External Evaluation and Review Report

Language Studies International (NZ) Limited

Date of report: 25 July 2019

Language Studies International (NZ) Ltd (LSI Auckland)

LSI Auckland is one of a network of language schools operating globally. The school delivers English language courses to a wide mix of ethnicities with diverse learning goals. LSI Auckland is a member of English New Zealand.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	10-12 Scotia Place, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	International: 154 students. The main countries represented are Colombia 21 per cent, Brazil 18 per cent and Thailand 16 per cent. The remaining students (45 per cent) are from Argentina, Canada, Chile, China, Ecuador, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Peru, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Spain, Tahiti, Taiwan and Turkey.
Number of staff:	16 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	See: NZQA – Language Studies International Ltd
Last EER outcome:	The previous EER (external evaluation and review) was held in April 2016 and the results were: Highly Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	• International Students: Wellbeing and Support • Intensive English
MoE number:	8963
NZQA reference:	C34020
Dates of EER visit:	9 and 10 April 2019

Summary of Results

LSI Auckland uses a thorough system of evaluation and analysis to support the academic achievement of international students. An emphasis on providing strong support and pastoral care results in high satisfaction as expressed in student feedback.

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in self-assessment

- Organisational purpose and direction is set by LSI Global and well managed by LSI Auckland staff.

- Students improve their communication skills and English language proficiency in line with their needs and levels of competency.

- Students and staff are well resourced.

- A strong student support network with integrated operational management ensures coverage of required services.

- Meaningful feedback and progression data has improved evaluation of student academic achievement and experience.

- Academic and administrative staff are well informed on operational and student matters at regular meetings. Feedback is encouraged and clear systems are in place to record meeting decisions.

- Technology is well used as a teaching and learning tool and as an effective student management system.

- Ongoing internal moderation provides opportunities for professional development; external moderation is in the development stage to enhance the quality of assessment further.

Key evaluation question findings[1]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Students at LSI Auckland acquire language and study/life skills that enable them to communicate, at varying levels of proficiency, in a variety of settings. Skills and competencies acquired are relevant to each individual's personal goals and aspirations within the context of an English language school.
	Information about the progress of students is collected through a comprehensive system that informs both staff and students. Rates of progression are high and consistent over time and are in line with current theories of language acquisition.
	Progression and achievement are monitored formatively and summatively through a variety of testing modes over the duration of the students' study period, from pre-arrival to exit.
	Multiple student feedback mechanisms show high rates of confidence in the skills gained which are benchmarked against other LSI Worldwide[2] schools.
	Progression and achievement are understood at an individual level. Analysis of cohort data has identified priority areas for intervention and improvement.
Conclusion:	Student achievement is high and in line with LSI Global[3] benchmarks. LSI Auckland uses the technological tools provided by LSI Global to good effect. All input is used to improve the student experience and for evaluative discussion of achievement and effective improvement plans.

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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] LSI Worldwide refers to the collaboration between LSI schools internationally.

[3] LSI Global refers to the head office, governance and management of the LSI Worldwide group.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Students are the key stakeholders in this organisation and are a diverse group with a wide range of individual goals. Their experience at LSI Auckland helps them develop valuable skills such as communication and interpersonal skills, problem-solving and decision-making, study skills and cultural awareness. The LSI Global student management system provides added value to students pre- and post-course, through access to further study modules. On course, students know and understand their progression and areas of strength or weakness and are given the resources and skills to improve and extend their language skills. LSI Auckland gathers good information from student feedback about the value of the learning. These multiple touch points of student feedback contribute to the adjustment of the curriculum structure and delivery as well as the student support available. Examples of good outcomes for graduates are gathered and kept on file. The samples provided show graduates going on to higher learning in their home countries, achieving the required IELTS[4] scores, and appreciating the friendships made and independence gained. LSI Global is another key stakeholder – LSI Auckland being one of 14 international schools. It has responsibility to ensure the value for students is maintained at expected levels of practice. Any lower rates of satisfaction are queried by LSI Global and analysed by LSI Auckland to improve performance.
Conclusion:	LSI Auckland provides good value for a wide range of students in the English language sector. Over 96 per cent of students surveyed over the last two years would recommend LSI Auckland to others.

