



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

SPI Institute Ltd - South Pacific
Islands Institute Limited

Date of report: 5 December 2025

About SPI Institute Ltd - South Pacific Islands Institute Limited (SPII)

SPII is a long-standing, family-founded and intergenerationally owned Pacific Island, Hamilton-based PTE.¹ SPII delivers NZQA-approved foundation studies programmes at levels 1-2, and a level 3 pre-trades programme, primarily to Māori and Pasifika rangatahi, including rangatahi disengaged from education.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	43 Lake Road, Frankton, Hamilton
Eligible to enrol international students:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 44 students in 2025: 25 Māori, 11 Pasifika, eight other ethnicities. No students self-identified as disabled in 2025. SPII identifies that over 40 per cent of students are neurodiverse.
Number of staff:	Five full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	South Pacific Islands Institute
Last EER outcome:	At SPII's last EER (enquiry phase November 2023, final report April 2024), NZQA was Not Yet Confident in the PTE's educational performance and Confident in SPII's capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	The scope of this evaluation included all SPII's programme delivery: New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills (Level 1) 123532-4; New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills (Level 2) 124379-3; New Zealand Certificate in Electrical Pre-trade (Level 3) 127958.

¹ Private training establishment.

MoE number:	8952
NZQA reference:	C64570
Dates of EER visit:	17 and 18 September 2025

Summary of results

*SPiI has demonstrated improved and strong performance since the last EER.
Effective self-assessment has supported strengthened performance.*

Confident in educational performance

- SPiI stands out as a highly student-centred PTE, strongly focused on and successfully re-engaging rangatahi in education. Ākonga grow significantly and develop an understanding of their own potential and positive future aspirations.

Confident in capability in self- assessment

- Since the last EER, SPiI has moved from a reflection and transition phase to one of improved performance, growth and ongoing improvement. Gaps have been addressed. The implementation of authentic, effective processes has supported improved student outcomes.
- Management and kaiako have a wealth of experience and qualifications, used to ensure an empowering and highly effective learning environment that meets ākonga needs well.
- Stakeholder testimonials demonstrate the high regard and value within which SPiI is held. Student care and support is excellent. SPiI is planning to build on a valued, integrated hauora framework introduced in 2025.
- SPiI is continuing to develop its programme portfolio, including plans for new level 1 and 2 programmes to better match ākonga needs. The level 3 pre-trades programme provides a relevant pathway option.
- Self-assessment processes have been carefully developed to address gaps and the building of an insightful body of data to review performance and inform ongoing improvement.
- SPiI has excellent foundations in place to sustain and continue to build on strong processes and performance going forward.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Ākonga develop significantly and thrive in an empowering learning environment. They grow their skills and attributes, and their confidence, attitudes and self-responsibility. Ākonga learn to see their own potential and build trusting peer relationships focused on shared positive aspirations.</p> <p>Ākonga are positively engaged in learning, achieving unit standard credits and qualifications, and pathwaying from levels 1-3. This is significant for the 60-70 per cent³ of rangatahi who have been out of education for more than six months prior to enrolment (many disengaged from school or alternative education). Collating attendance data could add understanding to engagement trends.</p> <p>Overall completion rates⁴ have improved markedly since 2023 (data is shown in Appendix 1). Qualification completion rates for the level 3 programme in 2024 were low, reflecting various factors, including a programme and processes in transition. However, in 2025 projections are for a 65-70 per cent result. SPll's establishment of a triage and hauora framework⁵ has had a positive impact.</p> <p>Improved completions reflect SPll's close analysis of achievement data, and new systems and processes put in place supporting effective self-assessment.</p> <p>SPll has worked closely with students to greatly increase participation in initial literacy and numeracy testing. It is yet to have a progression dataset but is actively working</p>

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

³ SPll self-assessment data.

⁴ Predominantly for a student body of Māori and Pasifika ākonga.

⁵ Referred to more fully at key evaluation question findings 1.4.

