



Submission on Workplace Health &
Safety 2012

ASSESSMENT SERVICES

BRUCE HEESTERMAN
CEO ASPEQ LTD

Introduction

This document is in response to the consultative process now underway regarding workplace healthy and safety. We believe the consultation should not only cover changes to the regulation but consider how regulations can be introduced that provides confidence, from the coal face to the Boardroom, that the desired workplace safety outcomes are in fact achieved.

Aspeq has nearly 20 years experience in the development and provision of high stakes examinations for regulated industries and supports in New Zealand and beyond. It is a fact that all industries that have introduced independent and nationally consistent examinations have seen a significant rise in industry competence as a result and for this reason Aspeq asks that the consultation process considers not only what might need to be changed but how those changes might be confirmed to be in place. Aspeq is not a training organisation, but acknowledges that in responding to this consultative process, it has a potential commercial interest in securing the examination work across the industry.

The problems for industry

The core problem being addressed is work place safety and how to ensure that people operating gain knowledge skills that will make them and their colleagues safe and then retain that knowledge. Training is however only part of the issue facing organisations and current issues include:

1. The plethora of industry training organisations (or internal company provided training) means that outcomes vary considerably across the nation.
2. Training organisations have a natural conflict of interest in providing examinations for the subjects that they train thus making an independent assessment organisation an imperative to increasing industry competency.
3. Training provided internally for employees likewise has a conflict that low pass rates of examination reflects badly on trainers, themselves employees, and thus the incentive to allow less than competent people operate is ever present.
4. It is difficult for management or directors to accurately determine whether work place safety programs are truly being delivered to a ubiquitous standard across the nation or even within a single organisation.
5. It is difficult to determine if training by one organisation is acceptable for another in the same industry.
6. Training without common assessment standards means that a lot re-training is carried out "just to be sure" an individual is competent where as with assessment training can be targeted to those who truly need it
7. Simple tests or quizzes are prone to rote learning and rote learning has been shown to be 15% less effective than deep learning for on-going changes in behaviour; randomised examinations prevent rote learning.
8. While there are formal qualifications available on the NZQA framework most entry level personnel simply want to do their job safely and are not after a formal qualification.



While it is accepted that internal training can be calibrated or customised for a particular industry or site it does not deal with the issue of an increasingly mobile work force needing to take skills that are transferable with them.

Our recommendation

That consideration is given to mandating independent examinations for health and safety training across New Zealand thus ensuring that high quality training once completed is transferrable and recognised by all employers in various sectors. Successful completion would provide the person with transferrable evidence of being safety trained.

About Aspeq Limited

Aspeq is a New Zealand based company that has been in the business of providing testing services to national aviation authorities since 1992, when it assumed responsibility for the functions previously operated by the Air Transport division of the New Zealand Ministry of Transport. Aspeq has unique experience with testing service systems, processes and procedures built up over 20 years in this specialised industry. It is our core business activity that has now expanded to financial adviser, construction and land transport both in New Zealand and internationally. In the past three years Aspeq has created and deployed assessments programs for financial advisors and registered builder, the latter on behalf of the Dept of Building and Housing (DBH). We are currently providing advice to the Singapore Ministry of Manpower regarding safety testing for incoming immigrant labourers in Singapore.

ASPEQ provides a complete single-supplier solution that would cover most of the requirements specified by regulators or companies. Our ability to do so is backed by our practical experience with national authorities in New Zealand, Australia and Asia.

Historically examinations in New Zealand have been delivered through paper based exams but have recently transitioned from paper to computer based exams that are delivered through a network of examination rooms across New Zealand augmented by mobile exam rooms. Questions are primarily multi-choice that requires only modest levels of literacy for candidates. Aspeq also has extensive experience in on the job competency assessments that complement the theory examinations mentioned above.

