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External Evaluation and Review Report

Links Training (2008) Limited

Date of report: 20 September 2018

About Links Training (2008) Limited

Links Training (2008) Limited (Links) is a small training provider delivering mostly first aid training. Links also provides training in health and wellbeing to a small number of students who have training agreements with Careerforce, as well as some unit standard assessment.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	21 Bristol Street, Levin
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 32 equivalent full-time students; approximately 1600 students in 2017 International: nil
Number of staff:	Two full-time and four part-time
TEO profile:	See: NZQA – Links Training (2008) Limited
Last EER outcome:	The last external evaluation and review (EER) was completed in May 2014. At that time NZQA was Highly Confident in both the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of Links Training.
Scope of evaluation:	The scope of this EER is first aid training. This was chosen because it includes most of Links' provision and includes the PTE's only NZQA-approved training scheme.
MoE number:	7901
NZQA reference:	C29885
Dates of EER visit:	12 and 13 July 2018

Summary of Results

Links Training is clearly focused on identifying and meeting student and other stakeholder needs. This approach, combined with strong management, has led to high achievement rates. Better use of data will improve self-assessment.

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| Highly Confident in educational performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student achievement is high and is validated by external moderation.• Employers and students value the first aid training for providing the knowledge and confidence to respond to situations when first aid is required.• Links has good systems for identifying student and other stakeholder needs and is responsive to identified needs. |
| Confident in capability in self-assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivery is very effective at involving students in their learning. Barriers to learning are identified for individuals and appropriate support is provided.• Governance and management effectively supports a high level of educational achievement.• Self-assessment could be strengthened by more effective analysis of data.• Management of compliance accountabilities is generally strong and there are effective processes for this. However, there are some gaps, although the impact of these on learners is low and Links responded quickly to address identified issues. |

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?	
Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student achievement is high. Ninety-nine per cent of students successfully complete first aid training. This is achieved in the context of short courses delivered mainly in the workplace. Students either gain a first aid certificate or meet the requirements for refreshing prior first aid training. For the small number of students enrolled in New Zealand certificates in health and wellbeing, the course completion rate is 90 per cent. These students are in related employment and have training agreements with Careerforce. Links facilitates the on-job training and carries out the theory assessment.</p> <p>Until very recently Links has not collected ethnicity data, so the participation and course completion rates for Māori and Pasifika students cannot be calculated. However, given the very small number of students who are not successful it can be inferred that the course completion rates for Māori and Pasifika students are comparable to those of other students. Ethnicity data is available for students studying New Zealand certificates (see Appendix 1) but this is not used effectively in self-assessment.</p> <p>The PTE understands the reasons for the small number of students who are not successful and works to support their achievement. Non-completion of first aid courses is usually due to students not completing all activities due to poor attendance. For students on the work-based New Zealand certificate programmes, non-completion is usually the result of a change in employment. Student achievement is tracked, reflected on and used to maintain high course completion rates.</p>
Conclusion:	Student achievement is high and is validated by external moderation. Collection and analysis of data on student ethnicity would improve self-assessment.

¹ 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>Both students and employers value the first aid training for providing the knowledge and confidence to respond when first aid is required. This value is seen in both initial training and refresher courses where students have the opportunity to demonstrate retained knowledge and to update their responses and techniques. Links liaises with employers to ensure that training scenarios are appropriate for the workplace in order to enhance the value to both the employer and student.</p> <p>Links provides first aid courses mostly to employers and community groups but also to the public. Links notifies previous students and employers when refresher courses are required. The high proportion of return business is used by the provider as an indicator that the training is valued. Reasons for employers changing first aid providers are identified by Links and used to inform improvements.</p> <p>While Links has a good understanding of the value of the training provided, evidence to support this is not systematically collected and analysed.</p>
Conclusion:	Employers and students value the first aid training for providing the knowledge and confidence to respond to situations when first aid is required. The PTE measures value to employers by return business. More systematic collection and analysis of the value of the training to stakeholders would be useful.

