p> <p>Wood Wise has a clear focus on, and clear understanding of, its core business. The business model is sustainable, evident in over two decades of successful operation; a succession plan is in place.</p> <p>Monitoring of staff performance is transparent and open, although not always systematically applied. Possibly as a result of the longevity of the operation, performance management has become largely intuitive and informal. A fresh and more systematic review of this aspect may identify areas for improvement. These, and several other observations in this report, were also made at the 2016 EER.</p>
Conclusion:	Wood Wise is responsibly led and well managed. Review processes are mainly informal, reflective and intuitive, fitting the size and context of the organisation. There could be value in further documentation of self-assessment and greater involvement of staff in future analysis and reflection.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Wood Wise has a culture that includes an appropriate emphasis on being compliant. Compliance management responsibility sits primarily with the managing director, with compliance tasks and obligations distributed to staff as appropriate. The management of compliance is mostly reactive and informal rather than part of a scheduled process. Nevertheless, it has been effective so far.</p> <p>Evidence of effective compliance management at Wood Wise include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk management and health and safety planning which is monitored regularly by senior management. • Training sites are evaluated before they are used. This gives information to determine whether the site is safe and suitable to be used. • NZQA attestations and returns have been submitted within required timeframes. • The programmes at Wood Wise are being delivered consistent with NZQA approvals. • Wood Wise has met compliance obligations associated with moderation, with both NZQA and Competenz. • The PTE works positively with agencies, for instance WorkSafe.
Conclusion:	Wood Wise has a clear understanding of its compliance accountabilities and manages these well to ensure obligations are met.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Training design and delivery

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 Wood Wise:

- Investigate and effect ongoing opportunities for staff to review, discuss and further develop their teaching practice.
- Adopt a more structured method of capturing and analysing valued outcomes in order to identify trends and possible concerns.

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

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 fraud⁴*
- *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.*

⁴ 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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