

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Bridge International College NZ
Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 10 March 2015

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	5
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	6
Findings	8
Recommendations	14
Appendix	15

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Bridge International College NZ Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Dilworth Building, 22-32 Queen Street, Auckland Central
Delivery sites:	As above, and 238 Queen Street, Auckland Central
First registered:	21 December 2000
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication English (Elementary – Advanced)• Exam Preparation for International English Language Testing System (IELTS)• English for Migrants
Code of Practice signatory?:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: three students at the time of the external evaluation and review (EER) International: 37 students at the time of the EER (two students were under 18 years)
Number of staff:	Five full-time staff (four tutorial, one administrative) Three part-time staff (tutorial)
Scope of active accreditation:	General English (Level 4) Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

(TESOL) (Level 4)

Distinctive characteristics: Approximately 90 per cent of students at Bridge International College NZ Limited (Bridge) are studying full-time in Communication English. They enrol for an average of nine weeks.

Recent significant changes: In March 2014, Bridge was acquired by the ICL Education Group (which includes ICL Business School, Auckland English Academy Ltd and New Horizon College of English). In April 2014, Bridge moved into premises shared with ICL Business School (Dilworth Building). The Bridge IELTS programme is delivered by Auckland English Academy Ltd at 238 Queen St.

Previous quality assurance history: NZQA conducted a Validation visit in March 2014, and the report records requirements for Bridge to improve information and advice for students in relation to accommodation, the Code of Practice for Pastoral Care of International Students, refunds policy and EER category status, and to update the quality management system accordingly.

At the previous EER in 2013, NZQA was Confident in the educational performance and Not Yet Confident in the capability in self-assessment of Bridge.

Other: As part of the ICL Education Group, Bridge shares governance and management, some administrative functions (such as human resources and marketing) and student support services.

Memoranda of agreement are in place with other schools in the ICL Education Group, which enables students to move between schools.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The following focus areas were agreed for inclusion in the EER:

- Governance, management and strategy – which is a mandatory focus area
- International student support – nearly all learners are international students
- General English – all students are enrolled under the General English accreditation (except for those studying IELTS).

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. 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.

Because of the joint ownership and at the request of the principal of ICL Education Group, the on-site visit for the EER of Bridge was combined with that for ICL Business School. The combined EER visit was spread across three days, including shared sessions for Focus Areas 1 and 2 (on days one and two of the visit) and separate sessions for Focus Area 3 (on day three of the visit).

Interviews were conducted with the governance group of ICL Education Group (comprising the principal, the strategic development manager and the chief operating officer), the academic registrar, the director of studies, four teaching staff (three full-time and one part-time), student support staff and eight learners and a graduate.

A variety of documents were reviewed, including management and academic documentation, learner progress records, graduate destination data, learner survey results and meeting minutes.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Bridge International College NZ Limited**.

The reasons for this judgement are as follows:

- Students, who are enrolled for an average of nine weeks, are improving their English and broadening their personal horizons as they learn about New Zealand and other cultures. Evidence of progression through language levels and personal development is found in individual learner records and learner feedback.
- Student survey results confirm that most students enjoy their study experience and value the individual attention and support they receive. This conclusion is supported by student satisfaction ratings exceeding the 80 per cent target.¹
- Achieving improved speaking skills is a priority for many students. Alumni data shows that many students go on to work and travel in New Zealand and elsewhere. Bridge is currently considering how to incorporate a greater focus on speaking in the General English programme to further build students' confidence in everyday communication.
- Appropriate management, academic and student support resources and processes are in place, which contribute to current learner achievement and value and provide a good basis for improvements in educational performance.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Bridge International College NZ Limited**.

The reasons for this judgement are as follows:

- There is evidence of increased capability in self-assessment at Bridge since the previous EER, although as yet there is limited evidence of changes leading to improved outcomes for learners or other stakeholders.
- Bridge has adopted some useful processes which are standard across the ICL Education Group, such as individual learning plans. Feedback from learners, teachers and other stakeholders has been used to identify improvements to the homestay provision and the activities programme.

¹ Bridge, student survey results, May 2014.