	<p>with students to encourage end-of-programme testing. Anecdotally, some ākonga have made significant gains.</p> <p>As identified at the last EER, there is an opportunity for SPll to develop self-assessment to track achievement to meaningfully show ākonga growth. SPll's own success indicators would be valuable for this purpose. Self-reviewing individual unit standard completions data by cohort and over time would also support self-review.</p>
Conclusion:	Needed improvements to completion results have been achieved since 2023, supported by improved self-review and responsiveness to student needs.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Government and external agencies, as well as parents, affirm the significant contribution that SPll is making to the lives of ākonga, their whānau, and to society. Notably, SPll is a unique local provider actively and effectively re-engaging rangatahi in learning and future pathways.</p> <p>The outcomes described by whānau are outstanding, including for whānau who had been worrying at the trajectory that their rangatahi had been on. Such outcomes include improved family communication and relationships, and the changed goals, aspirational language and future focus of ākonga and their peer networks. Ākonga are enthusiastic about learning. They are out of bed and leaving home early to get to SPll. SPll is effectively keeping ākonga with learning challenges engaged and on-track, when previously they were lost and unable to keep up with the mainstream.</p> <p>SPll tracks students' destination outcomes, which are positive, though self-assessment information could be developed to better capture and show the wide-ranging and excellent valued outcomes being achieved.</p> <p>In 2024, 67 per cent of graduates (who were not previously in education or employment) had progressed to some form of further education, training or employment, including 33</p>

	per cent who had progressed to next-level study with SPIL. This is significant for ākonga initially presenting as 'high risk' and with complex trauma, limited whānau support and low levels of trust.
Conclusion:	The value of outcomes is significant. SPIL is making a huge difference to people's lives. Graduate destinations are well understood but self-assessment could better show the important contribution SPIL is making to improving ākonga outcomes. Such evidence has significance to the sector beyond the PTE, given the excellent outcomes for a particularly challenged cohort.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>SPIL's programme portfolio provides ākonga with the ability to pathway from level 1-3 foundation programmes as they grow in skills and confidence within a supportive learning environment. The decision in 2023 to provide a pre-trades-aligned level 3 programme has been both aspirational and beneficial, encouraging ākonga to see a potential career pathway. Level 3 ākonga are slightly more mature and achievement focused. As graduates of the level 1 and 2 programmes, they become role models and tuakana, encouraging the progress of their peers/teina.</p> <p>The level 3 programme provides practical learning opportunities through an agreement with an electrical company associated with the PTE, and an on-site workshop. Guest speakers from different sectors engage with all ākonga, raising awareness of different pathway options.</p> <p>Programmes are insightfully reviewed, using authentic and relevant data and evaluative feedback proactively sought from students and stakeholders.</p> <p>In 2024, following programme review (including an end-of-year survey, discussions with ākonga and stakeholder engagement), SPIL decided to redesign and seek NZQA approval for more relevant and engaging level 1 and 2</p>

	<p>programmes. Unfortunately, this had to be put on hold in 2025 to reprioritise limited financial resources.</p> <p>The programme development process is carefully conducted to ensure coherency and comprehensiveness. An indicator used by SPiI to demonstrate this is that they received no requests for further information from NZQA when applying for approval for the level 3 programme.</p> <p>Management and kaiako bring a wealth of relevant experience to their roles and an impressive array of educational and support-orientated experience. They use their knowledge to ensure that the learning environment is empowering and structured to best engage and meet the needs of the students, including by using a repertoire of differentiated and supportive learning strategies.</p> <p>A well-considered, regular and authentic internal post-assessment moderation process contributes to ensuring that assessment is fair, valid and consistent. This process incorporates considered and supportive feedback to kaiako. SPiI met NZQA's national external moderation requirements in 2024.⁶ Considerable effort has been invested in assessment quality, and this will need to be well maintained.</p>
Conclusion:	A relevant programme portfolio facilitates pathways for foundation students. Programmes and the portfolio are insightfully reviewed, with imminent plans for more relevant level 1 and 2 programmes.

