



**Post School Education and
Training (PSET)
Tracer Study
Phase II – Survey of Employers**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	pg 2
2.	PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	pg 2
3.	METHODOLOGY	pg 3
4.	OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY	pg 3
	4.1 Employers of PSET graduates	pg 4
	4.2 Employment status of PSET graduates	pg 5
	4.3 Why graduates left their jobs	pg 6
	4.4 Impact of PSET graduates' education and training on their work	pg 6
	4.5 Have the graduates been promoted since 2007	pg 8
	4.6 Training needs of employed graduates	pg 9
5.	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	pg 10
6.	CONCLUSION	pg 11
7.	RECOMMENDATIONS	pg 12

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - LIST OF EMPLOYERS	pg 13
APPENDIX 2 - SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE	pg 15
APPENDIX 3 - TRAINING NEEDS OF GRADUATES	pg 17

1. Introduction

In 2007, the Samoa Qualifications Authority (SQA) through its Research, Policy & Planning Division (RPPD) conducted a PSET Tracer Study on 2005 – 2006 Graduates from six (6) selected PSET Institutions.

Out of the 463 graduates that were traced, a total of 344 graduates were identified as being employed. To assess the impact of the training and education received by these 344 graduates from the selected PSET Institutions in carrying out their work, a second tracer study for employers was therefore recommended in the 2007 study.

This report entails the study process and findings for Phase II of the PSET Tracer Study conducted on Employers of the 344 employed graduates identified in the 2007 Tracer Study.

2. Purpose of the PSET Tracer Study

The main purpose of this study is to assess the impact of the training and education received by the 344 graduates from the 6 selected PSET Providers in carrying out their work.

The main objectives of the Tracer Study are:

- To find out whether the 344 graduates with jobs during the 2007 study were still employed by the same employers.
- To assess the impact of knowledge and skills they have learned from PSET Providers in carrying out their work.
- To find out whether these graduates have been promoted since their employment in 2007.
- To find out whether there is a need for graduates to undertake further training or studies to improve their performance.

3. Methodology of the Tracer Study

(a) In the 2007 tracer study on graduates of 6 selected PSET Providers, a total of 344 graduates were identified as being employed by one hundred and three (103) different employers.

The total target group of employers for this second tracer was therefore 103. Five (5) of the employers from the private sector were excluded from this survey as they were discovered to be no longer operating while one (1) other employer had all its records destroyed in a recent disaster event.

Thus, a total of ninety seven (97) employers (**refer Annex 1**) were approached to take part in the survey through a formal letter with student questionnaire(s) attached (**refer Annex 2**).

From the 344 graduates identified from 2007 as being employed, 332 graduates were assigned questionnaires and distributed to the 97 employers. Twelve (12) graduates worked for the six employers that were excluded from this study.

(b) Follow-up was conducted after the due date had passed but only a few employers responded so a second follow-up letter was sent out three months later to remind the employers of the study. The follow-up was also delayed as the responsible staff member for the survey had to leave for studies overseas.

Numerous follow-ups were conducted via telephone and email. Questionnaires were also re-submitted upon request. After a total of three weeks had lapsed since the follow-up letter had gone out, it was decided that personal visits were to be conducted as a last resort option for the remaining twenty (20) employers before the data collection process was wrapped up. Twelve (12) questionnaires from four employers were not forthcoming when the analysis process commenced.

(c) The information received from the respondents of this study was recorded, compiled and analyzed accordingly.

4. Outcomes of the Tracer Study

The total number of employers identified from the 2007 study was one hundred and three (103). Five (5) employers were no longer operating and one (1) other was in the process of rebuilding from a disaster event so the total number of employers approached for the study was ninety seven (97). This equates to 94.2% of total target group of employers.

The total number of employed graduates identified from the 2007 tracer study was 344. Employers for 12 graduates were excluded from the study, thus questionnaires were distributed for only 332 graduates. This is equivalent to 96.5% of total target group of employed graduates.

4.1 Employers of PSET graduates

Table 1 shows the types of employers that were approached to take part in the study and the number of graduates employed per category of employer according to 2007 study.

Table 1: Employers of PSET Graduates

Employment Category	Number of Employers	Number of employed graduates
Government Ministries	12	38
Government Corporations	12	67
NGOs	3	4
Companies / Private Sector	59	196
Regional / International Organisations	2	5
Churches	6	13
PSET Providers	3	9
TOTAL	97	332
% of Total Target Group	94.2%	96.5%

Of the total ninety seven (97) employers that were asked to take part in the survey, ninety three (93) or 95% of the employers submitted responses. This equates to 90.3% of total target group of employers identified from 2007 study. Four employers in the private sector (4.1%) did not respond to the study. This is equivalent to 3.9% of total target group.

Of the total 332 graduates whose assigned questionnaires were distributed, responses for 320 graduates (96.4%) were received. This equates to 93% of total target group of employed graduates. Questionnaires for twelve graduates (3.6%) were not returned. This gives a non-response percentage of 3.5% per total target group.

4.2 Employment status of PSET graduates

The employers in the study were asked if the graduates were still employed by their organization/company. Of the 320 graduates whose questionnaires were returned, one hundred and forty six (146) were confirmed as being current or former employees. This equates to 45.6% of the respondents and 42.4% of total target group.

Of the 146 confirmed job holders, seventy six (76) or 22% of target group were still with the same employer and seventy (70) graduates or 20.3% of target group had left their jobs.

One hundred and seventy four (174) graduates or 50.1% of total employed graduates in 2007 were identified as non-employees, having never been employed by the respective organizations/companies the graduates named as their employers in the 2007 study.

Table 2: Employment status of PSET Graduates

Employment Category	No. of graduates still employed	No. of graduates no longer employed	No. of graduates never employed
Government Ministries	20	11	7
Government Corporations	18	13	36
NGOs	1	0	3
Companies / Private Sector	29	40	115
Regional / International Organisations	2	0	3
Churches	3	3	7
PSET Providers	3	3	3
TOTAL	76	70	174
% of Total Target Group	22%	20.3%	50.1%

Table 2 reaffirms results in the 2007 tracer study with the Private Sector being the main employer of graduates from the 6 selected PSET Providers. More than half of the graduates in both Government Corporations and the Private Sector were found to have never been employed. Of the confirmed job holders, the table indicates a 50% chance of graduates retaining jobs with same employer identified in the 2007 study. Because of the small target group, no obvious trend in terms of which employer graduates tended to retain work with the longest can be derived.

Box 1 – Overview of PSET graduates employment status

Total target group (total no. of employed graduates from 2007 study)	344 graduates
Total number of questionnaires (per graduate) administered	332
Total number of questionnaires (per graduate) returned	320
Total number of questionnaires (per student) not returned	12
<i>Of the respondents:</i>	
Number of graduates confirmed as being former or current employees	146 graduates
Number of graduates who were still employed with same employer	76 graduates
Number of graduates who had left their jobs since 2007	70 graduates
Number of graduates whom never worked for the identified employer	174 graduates

As illustrated above, only 146 graduates out of 344 were confirmed as actually being or have been employed. While some responses would have been genuine, this huge difference in numbers could either have been the result of graduates providing false responses in the 2007 study or the absence of proper record keeping by the employers involved in this study.

Nonetheless, 146 would be the more robust result taking into consideration the reliability of the method used in this survey. In this case, 52% of the confirmed employed graduates were still with the same employer and 48% had left their jobs.

4.3 Why graduates left their jobs.

Employers were also asked in the study to provide reasons for graduates leaving their jobs. The main reason that came through for graduates leaving their jobs was having found better work opportunities elsewhere. Other reasons listed included personal commitments and migration to overseas countries. For the private sector, termination from work accounted for several graduates not continuing employment with their company/organisation.

4.4 Impact of PSET graduates education and training on their work.

In assessing the impact of the PSET graduates' education and training on their work, employers were questioned on whether they were satisfied with the application of acquired skills and knowledge as well as on the relevancy of these skills to the work undertaken by the graduates.

For the rest of the tables that follow, findings were taken from 120 questionnaires (82.2%) out the 146 questionnaires returned for confirmed employed graduates. Responses for some of the questionnaires could not be provided due to reasons such as the duration of employment being too short for the employer to respond as well as change in management staff.

Table 3: Application of skills and knowledge by graduates in workplaces.

Employment Category	# of Graduates who applied their skills satisfactorily	# of Graduates who did not apply their skills satisfactorily
Government Ministries	19	3
Government Corporations	26	0
NGOs	1	0
Companies / Private Sector	54	4
Regional / International Organisations	2	0
Churches	6	0
PSET Providers	4	1
TOTAL	112	8
% of Total Respondents	93.3%	6.67%

Overall, employers were satisfied with the application of skills and knowledge acquired by the graduates of the selected PSET Providers. As shown above, 112 graduates out of 120 (93.3%) were able to satisfactorily apply their acquired skills and knowledge in workplaces.

Reasons for employer dissatisfaction with the application of skills and knowledge by the graduates included lack of basic skills in trade area e.g welding, lack of motivation to learn new skills, poor report writing skills as well as customer service skills.

Employers in the tourism sector in particular, also felt that the English language skills of graduates coming out of local PSET Institutions have noticeably become poorer over the years. It was also in the opinion of the same employers that PSET Institutions catering for the Tourism workforce were not producing enough graduates to accommodate local market needs.

Table 4: Relevance of PSET Education to graduate job.

	Not Relevant	Relevant	Very Relevant
Number of graduates	5	64	51
% of Graduates	4.2%	53.3%	42.5%

As indicated in Table 4, employers on the whole felt that the skills and knowledge gained by the graduates were relevant to the needs of their organisation/company. Four (4) of the five (5) graduates in the “not relevant” response category were not employed in their relevant field of study. It was also highlighted in the responses from employers in the tourism industry that in order for graduates to understand the relevancy of study courses to the industry, students should have good knowledge of the industry before going into the programme instead of choosing hospitality as a by-chance option without any real knowledge of the tourism sector.

4.5 Have the graduates been promoted since 2007.

Table 5 illustrates the responses from employers on whether or not graduates were promoted since their employment in 2007.

Table 5: Employers Responses to Graduate Promotion.

Employment Category	Number of graduates promoted	Number of graduates not promoted
Government Ministries	15	7
Government Corporations	17	9
NGOs	1	0
Companies / Private Sector	30	28
Regional / International Organisations	0	2
Churches	3	3
PSET Providers	3	2
TOTAL	69	51
% of Total Respondents	57.5%	42.5%

Since 2007, sixty nine (69) graduates out of 120 (57.5%) received job promotions from the same employers. Six (6) of the 51 graduates who did not receive job promotions had actually left for higher paid work elsewhere.

Therefore, only forty five (45) out of 120 graduates (i.e 37.5%) did not receive any promotion either with the same employer or elsewhere.

The total number of graduates who received promotions either with the same employer or elsewhere therefore was 75 out of 120 which equates to 62.5%.

4.6 Training Needs of employed Graduates

Table 6 below provides a summary of results from employers on whether or not the graduates needed more training in order to meet the needs of their organisation/company.

Table 6: Employers Responses to Training Needs of Graduates

	Number of Graduates	% of Graduates
Graduates needing more training	81	67.5%
Graduates not needing more training	39	32.5%
TOTAL	120	100%

As revealed from the table, employers highlighted that more than half of the graduates (81 out of 120) needed more training. So although employers were generally satisfied with the application of skills and knowledge by graduates, more training was still needed in order to meet organization/company goals.

The main training needs areas for graduates of the National University of Samoa – Institute for Higher Education (NUS-IHE) included leadership and management, taxation and auditing techniques, analytical skills, report writing and newly introduced accounting packages. The need for graduates to sit the Final Qualifying Exam and become Certified Public Accountants was also highlighted.

NUS-Institute of Technology graduates generally needed more training in customer service, public administration, supervisory work as well as in sales and marketing.

Communication skills, report writing, leadership skills and office management were some of the areas students who graduated from Tesese Institute of Administrative Studies needed further training in. English Language fluency was also emphasized as an area that needed strengthening.

Employers also highlighted the need for training on work ethics and customer service particularly for students who attained qualifications in the different trade skills areas. Undertaking courses under the Apprenticeship Scheme was also identified as being crucial to graduate performance improvement.

The full list of recommended training needs for graduates has been attached as **Annex 3** of the report.

5. Limitations of Tracer Study

As illustrated in the result tables presented in the report, more than 50% of the graduates were identified by employers as having never been employed with their organisation/company.

The validity of any tracer study depends on the response rate of the study. Whilst the response rate for this study was quite high, inconsistencies in findings compared to 2007 study were discovered in the actual responses provided.

Coupled with non-responses, the target group was grossly reduced to just 120 graduates. This limits the use of findings from this survey in generalising the same results to a wider target group.

In hindsight, confirming with all the employers on whether the graduates were actually employed with them in 2007 could have avoided these inconsistencies in findings.

Furthermore if all 344 graduates were still confirmed as being employed, results for the study would have been generated from 344 graduates of 21 different programmes offered by 6 different PSET Providers. Limitation therefore also exists in generalising findings on the impacts of knowledge acquired on job performance for all 6 PSET Institutions, since results would be very much determined by the majority of graduates from NUS-IOT and NUS-IHE. That is, in the 2007 study NUS had 288 employed graduates whilst Leulumoega Fou School of Fine Arts for instance had only 4. Responses for the 288 graduates on the impact of their knowledge on job performance would skew the results for Leulumoega Fou students towards that of the NUS students although actual responses for graduates from the two Institutions might be totally different.

6. Conclusion

Despite some data inconsistencies, the study succeeded in generating necessary data to address its objective statements as listed in the outset of the report.

Findings from this study revealed that:

- ✚ Only 146 out of 344 graduates (42.4%) were confirmed as being or have been employed by the employers identified in the 2007 study. 52% or 76 graduates out of 146 were still with the same employer. Most graduates left their jobs to fulfill better paid work opportunities elsewhere. The study also reaffirmed results in the 2007 study with the private sector being the main employer of the graduates from the 6 selected PSET Providers.
- ✚ The impact of graduates' acquired knowledge and skills on the work they undertook was generally positive. Employers were satisfied with most (112 out of 120) of the graduates' application of skills and knowledge in the workplaces. Where graduates were employed in relevant job areas, employers also generally felt that the acquired skills and knowledge were relevant to the job
- ✚ Of the 120 valid responses received, 62.5% or 75 of the graduates received promotions either with the same employer or elsewhere. 37.5% of the graduates were not so fortunate to receive promotions.
- ✚ According to the employers most graduates (81 out of 120) still needed further training in order to effectively carry out their jobs despite having acquired qualifications from relevant PSET Institutions. Overall, graduates required further training in the areas of management, auditing, customer service, report writing, communication as well as work ethics.

7. Recommendations

1. Given problems encountered in this second tracer study, it should be noted for future tracers that the validity of information should be established during the course of the same study so that the authenticity of results is maintained when used in successive tracer studies.
2. The selected PSET providers that agreed to partake in the 2007 study would also appreciate feedback on responses from employers regarding the impact of training and knowledge acquired by graduates on their work.
3. The authenticity of results presented in this report may be questioned by PSET Providers given the limitations in both tracer studies, thus it is highly recommended that each PSET Institution conduct their own tracer studies so that more robust and specific information is generated on the actual impact of their programmes on graduate work performance as well as on training needs of graduates exiting their institutions.
4. The results presented in this report on training needs for the 120 graduates in the different sectors are very similar to those published in Labour Market Survey Reports produced by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour. But perhaps what is needed are sector specific studies on skills audits and training needs in order to generate genuine and representative information on priority skills gaps and training needs that exist within each sector.

These studies could also be designed to capture the perspective of sectors on the standard of training and skills acquired by graduates from local PSET Institutions. Such information when made available can greatly assist SQA and the PSET sub-sector towards making their programmes as relevant as possible to sector needs, and ensuring students who graduate from these programmes can apply their skills to the standards required by each sector both locally and internationally. It is therefore in the interest of SQA to advocate for studies in skills audits and training needs to be conducted (if they have not been done) particularly for key priority sectors in Samoa.

APPENDIX 1: List of Employers

1	Aggies Hotel	50	Ministry of Justice & Courts Administration
2	Agriculture Store Corporation	51	Ministry of Finance
3	Ah Chong Public Accountants	52	Ministry of Revenue
4	Ah Liki Wholesale	53	Motor Distributors of Samoa
5	Ah Liki Constructions	54	Ministry of Works, Transport & Infrastructure
6	Ameperosa & Roma Law Firm	55	Ministry of Prime Minister & Cabinet
7	ANZ Bank	56	National Bank of Samoa
8	Apia Haulage 2000 Ltd	57	Newsline
9	Audit Office	58	National Provident Fund
10	A-Well Finance Company	59	National University of Samoa
11	Betham & Co	60	Nuuausala College
12	Big Bear Company Ltd	61	Office of the Ombudsman
13	Bluebird Lumber & Hardware Co. Ltd	62	Ott Transport
14	Central Bank of Samoa	63	Pacific International Travel & Tours
15	Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (Main Office)	64	Pacific Aluminium Ltd
16	Chan Mow Ltd	65	Peace Corp
17	Craig Constructions	67	Pacific International University
18	Computer Services Ltd	68	Polynesian Explorer
19	Development Bank of Samoa	69	Polynesian Travel & Tours
20	Digicel Company	70	Polynesian Airlines Ltd
21	Don Bosco Technical Center	71	Princess Tui Inn
22	Electric Power Corporation	72	Progressive Insurance
23	European Union	73	Public Service Commission
24	Frankies Molesi Supermarket	74	Rasmussen Engineering Shop
25	Gourmet Seafood Restaurant	75	Sails Restaurant
26	Elisa Hotel	76	Samatic Co Ltd
27	Hotel Millenia	77	Samoa Breweries Ltd
28	HJF Electronics	78	Samoa Tattsлото
29	Ieremia Gale Workshop	79	SamoaTel Ltd
30	Insel Fehmarn Hotel	80	Small Business Enterprises Center