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:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Delivery of training is effective and engaging. Students commented very favourably on the skills and knowledge of teaching staff and the appropriate mix of theory and practice. Employers also expressed confidence in the skills and knowledge of staff and commented positively about the responsiveness of Links and their willingness to adapt delivery to meet employer needs.</p> <p>The first aid courses are generally well resourced, with suitable training scenarios, workbooks, mannikins and other physical resources. However, classes are sometimes overbooked because it is anticipated that some students may not show up. On occasions this has resulted in classes with more students than desirable for effective delivery. This is usually managed effectively by the use of additional staff, but occasionally there has been some impact on delivery.</p> <p>External moderation attests to the appropriate standard of assessment. The Skills Organisation has exempted Links from first aid moderation this year because of good results in previous years. External moderation by Careerforce also shows that assessment is at the appropriate standard and Links met NZQA external moderation requirements in 2017. First aid courses are structured so that students receive formative feedback on the application of practical skills before assessment activities.</p> <p>Peer observation is effectively used to monitor and improve both teaching and assessment. Programmes, delivery and content are regularly reviewed at staff meetings, and this results in incremental improvements to courses as well as some larger initiatives. An example is the introduction of more technology in the delivery of programmes to better engage younger students.</p>
Conclusion:	Links has good systems for identifying student and other stakeholder needs and is responsive to identified needs. The training is well resourced and delivery is effective. Moderation by industry training organisations is positive.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The support for first aid students is sufficient and effective given the short duration of the courses (up to two days).</p> <p>Comprehensive information is provided to students before each course. During the enrolment process the physical requirements for undertaking first aid are explained and students are asked to identify any barriers to learning. Where barriers to learning are identified, they are addressed on an individual basis.</p> <p>Delivery is tailored to engage students through interactive activities, relevant examples, and practical learning. Teacher support is provided for assessment re-sits which may occur after the course. Appropriate literacy and numeracy support is provided as required.</p> <p>Student feedback is provided through surveys and direct staff contact. Although student survey results are not summarised, the surveys viewed by the evaluators showed good levels of satisfaction. Student surveys are reviewed by the director, and when issues are identified they are investigated and responded to appropriately.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Delivery by Links is effective at involving students in their learning. Barriers to learning are identified for individuals and appropriate support is provided.</p> <p>Student feedback is positive and is used to make improvements.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Links is managed with a clear focus on the quality of delivery. This is particularly evident through the academic leadership, employment of well-qualified staff, and the resourcing of delivery.</p> <p>Academic leadership is provided by the director, and there are clear expectations and monitoring of academic standards, which is supported by effective processes. Staff are supported to engage in professional development which clearly informs their teaching and course development. New staff receive a comprehensive induction. This develops their teaching and assessment practices in line with the standards and methods required by Links, and the manager checks on their application. Delivery is well resourced, and the resourcing of new activity is considered in the planning phase.</p> <p>There is strong engagement with relevant industry and sector groups, and this is used to inform both the PTE's development and delivery of courses. For example, the director is on the board of the Association of Emergency Care Training Providers and staff attend the annual conferences. This participation has informed developments such as the introduction of technology in first aid delivery.</p> <p>The director is aware of the need to operate a financially sustainable business model and the requirement to balance this with the quality of delivery. Regular staff meetings provide opportunities for regular reviews of delivery and systems, and the sharing of information and good practice.</p> <p>Although Links is a relatively small provider which allows for review at the individual level, analysis of data could be used more effectively to provide more information about performance.</p>
Conclusion:	Governance and management effectively supports a high level of educational achievement. Engagement with industry informs improvements. Self-assessment could be strengthened by more effective analysis of data.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Links has a comprehensive quality management system which is aligned with external requirements. Compliance reporting deadlines are planned for. The organisation highlights the health and safety of staff and students as a priority. However, the management of compliance needs to be improved in some areas. Management has responded to the issues identified by the evaluators quickly and effectively.</p> <p>The nationality of first aid students and whether they are a domestic or international student is not recorded by the PTE. This is not compliant with section 4.1 (d) of NZQA's PTE enrolment and academic records rules. Links responded immediately to this issue and is getting advice from NZQA to remedy the situation. The impact of this issue is reduced because it is unlikely that the PTE has inadvertently enrolled any international students. This is because of the exemption provided by the Education Act (1989) 238 EA and the nature of the first aid training provided.</p> <p>During the EER it was identified that some temporary sites that were used regularly had not been notified to NZQA. Links acted quickly to address this. There are good systems to ensure that all sites are safe and that students are informed of site-specific health and safety information before the start of courses.</p> <p>Other areas reviewed by the evaluators where requirements were met included: qualifications of staff delivering first aid; delivery hours for first aid; annual delivery of part of an approved programme.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Management of compliance accountabilities is generally effective. However, there are some gaps. Self-assessment is limited. For example, compliance with NZQA enrolment and academic record rules had not been reviewed, especially around the identification of international students. This has resulted in gaps that have had some impact (e.g. incomplete student records) and that have not been managed. Links responded quickly to address identified issues.</p>

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: First Aid Training

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 Links Training (2008) Limited:

- Strengthen self-assessment by improving the effectiveness of the collection and analysis of data, including ethnicity data.
- Develop effective systems to minimise the impact of overbooking classes.

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 Links Training (2008) Limited to:

- Comply with section 4.1 (d) of NZQA's PTE enrolment and academic records rules.
- Ensure no international students are enrolled or ensure the PTE is compliant with the requirements for enrolling international students.
- Ensure all sites are appropriately notified to NZQA or approved by NZQA.

Appendix 1

Student achievement data

Table 1. First Aid Training 2017

<i>Students</i>	<i>Number of students enrolled</i>	<i>Number not successful</i>
Total	1600	28
Māori	Not known	4
Pasifika	Not known	3

Table 2. Certificates in Health and Wellbeing 2014-2017

<i>Students</i>	<i>Number of students enrolled</i>	<i>Qualification completed</i>	<i>Training agreement terminated (change in employment)</i>	<i>Still in training</i>	<i>Withdrew</i>
Total	73	46	12	14	1
Māori	11	12	8		
Pasifika	9				

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 fraud²*
- *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.*

² 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 according to 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 for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

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. The requirements are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, which 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.

In addition, the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 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 2013 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 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 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). The Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/ga-rules/external-evaluation-rules-2016/1/>, 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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