⁶ External post external moderation has not been called for by the relevant workforce development councils during the EER period.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>SPiI's previous EER report found that SPiI provides: 'an exemplary level of pastoral care that is effective in minimising the learning barriers students face. They have established systems that encourage students, many with complex needs, to stay engaged'.⁷ SPiI continues to provide such systems and high level of care and responsiveness, including for the over 40 per cent of ākonga who SPiI has supported to identify as neurodiverse. A desktop audit by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) in 2024 has also noted SPiI's provision of a high standard of care.</p> <p>Much thought has gone into SPiI's support processes to ensure they are appropriate and to minimise barriers to learning while also supporting students to grow in their self-management. The diverse group of ākonga interviewed by NZQA articulated this growth persuasively.</p> <p>Ākonga are welcomed and positively acknowledged and encouraged into the learning environment from the point of first contact. Tutors work alongside the students to support their identification of goals and the steps to achieve them. They identify the level of learning assistance that ākonga may need and how best to support their learning.</p> <p>The student handbook and other student information are of high quality. Obvious care has been taken to ensure that written information is visually engaging and easy to read and understand. Key information is well conveyed, such as programme information and the complaints process.</p> <p>SPiI's identification and responsiveness to wellbeing needs is excellent. In 2025, SPiI introduced a hauora framework to support the holistic needs of ākonga, along with a triaging framework. These approaches integrate wellbeing and support as a core part of learning. Ākonga actively participate in these processes, are regularly engaged about their progress, and provide feedback on triaging,</p>

⁷ SPiI EER report 2024: key evaluation question findings 1.4.

	including to identify when extra focus and support is required, or if ākonga are ready for additional learning. Refreshingly, ākonga spoken with for the EER described these processes and their effective impact. They also spoke of the importance to their learning of tuakana-teina mentoring and peer relationships.
Conclusion:	Student support is highly effective. Support is structured to empower ākonga to grow and further their own learning and to support the learning of their peers. A high level of care is provided. Students are responding well to the more differentiated approaches to their learning needs and life challenges than they experienced in compulsory education.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The owners have worked hard to achieve a planned strategic focus of successfully achieving and moving from a reflection and transition phase to one of implementation, growth and ongoing improvement.</p> <p>SPII has a clear mission, direction and aligned strategic plan which is guiding performance. SPII is effectively empowering ākonga through accessible, high-quality education. It has established and plans to grow industry-aligned vocational education. Educational processes are informed by deep consideration of what will work best for ākonga, and ākonga and kaiako perspectives.</p> <p>Organisational leadership is effective and highly valued by stakeholders who shared feedback as part of the EER. Various examples demonstrated the owners' proactive and persistent engagement with regulatory stakeholders to support the performance of the organisation.</p> <p>Purposeful staff recruitment has attracted kaiako with highly relevant qualifications and experience, who are excellent role models for ākonga and share SPII's culture and values. Professional development is appropriate and aligned to the context of the PTE – assessor and moderator</p>

	<p>unit standards have been completed following expectations of the previous EER.</p> <p>Resourcing decisions are made realistically and with the potential negative impacts on educational achievement identified and mitigated. For example, the impact of lost resources following under-delivery of TEC funding in 2023 was mitigated by new and better integrated student support processes.</p> <p>While SP11 was identified as a high financial liability risk by the TEC in 2023, this changed to 'low risk' in 2024. In 2025, SP11 now has students on a waitlist, given the demand for places. This demonstrates effective management and confidence in the sustainability of the business model, as aligned to SP11's educational purpose. Stakeholders describe a huge need for the PTE's educational provision.</p> <p>Self-assessment is highly effective and includes contributions by kaiako, ākonga and key stakeholders. Data collection and analysis is authentic and used with purpose to genuinely understand the quality of performance and to continuously improve to ensure the best for ākonga. The development of new processes and initiatives are carefully designed to ensure they meet students' needs and are fit for purpose. SP11 has invested in and developed its student management system to ensure effective analysis of achievement data aligned to NZQA and TEC reporting.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Excellence in performance is supported by student-centric processes, strong organisational vision, values and business acumen, and authentic and effective self-assessment.</p>