In brief our approach is:

1. The industry or regulator set the syllabus for subjects requiring assessment
2. Aspeq builds the question bank from which exams are created
3. Every examination is randomised to prevent rote learning or cheating
4. The examinations are done in person to ensure proof of identity is assured
5. Work place assessment is carried out by approved and independent assessors
6. In general assessors and question writers are not allowed to be also working in the training industry



-
7. Online booking of examinations, computer delivery of examinations and results notification within the same day as the examination.
 8. The use of laptops allows one off or mobile assessment to be carried out for large scale new projects if required.
 9. Aspeq can deliver one off nationwide assessments to cover the entire industry followed by on-going assessment for new entrants.

Aspeq's extensive experience working in the highly regulatory and high stakes aviation industry provides confidence that the same attention to detail is available for other industries.

Aspeq' Tasman platform

TASMAN consists of a number of parts, all but one of which is web based, delivered as services (Software as a Service), and accessed by a standard Internet Explorer web browser. The platform has been developed using Microsoft's .Net framework, with limited elements of Java for the web user interface, making it highly compatible with Microsoft based applications and infrastructure.

TASMAN also includes databases for the management of question banks and bookings to which data from existing systems can be imported and migrated. Significant security processes are followed including proven invigilator processes, 128 bit encryption of data, managed availability monitoring, firewall and intrusion detection systems. ASPEQ would use TASMAN to provide the following solutions:

- Use of TASMAN for examination booking, exam and venue scheduling, delivery and result notification services.
- Use of TASMAN to enable the management of the question banks, and control future question bank development.
- Configuration of TASMAN to meet the any special security needs.

Aspeq can also provide:

- A network of fixed and "mobile" test centres specifically for the needs of the clients.
- Access to the Australian testing network.
- Special data interfaces as required between the Authority's systems and TASMAN.
- A Contact Centre in the Lower Hutt to provide services for candidates and management of the network of test centres.
- Provision of a help desk and client support facilities for candidates accessible by telephone and email.

An existing and working solution

ASPEQ provides the industry with a complete, integrated, single-vendor outsourced testing services solution. This is backed by Aspeq's experience in the provision of testing services for aviation licensing purposes, and by our specialised in-house software development capability. As such the following are key characteristics of our proposal:

- the levels of credibility of our solution,
- confidence in our processes,
- demonstrated ability to deliver, and
- the assurance of our ability to protect and stand in the place of the CAA as far as its obligations are concerned.



Exam question management

ASPEQ has considerable experience in examination question management for multiple industries and occupations and uses subject matter experts to write questions in an ISO9001 compliant process.

Candidate experience

Aspeq is experienced in providing examination services to a range of exam candidate types and backgrounds. This is our primary business and we have developed the systems and processes to provide an efficient and cost effective exam service for candidates.

Service management

Aspeq is experienced in managing services in the aviation sector. The service management philosophy of continuous improvement is underpinned by ISO 9000:2008 compliance, and we have proven that our experience is readily transportable to other countries through implementing and managing a similar project in Australia, and providing services in Asia.

Service Models

Aspeq has a range of models that can be used to provide services to national aviation authorities. These range from complete solutions through fixed and/or mobile centres, to selected components from the range of testing services. The ability to provide tailored solutions gives considerable flexibility in providing services that match each authority's requirements.

Security

Aspeq understands the security requirements for the provision of aviation testing services. We have robust processes for candidate identification and the secure control of examination material to ensure that high standards of security are maintained.

Staffing

ASPEQ has experienced technical aviation staff and non-technical examination staff that understand the business processes for the provision of aviation Testing Services.

National authority experience

Aspeq's business is the provision of testing and associated services specifically for regulatory authorities. We have worked with Civil Aviation Authority New Zealand, ETITO, DBH, NZ Transport Authority (NZTA), the Civil Aviation Safety Authority in Australia, Civil Aviation Authority Singapore, Civil Aviation Division in Hong Kong and the Civil Aviation Authority of Macau. Aspeq understands the requirements of national authorities and we have developed services to meet both authority and candidate requirements.

Exam booking and delivery

ASPEQ is experienced in the development of systems specifically for the booking and delivery of aviation professionals. We understand the complexities of booking examinations for these licence types and the structure of the examination for computer delivery. We also appreciate that a sound booking system shifts the data entry responsibility from staff to the candidate, at the same time providing the candidate with personal control and choice.