- Teachers report that they are supported by management and value the access to improved facilities and resources. Bridge staff have participated in several professional development activities with colleagues from across the ICL Education Group, and further sessions are planned.

Findings²

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Learners are achieving their study objectives and making progress in English language acquisition. They are also learning about New Zealand culture and gaining confidence as they broaden their personal horizons. Students enrol with Bridge to improve their English language in order to work and travel in New Zealand or go on to further study. Their progress is measured through a regular testing regime, using standardised assessments and recorded in learner records and progress reports. Recently Bridge introduced individual learning plans which teachers discuss with the learners each week. Review sheets provide evidence of students' regularly setting learning goals and assessing their own progress. The short study duration (average of nine weeks) means that it is difficult to accurately measure English language acquisition. However, these records, together with evidence of student satisfaction with their progress, confirm that learners are achieving well at Bridge.

The teaching team is strongly focused on individual learner progress, and the director of studies regularly reviews the test scores and provides additional support as required. It is too soon for the effectiveness of the individual learning plans for enhancing learning to have been evaluated, although teachers and students are positive about the approach. A more systematic approach to reviewing the extent to which study goals have been achieved could be useful for targeting teaching activities, particularly in relation to improving speaking skills which is a priority for many Bridge students.

² 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 learners?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Learners report that they are getting good value from their investment in English language learning at Bridge. The exit and alumni surveys indicate that students achieve their objectives and improve their English while learning about other cultures. Bridge has established that between July 2013 and August 2014, 43 per cent of graduates gained employment in New Zealand, 23 per cent progressed to further study, and 8 per cent travelled within New Zealand. A further 10 per cent returned to their home countries for further study. This data, which is based on a reasonable sample of learners and a sound survey method, confirms that many learners are achieving valued outcomes as a result of their studies.

Bridge has relationships with two off-shore education organisations which have sent group programme students during the last year. Bridge also receives repeat enrolments in holiday programmes for students enrolled at several Auckland high schools. There is evidence that these organisations are very satisfied with the education and support services provided by Bridge and the extent to which learners improved their English and broadened their horizons.

Bridge has no evidence of the destination or outcomes for the small numbers of students who undertake study towards IELTS or who enrol for English study as migrants. There would be value for Bridge in further developing its ability to systematically capture and evaluate the students' destination outcomes to demonstrate the value of the IELTS course.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Overall, Bridge is meeting the needs of its learners by delivering an English language programme based on internationally recognised texts, with the inclusion of additional New Zealand content, and activities that are targeted towards the interests and abilities of the students. Interviews and tests at the time of enrolment, as well as a scheduled review within the week of commencement, ensure students are placed at the correct level. Regular tests provide feedback for learners on their progress. However, the student satisfaction rate of 80 per cent suggests is being met with most responses across the student satisfaction surveys over 80 per cent.

Bridge is targeting a 5 per cent increase in overall satisfaction by March 2015 and early results suggest that this is being met.

The student satisfaction survey has been redeveloped to gather more useful information on which to base improvements. Bridge has been aware for some time that many students want to improve their pronunciation and achieve greater confidence and fluency for everyday conversations. Bridge is considering extending the focus on this aspect as part of a review of the afternoon programme, which is underway. Other objectives for this programme review are to enhance the alignment between the morning and afternoon sessions, to introduce additional topics of particular interest, such as job search, and to increase the number and variety of out-of-class activities. This review reflects a purposeful approach to self-assessment which is involving management and staff in identifying improvements.

Teaching resources have been enhanced since Bridge moved into shared premises, and PCs and flat screen televisions have recently been purchased as teaching aids for the classrooms. Student feedback indicates that they would welcome greater use of digital resources in the classroom.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Teaching at Bridge is generally effective, which is evidenced by learner achievement (see Findings 1.1 above) and satisfaction. Learners at Bridge are surveyed every six weeks for feedback on teaching and class activities, and they say they enjoy the learning environment and that they are motivated and encouraged by their teachers. Teachers meet with students individually every week to review their study objectives and to provide feedback on progress. Additional one-to-one assistance is available from the director of studies for those students who seek extra help. Teachers' understanding of each student's individual strengths and needs is reflected in their lesson planning and classroom activities, and this is further evidence of effective teaching.

