External Evaluation and Review Report

AMS Group Limited trading as Axiom Training

Date of report: 29 July 2021

About AMS Group Limited

Axiom Training offers both programmes of study and short courses tailored to the needs of individual students and/or commercial clients. Provision includes training and assessment of driver training; crane and elevated work platforms training; and adult education courses.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	71 Te Kowhai East Road, Burbush, Hamilton
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: 797 EFTS (equivalent full-time students)
Number of staff:	Full-time 40; part-time 16
TEO profile:	See NZQA: Axiom Training
Last EER outcome:	Confident in educational performance and capability in self-assessment
Scope of evaluation:	• New Zealand Certificate in Port Operations (Level 3) with strands in Cargo Handling and Heavy Machinery Operation • New Zealand Certificate in Study and Career Preparation – Commercial Transport (Level 3)
MoE number:	7252
NZQA reference:	C45296
Dates of EER visit:	18 and 19 May 2021 (virtual)

Summary of Results

Students achieve well in the compliance-driven, specialised programmes. The value of the outcomes is highly regarded by students and external stakeholders. Programme design and delivery is planned to meet the needs of both individual students and communities. Student support is contextually appropriate, with the intention to enhance student skillsets and abilities. The organisation is well led by a management group which uses data effectively to support self-assessment practice.

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- The New Zealand Certificate in Port Operations (Level 3) with strands in Cargo Handling and Heavy Machinery Operation (hereafter port operations) has excellent completion rates.

- The completion rates of the New Zealand Certificate in Study and Career Preparation – Commercial Transport (Level 3) (hereafter study and career preparation) are generally good. The value of the outcomes is life-changing for graduates of this programme.

- Self-assessment of programme design and delivery through programme reviews appropriately informs programme improvements. Student feedback is used effectively.

- The acknowledgement and inclusion of Te Ao Māori has recently been connected to programme content and delivery. This initiative also informs the student cultural experience.

- Student support is strong, and the effectiveness of student support is seen through completion rates and student feedback. Axiom Training has an opportunity to extend self-assessment in this area in relation to the links between student support and achievement data.

- The recent restructure of the management team is proving worthwhile. Academic leadership is also proving to be effective, with committed and experienced staff seen at all levels of the organisation.

- The organisational quality management system has recently been revised in conjunction with

compliance processes. The updated site approvals process is an improvement since the last EER.

Key evaluation question findings[1]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	This evaluation identified excellent student achievement and outcomes for both focus areas whose value is highly regarded.
	The port operations programme has maintained 100 per cent qualification completion rates since the last evaluation.[2]
	This qualification is a requirement for New Zealand Defence Force personnel who are training to be responsible for operational cargo handling.
	Development of key skills is highly valued by the participants. The New Zealand Defence Force values the improved competency in the skillsets required to perform tasks in port operations.
	The study and career preparation programme has an average 58 per cent qualification completion rate since the last evaluation for all students. Māori and Pasifika students have averaged a higher 60 per cent qualification completion rate since the last evaluation in 2017.[3]
	Course completions for study and career preparation since the last evaluation have averaged 68 per cent. Withdrawals before completion of the qualification are common in this programme due to external factors. One reason for withdrawal is gaining employment. Students gain relevant skills even if they withdraw as employment is the primary outcome of the programme.
	Some valued outcomes of the study and career preparation programme lie outside the scope of traditional educational

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

[2] See Appendix 1

[3] See Appendix 1

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	measures. For instance, local criminal justice agencies reported significantly less re-engagement with clients once they had enrolled with Axiom Training.
	Other outcomes of this programme include growth in confidence, development of literacy skills and, for some, achieving a qualification for the first time. Academic staff track actual numbers employed and reported that the majority of those who graduated are in relevant employment. The evaluators suggested that tutors align the questions posed in graduate destination data conversations with the graduate profile outcomes. This would enable them to gain a better understanding of the success of the programme and the level of consistency with the graduate profile.
	Teaching staff and management understand and appropriately analyse achievement data for both programmes. Staff meet fortnightly to discuss achievement results and the progress of the students in study and career preparation, which enables intervention where necessary.
Conclusion:	Axiom Training has a strong focus on achievement across the organisation. Achievement in the port operations programme is driven by compliance requirements. Achievement and value are seen in many forms in study and career preparation. Strong communication with key stakeholders contributes to the value of outcomes being highly regarded by clients.

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:	Axiom Training has strong partnerships with external stakeholders, local authorities (e.g. Corrections, Ministry of Social Development) and schools. Emphasis on community partnerships to support success is an important part of Axiom Training's operating model.
	Improvements in moderation have occurred, and the relevant industry training organisation is satisfied with moderation performance. Moderation practices are as expected; internal moderation is robust with the use of ranging samples. External moderation results for 2019 and 2020 met the majority of the