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Effective compliance management was found to be a needed area for improvement at the last EER. SPII has established targeted systems and processes to support effective compliance management, and has established a compliance calendar to support the meeting of requirements.</p> <p>The PTE has focused closely on responding to a history of late reporting of student credits to NZQA, significantly decreasing the percentage of total results reported late – for example, from 45 per cent in 2024 to 19 per cent so far in 2025 (and that in a context of a higher number of results and students). The percentage of students with late results still appears high at 44 per cent. SPII explained that this reflects an issue that arose with the reporting of certain unit standards during the transition to a new student management system, and the time taken to sort the issue with NZQA, but which it considers to be now addressed.</p> <p>In 2025, SPII has submitted required documents and attestations to NZQA on time, including its statutory declaration which NZQA shows was not received in 2024.</p> <p>A TEC audit in 2024 found SPII's systems, processes and practices to be appropriate, with minor non-conformities. No non-compliances were found, seven out of nine areas complied and two areas for improvement were identified. The TEC report also identified that programmes are being taught in accordance with programme approval, with supporting evidence including detailed timetables for each course. This was also demonstrated through the EER.</p> <p>SPII's Code⁸ self-review is published on the PTE's website, and information about complaints has been added. The PTE still needs to report on whether any critical incidents have occurred as required by the Code, and to ensure alignment</p>

⁸ The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.

	<p>between self-assessed outcome ratings, as reported in the self-review report and its Code attestation.</p> <p>SPII met NZQA national external moderation requirements in 2024 and has been proactive in engaging with the relevant workforce development councils. Management and kaiako hold required qualifications to teach and assess in accordance with consent and moderation requirements.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Effective compliance management has been an active focus for SPII, including to address issues found at the last EER and carried over in 2024. There is evidence of improvement in 2025 through new systems and processes.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 All NZQA programme delivery – New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills (Level 1)⁹; New Zealand Certificate in Foundation Skills (Level 2)¹⁰; and New Zealand Certificate in Electrical Pre-trade (Level 3)¹¹

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The ‘good’ rating for performance for this focus area reflects strong rather than exemplary performance, demonstrated across the three programmes delivered in the EER period (2024-25). For example, overall achievement improved notably in 2024, with SPII addressing low results for the level 3 programme in 2025, and with a continuing focus on increasing completions overall. Programmes match needs, although, as identified by SPII, the level 1 and 2 programmes need to be redesigned to improve their relevance.</p> <p>The rating of ‘excellent’ for capability in self-assessment reflects SPII’s close tracking of programme achievement and performance, and processes and actions taken which have led to improved performance. Through comprehensive self-review at programme level, SPII has effectively self-identified where ongoing improvements are needed and has embedded these insights into strategic planning.</p>

⁹ Reference: 123532-4

¹⁰ Reference: 124379-3

¹¹ Reference: 127958

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 SPI Institute Ltd - South Pacific Islands Institute Limited:

- Incorporate professional development focused on supporting use of the Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool (LNATT) to assist with navigating the challenges that ākonga experience in completing literacy and numeracy assessment. Continue with progress towards engaging ākonga in end-of-programme LNAAT testing to be able to track progression.
- Incorporate increased usage of resources to support neurodiversity.
- Consider specifically tracking the achievement of neurodiverse students to review how well SPII is supporting their learning.
- Incorporate analysis of individual unit standard completion data into self-review to add to understanding about achievement, including, for example, identifying if particular unit standards experience higher resits or rates of non-achievement.
- Incorporate attendance data tracking into self-review, including to support identification of periods where greater attention and support may be needed to motivate attendance.
- Continue to closely track the reporting of student credits to NZQA to ensure systems issues have been alleviated and do not impact on the timeliness of reporting.
- Develop self-assessment information to better capture and show the wide-ranging and excellent valued outcomes being achieved.

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 SPI Institute Ltd - South Pacific Islands Institute Limited to:

- Report on critical incidents data – refer clause 10(3)(g) of the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.

Appendix 1

SPII compiled achievement data

Qualification completions

	2023	2024	2025*
All programmes	32%	54%	86%
Level 1	-	62%	84%
Level 2	-	64%	90%
Level 3	-	27%	83%

*Projected based on mid-year results

Course completions

	2023	2024	2025 (at 31/8/25)	2025 (forecast)
All programmes	34%*	62%**	55%	-
Level 1	-	64%	75%	76-80%
Level 2	-	63%	44%	65-70%
Level 3	-	58%	47%	65-70%

*TEC data

**TEC course completion: 60%

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 fraud¹²*
- 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.*

¹² 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/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz