



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

# External Evaluation and Review Report

Wood Wise Limited

Date of report: 13 March 2025

# About Wood Wise Limited

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*Wood Wise registered as a private training establishment in 1996. The organisation is a well-established and major supplier of on-site training and technical assistance for New Zealand's solid wood processing industry.*

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Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	C/o Forest Research Campus, Te Papa Tipu Innovation Park, 49 Sala Street, Rotorua
Eligible to enrol international students:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 130 part-time trainees enrolled in 2023, with 66 completions (training continued into 2024); includes 26 Māori trainees and seven Pasifika trainees. No trainees self-identified with a disability.  International: nil
Number of staff:	Three full-time equivalents (one full-time and four part-time), one contracted tutor
TEO profile:	See <a href="#">Wood Wise</a> profile 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:	NZQA was Highly Confident in Wood Wise's educational performance and Confident in the PTE's self-assessment at the last EER in 2020.
Scope of evaluation:	All training design and delivery <sup>1</sup>
MoE number:	8454

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<sup>1</sup> Current training includes New Zealand Certificates in Solid Wood Processing (Levels 2-5) delivered on-job and to industry trainees. This includes the NZQA-approved training scheme and combinations of unit standards leading to these qualifications.

NZQA reference: C57362

Dates of EER visit: 29 and 30 October 2024

# Summary of results

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*Wood Wise's performance meets the expectations of employers, trainees and their contractual arrangements with Competenz Industry Training Organisation. Self-assessment is fit for purpose and appropriate for the size of the business and the operating context.*

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## **Highly Confident in educational performance**

- Trainees have continued to achieve strongly. Trainees are assessed against unit standards and gain credits. These also contribute towards obtaining qualifications, gaining specialised skills and knowledge, and strengthening transferable skills, including self-confidence and communication. These outcomes are highly valued by trainees and employers and meet the needs of stakeholders.

## **Confident in capability in self-assessment**

- The value for employers from the training is evidenced by Wood Wise's long-standing relationships and repeat business. The feedback collected from employers since the last EER validates this.
- Tutors maintain their technical and industry knowledge, which is recognised by industry. Their experience supports the training's high levels of credibility with stakeholders.
- External moderation outcomes from Competenz and Hang-Ara-Rua Workforce Development Council have required improvements in some assessment practices and tutor training.
- Wood Wise supports the trainees effectively to achieve their learning goals in the workplace.
- The overall governance and management of Wood Wise supports strong educational achievement.
- The director provides strong academic and business leadership, and succession planning is underway to future-proof the organisation.
- Trainee progress is closely monitored, reported

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on and used to manage the business operations. Other self-assessment activities are more informal, fit for purpose, and appropriate for the size of the business and the operating context.

- Wood Wise generally manages its compliance accountabilities well.

# Key evaluation question findings<sup>2</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Wood Wise trainees have continued to achieve excellent results since the last EER. Trainees who stay for the length of their programme generally complete their unit standards and courses, and/or gain a qualification at levels 2-5 on the qualifications framework.</p> <p>Wood Wise's analysis of withdrawals since early 2020 has identified that these increased from 18 in 2020 to 29 in 2023, with a peak of 37 in 2022. While these withdrawals are beyond Wood Wise's control, they recognise that this trend is the result of mobility in the industry and within companies, or trainees leaving the industry or moving overseas. Economic pressures in the solid wood industry are also contributing to this trend.</p> <p>Trainees are acquiring useful and highly applicable skills and knowledge, such as specialist timber grading and machining skills. The learning and assessment takes place on the job, with a good balance of theory and application.</p> <p>Wood Wise has comprehensive systems for monitoring trainee progress and achievement. This is informed by data flows from and to Competenz, and is maintained at individual, cohort and company levels. This information is used effectively to manage workflow and training delivery.</p>
Conclusion:	Trainees have continued to achieve strongly since the last EER. Monitoring of trainee progress is effective, supports trainees' achievement, and informs Wood Wise's business operations. This evaluation found that while there may be further opportunities to analyse data more comprehensively, this is unlikely to influence outcomes