Bridge has established appropriate academic and management processes, including regular meetings, to support good teaching practice. Teachers report that they work closely together to discuss learner progress, to share resources and ideas, and to support a new member of the team. This cooperation is recorded in meeting notes, group emails, on the notice board, through digital storage and in the school's policies and procedures. Assessment and moderation processes are in place, which, together with the use of standardised tests for the four-weekly test cycle, provide reasonable assurance of consistent and valid assessment practices. New rubrics have been developed recently for assessing speaking and writing, to give consistency and fairness in marking. These processes and activities have

value for fostering collegiality among the teaching team and facilitating systematic sharing of information, which contributes to effective teaching.

Teachers are receiving a strong level of professional support from the director of studies. Regular observations, performance appraisals and discussions on personalised, collated feedback from learner surveys, provide opportunities for reflection and identifying areas for improvement. In 2014, Bridge teachers have participated in several shared professional development sessions, and further activity is planned to enhance skills in the use of digital technologies. Teachers at Bridge are beginning to have contact with English teachers from other PTEs in the group for the purposes of sharing experience and resources.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Learners at Bridge receive a good level of individual guidance and support from the teaching team and student support staff (who are shared with other PTEs in the ICL Education Group). The website, brochures, handbooks and enrolment material have recently been updated for accuracy and completeness. Bridge has student counsellors who speak the first language of most of the learners for whom they are responsible. The counsellors meet and support the induction and orientation of all new learners and, with the accommodation and welfare officer, assist those who choose a homestay. The director of studies is available to any students who require additional academic support. He maintains good records of quarterly meetings with students who are under 18 years of age, and regular feedback is provided to parents/guardians of these students.

Attendance is closely monitored by support staff, who work with tutors to encourage all learners to participate in all learning and social activities. An annual review is conducted which ensures that Bridge is complying with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. There is good evidence that students feel supported and that agents and families are confident in the care and guidance provided by Bridge.

Bridge is committed to achieving high levels of student satisfaction, and student feedback gathered through six-weekly surveys and exit surveys is collated, analysed and used to identify areas for improvement. A homestay action plan was recently developed to increase the level of support for students and homestay families. The activities programme has been reviewed and plans are being developed for a school-wide social programme for Friday afternoons. These activities are potentially useful for improving levels of support and student satisfaction, although it is too early as yet to determine their effectiveness.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Adequate**.

During 2014, Bridge has benefited from effective leadership by governance and management. After an initial period of adjustment to being part of a bigger organisation, staff feel well supported and they are confident about the future of their college. Bridge's current relationship with learners and stakeholders reflects its culture and intention of being a small, friendly school offering a high level of personal care and attention. A planned approach to co-location with ICL Business School and ongoing integration with the wider group will ensure that students' experiences at Bridge continue to match their expectations.

Bridge's 2014 academic plan sets out clear objectives and targets for improving educational and organisational performance. Staff morale is high and teachers value the access to improved facilities, resources and professional development. Regular engagement with staff from the other PTEs within the ICL Education Group is occurring and aims to provide further benefits for development and collaboration. Training and mentoring has been useful for the director of studies in developing his management and self-assessment capabilities. The value of this is evident in the systematic approach being taken to assess the effectiveness of teaching and support services over recent months and the active development of plans to address areas of weakness. It is not yet apparent whether there is a coherent approach to self-assessment across the PTE involving staff at all levels, and at this stage there is little evidence of improved outcomes for learners.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Adequate**.

2.2 Focus area: International student support

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

2.3 Focus area: General English

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Good**.

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Bridge:

- Continue to build staff capability through a targeted professional development programme
- Continue to develop the range of evaluative activities and the engagement of staff at all levels in these activities, including measuring the impact of changes on learning and other important outcomes
- Ensure adequate access to a native language speaker for all ethnicities Bridge is marketing to.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are 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.

Self-assessment and participation 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 NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, 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 Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, 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 External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.

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 External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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