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[4] International English Language Testing System

1.3 How well do the programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other stakeholders?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Curriculum design is relevant to the students and uses a variety of modes of assessment, delivery and resources in line with the CEFR.[5] The curriculum has recently been updated after consultation with external moderation partners and stakeholders to clarify learning outcomes, with good effect for teaching and learning. Assessments have benefited from revised rubrics.
	Curriculum and assessment reviews occur bi-annually, with staff involved in the review process. There is evidence of changes made in response to suggestions. Careful analysis of student feedback has also led to improved programme delivery.
	The duration and scheduling of classes meets the varied needs of the students, and additional classes provide relevant skills, i.e. Homework Club, Job Club.
	Official IELTS/Cambridge pre-tests provide students with an indication of their English language level and are used by the school as a method of moderation. Cambridge Main Suite examinations show good performance rates for students sitting the examinations.
	The learning environment is student-centred with a shared and collegiate approach to teaching and learning across staff. Updated resources provide currency of learning and individual access to learning resources. Well-qualified staff employ different strategies to engage learners. These strategies are shared and built on by effective professional development.
	Internal moderation is well managed and informs teaching and professional development. External moderation with an LSI partner school is in the early, but useful, stages of development.
	LSI Auckland is a member of English New Zealand[6] and meets all requirements, with two commendations at the March 2019 English New Zealand audit.

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[5] Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

[6] English New Zealand is a group of New Zealand English language schools.

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Conclusion:	Thorough self-assessment and evaluation of the curriculum and assessment has resulted in a fit-for-purpose programme.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	A commendation from the recent English New Zealand audit notes: 'LSI has an exemplary pro-active approach to pastoral care'. Placement and careful monitoring of students through feedback and assessment ensures that students' needs are quickly identified and extra academic or pastoral support is provided. Reflective student journals are completed online weekly to express goals or concerns. Responses to feedback are evident. Technology also supports student involvement by access to attendance, test and course results.
	Learning outside the classroom is encouraged and is being linked to curriculum learning outcomes. The Job Club introduces students to useful language and skills for working in New Zealand.
	Small class sizes and a wide ethnicity encourage interaction between students. Student support is well managed by capable, experienced staff overseen by management. Policies and procedures are updated annually and cover key aspects of pastoral care. Homestay and under-18 students are given particular attention, with some new initiatives reducing the number of common issues associated with relocating to a new country. Homestay families are also well supported by LSI Auckland.
	The student handbook and pre-arrival information online help prepare and support students. Frequent student surveys provide good information which is assessed by LSI Auckland management and supported by LSI Worldwide to improve the student experience.
Conclusion:	Student engagement and support is a key focus of LSI Auckland and offers students a positive experience.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Organisational purpose and direction is set by LSI Global. A clear system of benchmarks for staff performance and student satisfaction ensures that LSI Auckland maintains a high priority on meeting student needs. There have been a number of staff changes since the last EER including a new management team. Over the past 18 months, the current management has been leading innovation and transformation including the introduction of pathways and student support clubs, and the more effective use of the student management system. Implementation of some new initiatives (revision of the curriculum and evaluation of best practice) is the product of consultation with other providers and regulatory bodies. The current principal/director of studies is an English New Zealand auditor. Improved management strategies are creating an open, inclusive and supportive work environment which is valued by staff where their input is listened to and acted on. A comprehensive annual plan provides staff with both internal and external professional development opportunities. Resources have been upgraded, with modern shared spaces to encourage communication between students and staff. Management leads reflective practice, with clear systems to record meeting decisions and monitor action plans. Data is used to track and report on individuals and cohorts. This leads to evaluative discussions among staff to improve performance and highlight priority areas for intervention. Benchmarking of schools globally is possible with the data collected but is not yet fully in place. Earlier English New Zealand and other audits have been acted on.
Conclusion:	LSI Auckland has strong leadership which ensures staff support educational achievement. The organisation uses its analysis effectively to implement actions that improve overall performance.

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1.6 How effectively are compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	LSI continues to maintain compliance with its key stakeholders: • LSI Global (meeting trimester and annual key performance indicators) • English New Zealand (recent audit has two commendations) • NZQA – current documentation and records show that NZQA requirements for maintaining PTE registration are met in a timely manner with no risks or issues identified. Changes to NZQA Rules and other legislation are monitored and communicated to relevant staff for implementation. The Code of Practice[7] is well understood by management and support staff. Teachers understand and follow the processes required to meet the standard. There has been some recent professional development of staff to further their knowledge and currency. The Code of Practice is self-reviewed annually by management. There is an opportunity for more staff to be involved in this self-review, and the action plans could be monitored more thoroughly. Student file checks demonstrate compliance with visa, insurance and attendance requirements. Some minor self-identified gaps in some files in 2018 resulted in a review of all student files to resolve issues. Relevant staff are fully conversant with immigration rules and requirements for international students. The recent English New Zealand audit concludes: 'LSI Auckland has worked hard to strengthen compliance and build on good practice since the last full audit in 2016'.
Conclusion:	LSI Auckland and LSI Global have effective processes for managing ongoing compliance accountabilities and responsibilities. Self-assessment could be strengthened.

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[7] Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice, 2016

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: International students: Wellbeing and support

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

2.2 Focus area: Intensive English

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

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.

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and 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.

Appendix

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[8]*

- *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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[8] 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 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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