	national external moderation requirements for 2020.. achievement. Requirements were not met for the Core Skills system in 2020, which is an area for improvement.
	Delivery sites are geographically located to match the needs of stakeholders and prospective students. These regional locations support community success. Learning environments are further planned to benefit students through the design of the programmes which are connected to competency in the workplace. For example, port operations students commence learning early in the morning to simulate a port workplace, and a real-world context is used wherever possible.
	Axiom Training has recently introduced Te Ao Māori into the study and career preparation programme, ensuring connection to programme content and delivery, and enhancing the student experience. For example, sharing of cultures and identity and relationship-building underpin study and career preparation.
	The programme review process is strong and ongoing. There are many facets to programme review, which is set up with the intention to inform improvements across the organisation and in the student experience. A robust peer observation process has been developed to enhance teaching quality.
Conclusion:	The execution of programme design and delivery matches the needs of relevant stakeholders effectively. Feedback indicates strong communication with stakeholders and effective collation and use of student feedback. Moderation validates achievement.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Student and graduate interviews confirmed that student support is satisfactory. These comments validate Axiom Training's recent self-review of the interim domestic Code[4], which shows effective actions for student support under each outcome. The self-review receives input from multiple staff and is also used as a tool for compliance (see key evaluation question 6). Strong relationships between students and staff are encouraged and valued, and connections with tangata whenua add value and context to the mission of the organisation, as well as to the student experience. Drug and alcohol testing and support is appropriate and supportive, not only to prepare students for employment where drug and alcohol testing is mandatory, but also to generally encourage students to adopt a healthier lifestyle. Study and career preparation is open-entry, so learning plans are used to meet student needs and goals. Axiom Training holds a teaching conference twice a year where ideas are shared in relation to teaching and student support. Staff have the opportunity to discuss what works well and what can be improved to better support the students. The organisation could better identify the links between student support and achievement to potentially reduce withdrawals. For example, connecting with government agencies could mitigate delays in student financial support.
Conclusion:	Students across the organisation are appropriately supported and involved in their learning. The effectiveness of student support is seen through achievement, retention, completions and student feedback.

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[4] The Education (Pastoral Care of Domestic Tertiary Students) Interim Code of Practice 2019

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The restructure of the governance and management team since the last EER is proving to be worthwhile. Academic leadership is effective, and the staff demographic reflects the clientele. All staff are appropriately experienced.
	Health and safety is a key focus of the organisation, and is essential in its areas of programme delivery. Staff and students are sufficiently resourced, with improvements in technological support currently occurring.
	Professional development opportunities are plentiful, and link into the annual performance review process. Staff say they are valued by the organisation.
	Axiom Training is reflective and self-aware. The organisation appropriately uses data to guide self-assessment. Relevant identification of business and client needs, and effective self-assessment activity informs improvements to the business which support educational outcomes.
Conclusion:	The governance and management team is effective in supporting educational outcomes through robust self-assessment practice.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Axiom Training effectively manages important compliance responsibilities and uses appropriate platforms to support compliance management. For example, newly implemented systems allow identification and filing of information on hazards, incidents and management of temporary site requirements. This system automatically alerts for any overdue compliance or health and safety actions.
	Review of and reflection on an historic compliance oversight since the last evaluation has led to the development of an annual internal audit process aimed at preventing future

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	compliance oversight. This includes a new site check process to ensure temporary delivery sites meet NZQA criteria.
	A compliance calendar is also used for the NZQA-approved programmes to keep on top of academic rules and requirements. Currently, Axiom Training are undergoing a TEC audit due to poor oversight of one programme. Beyond this area requiring attention, programmes are currently delivered as approved, with updated processes to ensure prevention of future oversight.
	The first aid trainer used in NZQA-approved programmes meets currency and trainer requirements as confirmed by the standard-setting body.
	The interim domestic Code self-review was completed by the required due date and serves as a compliance checklist in self-assessment activities. Other self-assessment activities target improvements for all business processes. Any gaps identified inform improvements across the organisation.
Conclusion:	Important compliance accountabilities are managed effectively, with self-assessment activities driving identification of any gaps in compliance management, therefore informing improvements.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Certificate in Port Operations (Level 3) with strands in Cargo Handling and Heavy Machinery Operation

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**

2.2 Focus area: New Zealand Certificate in Study and Career Preparation – Commercial Transport (Level 3)

Performance:	**Good**[5]
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 AMS Group Limited trading as Axiom Training:

- Align the graduate profile outcomes to the questions posed in graduate destination data conversations to prepare for consistency review.

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.

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[5] See Appendix 1

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Appendix 1

Table 1. Breakdown of achievement for each programme since the last evaluation

New Zealand Certificate in Port Operations (Level 3) with strands in Cargo Handling and Heavy Machinery Operation	
2018	
Total head count	19 (100%)
Māori/Pasifika	9 (100%)
Non-Māori/Pasifika	10 (100%)
Youth (18-24)	16 (100%)
2019	
Domestic	Equivalent full-time:
Total head count	6 (100%)
Māori/Pasifika	2 (100%)
Non-Māori/Pasifika	4 (100%)
Youth (18-24)	5 (100%)
2020	
Domestic	Equivalent full-time:
Total head count	9 (100%)
Māori/Pasifika	6 (100%)
Non-Māori/Pasifika	3 (100%)
Youth (18-24)	4 (100%)
New Zealand Certificate in Study and Career Preparation – Commercial Transport (Level 3)	
2018	
Programme completions:	
Total completions	76/107 (71%)
Māori/Pasifika	17/32 (53%)
Non-Māori/Pasifika	59/75 (79%)
Youth (18-24)	10/26 (38%)
Course completions:	
Total completions	361/428 (72%)
Māori/Pasifika	277/300 (92%)
Non-Māori/Pasifika	84/128 (66%)
Youth (18-24)	53/104 (51%)
2019	
Programme completions:	
Total completions	93 (50%)
Māori/Pasifika	81 (49%)
Non-Māori/Pasifika	12 (55%)
Youth (18-24)	12 (50%)

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Course completions:	
Total completions	498 (67%)
Māori/Pasifika	451 (69%)
Non-Māori/Pasifika	47 (53%)
Youth (18-24)	65 (68%)
2020 Programme completions:	
Total completions	64 (54%)
Māori/Pasifika	48 (53%)
Non-Māori/Pasifika	16 (57%)
Youth (18-24)	9 (69%)
Course completions:	
Total completions	323 (67%)
Māori/Pasifika	242 (66%)
Non-Māori/Pasifika	81 (72%)
Youth (18-24)	39 (75%)

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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 fraud[6]*

- *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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[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.

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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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