<sup>2</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

	and enhance achievement rates.
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## 1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>For many trainees, this may be the first formal qualification they have gained. This is an important achievement, a real confidence booster. For some, their achievement is further rewarded with further specialised training, a promotion, or a new role within the company. As these qualifications are recognised and respected by industry, trainees know their achievements are valued and transferable.</p> <p>Trainees can apply their learning immediately to their employment, contributing to production goals, quality and reducing wastage. Wood Wise also places importance on enhancing trainees' transferable skills such as communication and growing self-confidence. Interviews with external stakeholders confirmed that Wood Wise's training has these two-fold benefits, which are valued by both the trainees and companies.</p> <p>Employers interviewed during this evaluation said they valued the trainees' positive attitude to their work. As a result of the training, trainees gain an improved understanding of their jobs and the broader processes within the workplace and across the wider industry. Employers fund the high costs of training, with some offering training opportunities as a reward for employees who demonstrate reliability and commitment to work, and is an indicator of the value placed on the training.</p> <p>Wood Wise uses repeat business as a measure of the value they are offering industry. In response to the recommendation in the last EER report, Wood Wise has been collecting feedback from employers and publishing it on their website. The positive feedback confirms the PTE's view that their long-standing relationships, over three decades, provides evidence of the value to stakeholders and confirms that employers respect Wood Wise's experience and expertise.</p>
Conclusion:	The value of the training for employers is evidenced by

	Wood Wise's long-standing relationships, repeat business, and the feedback collected since the last EER. Trainees value their achievements and the promotion and career opportunities that can result from this upskilling.
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### 1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The programmes and qualifications offered by Wood Wise are well supported by and highly relevant to the solid wood industry. The Wood Wise director and tutors have previously provided professional input into standard-setting functions through expert advisory groups. The programme is aligned to current practices and designed to enhance the portability of trainee achievement. Trainees can also progress to specialist training within the programme.</p> <p>On-site learning environments are convenient and provide relevant learning opportunities that integrate company health and safety practices. Learning is realistic and meaningful. In between training sessions, trainees continue their learning, complete knowledge assessments, and practise their skills. Tutors conduct practical skill assessments in the workplace, supported by supervisor feedback on competency and the repeatability of assessed tasks.</p> <p>Wood Wise tutors have extensive industry experience and hold relevant adult education qualifications. They keep up to date with advances in industry technologies and practices that they observe when they are on site with the trainees, and also in their inspection work with Grade Right.</p> <p>Wood Wise's internal moderation process involves all staff and uses an increasing sample size by level, i.e. 10 per cent of level 2 and 50 per cent of level 5 scripts are moderated. Moderation results are shared at regular team meetings. As required by Competenz' contract, Wood Wise uses the industry training organisation's assessment material and participates in their moderation system. Recently some improvements have been required in model</p>



	<p>answers and the consistency of marking, with some tutor training provided.</p> <p>External moderation is also conducted by the Hanga-Ara-Rua Workforce Development Council (WDC) as this is now the standard-setting body. Recent site visits by the WDC for moderation purposes have identified some aspects of assessment practice that need improving, including adhering more closely to marking schedules and evidencing assessment decisions. Wood Wise is working on these assessment practice enhancements.</p>
Conclusion:	The industry-endorsed standards and qualifications and the related training delivered by Wood Wise aligns well with stakeholders' and trainees' needs. Improvements are being made in assessment practices to align with the expectations of Competenz and Hanga-Ara-Rua.

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

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Designed	<p>Wood Wise discusses training options with employers and trainees prior to confirming training and commencing the on-site training. This ensures everyone's goals are well understood and that the training is designed to provide the required learning and skill development.</p> <p>Wood Wise provides the trainees with handbooks setting out what the training involves and the expectations for success, and a training schedule is agreed with the company representative. Trainees' literacy and numeracy learning needs are identified through assessment using the Tertiary Education Commission's assessment tool, with the results communicated to the tutors.</p> <p>Small classes facilitated by relatable and qualified tutors ensure the learning is relevant and engaging. One-to-one support is provided by the tutors for those needing extra learning and to practise their skills. Catch-up classes are offered if required. Trainees' progress is monitored closely and reported back to the company representative, including for those skills requiring reinforcement and next steps.</p>

	<p>Trainees interviewed during the EER confirmed that the tutors are approachable and accessible, and that they are well supported and motivated by the learning. They expressed appreciation of the tutors' experience and knowledge of the broader industry, and are comfortable with learning on site in their regular work environment.</p> <p>The work-based nature of this training and the limited time tutors have with the trainees places some limitations on the extent of Wordwise's pastoral care and support. During the training sessions, which may be for a few hours each month, tutors consider trainees' personal and safety needs and bring to the attention of the company representative any concerns or unsafe practices.</p> <p>NZQA's recent monitoring of the Code of Practice<sup>3</sup> has provided feedback for improvements to future self-reviews in relation to reporting on trainee wellbeing and safety. At the time of the EER, there was evidence that Wood Wise is working towards this, for example by updating their website to meet the publishing requirements of the Code.</p>
Conclusion:	Trainees are well supported to achieve their learning goals in the workplace. Wood Wise is responding to NZQA's recommendations for improvements to reporting on trainees' wellbeing and safety.

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Wood Wise has a clear strategic direction: to be a supplier of high quality on-site training and technical assistance for New Zealand's solid wood processing industry. This strategy is reflected throughout the organisation. The company is well managed, with the increasing involvement of the minor shareholders as part of the succession plan that is underway. Effective administrative management supports the training operations and staff.</p> <p>Long-term relationships with the solid wood industry are a</p>

<sup>3</sup> [Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners\) Code of Practice 2021](#)

	<p>key feature of the company. Key relationships for the training business rely largely on the managing director. The Wood Wise team is well known and respected by the industry, with some having close connections through the other arm of the business, Grade Right.</p> <p>Currently the managing director provides academic leadership to the tutors, although there is capability within the team to take on this role. Quarterly team meetings provide opportunities to reflect on the training delivery, gain feedback from employers and trainees, and share resources. A replacement tutor has recently been brought into the business and was well supported during the transition.</p> <p>Competenz reports that Wood Wise is fulfilling its contractual requirements. The PTE is responsive and proactive in managing the training, reporting trainee progress, and in general communications.</p> <p>Although self-assessment at Wood Wise is not as systematic or as visible as in larger PTEs, it is appropriate for the size of the business and the operating environment. Wood Wise has made some enhancements to the collection and use of feedback from stakeholders, which has confirmed stakeholder's perception of the value of the training.</p>
Conclusion:	The overall governance and management of Wood Wise supports strong educational achievement. The managing director provides strong academic and business leadership, and succession planning is underway to future-proof the organisation.

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	<b>Good</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	Wood Wise is generally managing its compliance accountabilities well. NZQA's reporting requirements, including reporting trainee results, have been met in a timely manner. As mentioned (see 1.4), improvements are underway in publishing and reporting on trainee wellbeing and safety. The approved training scheme is incorporated

	<p>into programmes/qualifications and the unit standards assessed and reported.</p> <p>Competenz contractual requirements for monitoring and reporting trainee progress are being met, and Wood Wise is responsive to information requests.</p> <p>Wood Wise's quality management system includes general and academic policies which are regularly updated. An example of this is the recent updating of the moderation policy to align with external parties' expectations.</p> <p>Company health and safety policies are adhered to during the on-site training and practice exercises. Wood Wise conducts regular financial audits and reports the results to NZQA, as required.</p> <p>Wood Wise relies on regular communications from NZQA to prompt the PTE's reporting and supplying attestations. Developing an annual calendar of events could assist Wood Wise to plan their compliance reporting.</p>
Conclusion:	Compliance accountabilities are generally well managed.

## Focus areas

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

### 2.1 All training design and delivery

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>

## 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 Limited:

- Continue to look for improvements in the PTE's self-review of the Code, and the implementation of identified actions.
- Continue to enhance assessment and internal moderation practices, and ensure these are meeting the expectations of Hanga-Ara-Rua and Competenz.

## 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 fraud<sup>4</sup>*
- *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.*

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<sup>4</sup> 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](http://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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