31	Isitolo Leota Accounting Firm	81	Samoa Bureau of Statistics
32	Island Rock Co. Ltd	82	Samoa Commercial Bank
33	Jane's Pasifika Travel & Tours	83	Samoa Fire Services Authority
34	Kool Line Refridgeration	84	Silva Transport Ltd
35	Latter Days Saint Church	85	Sinalei Reef Resort
36	Lesa & Penn Accounting Firm	86	SL Refrigeration
37	Le Talie Rentals	87	Samoa Life Assurance Corporation
38	Lending Tree Ltd	88	Samoa Ports Authority
39	Lotto Samoa	89	Samoa Shipping Corporation
40	M & A Travel & Tours	90	Strickland Brothers
41	Maina's Supermarket	91	Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organisation
42	Manny's Wear	92	Sunrise Restaurant
43	Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Labour	93	Samoa Water Authority
44	MedCen Hospital	94	Uesiliana College
45	Ministry of Education, Sports & Culture	95	Vacations Beach Fales
46	Methodist Press	96	Westpac Bank
48	Methodist Board of Education	97	Yazaki Eds.
49	Matuaileo'o Environmental Trust Inc		

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

PSET TRACER STUDY PHASE II
SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS QUESTIONNAIRE - 2009

Employer: _____

Please tick where appropriate: General Manager____ Manager____ Supervisor____

Date Questionnaire Received: _____

Date Questionnaire Completed: _____

Name of Graduate	
Year of Graduation	
Programme of Study	
PSET Provider attended	

1. Is this graduate still working for your Organisation? Please tick Yes or No.

Yes No

1 (a) If yes, please state the duration of employment?

1 (b) If no, please state the reason(s) why?

2. What is his/her current occupation?

3. Has this person been promoted since he/she started working for the Organisation?

Yes No

4. Are you satisfied with the application of skills & knowledge of this employee?

Yes

No

If yes or no, please explain.

5. Does your Organisation offer in-house training or send staff to other trainings for capacity building and upskilling? Please tick where appropriate and explain.

In House Training

Other Trainings

6. How relevant are the skills and knowledge the graduate has gained from his PSET training to your Organisation? Please tick where appropriate and explain.

Not relevant

Relevant

Very relevant

7. Do you think there is a need for another level of training for the graduate employed by your Organisation to assist with meeting your Organisation's needs?

Yes

No

7(a). If yes, what sort of training do you think is needed?

Thank you for completing the Questionnaire and for your valuable contribution.

APPENDIX 3: TRAINING NEEDS OF GRADUATES

	Training Needs Areas.
NUS-IHE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership & Management skills (10) • Undertake Final Qualifying Exam for Samoa Institute of Accounts (5) • Attain higher Qualification in Study area (4) • Report writing (4) • Analytical skills (4) • Pedagogical Skills (4) • New Accounting Packages (3) • Audit techniques (3) • Undertake Tax Subjects (2) • Industrial Relations (1) • Strategic Planning (1) • Project Appraisal (1)
NUS-IOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service (2) • Supervisory skills (2) • Up-skill in trade area (2) • Work ethics (2) • Office Management (2) • Sales and marketing • Work ethics • Public Administration • Advanced training in secretarial work • Foreign Exchange Control • Undertake Apprenticeship Courses
Tesese Institute of Administrative Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language (3) • Communications Skills (2) • Professional letter and report writing (2) • Leadership skills (2) • Office Management • Customer Service • Personal Relations
Pacific International University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Adult Teaching (CAT) • Computer Hardware Configuration • Work ethics • Sales and marketing
• Don Bosco Technical Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work ethics • Upskill in trade skill area
• Laumua o Punaoa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upskill in trade skill area (2) • Customer Service • English Language
• Leulumoega Fou School of Fine Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory of Fine Arts