Report of External Evaluation and Review

South Canterbury School of English Language Limited trading as Aotearoa Tertiary Institute

Confident in educational performance
Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 30 May 2014
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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: South Canterbury School of English Language Limited trading as Aotearoa Tertiary Institute (ATI)
Type: Private training establishment (PTE)
Location: 14 Walmsley Road, Otahuhu, Auckland
Delivery sites: As above
First registered: 21 February 1997
Courses currently delivered:
   • New Zealand Diploma in Business (NZDipBus) (Level 6)
   • NZIM Diploma in Management (Level 5)
Code of Practice signatory?: Signatory to the Code of Practice for students aged 18 years and over
Number of students:
   Domestic: ATI had no domestic students at the time of the external evaluation and review (EER)
   International: 20 students; mainly Fijian Indian
Number of staff: ATI has five full-time staff, most of whom undertake a variety of roles within the organisation.
Scope of active accreditation:
   • New Zealand Diploma in Business (NZDipBus) (Level 6)
   • NZIM Diploma in Management (Level 5)
Distinctive characteristics: ATI enrols primarily international students, and offers management and business programmes at levels 5 and 6. The student cohort is predominantly, but not exclusively, Fijian Indian.
Although all students are categorised as international students, many were already living in New Zealand at enrolment, mostly with family.

Recent significant changes: Following a number of sanctions and conditions placed on ATI over the past two years, ATI experienced a significant reduction in the number of student enrolments in 2012, and even more so in 2013. After being able to show that it met the requirements of PTE registration, and as restrictions have been lifted, the number of students in 2014 appears to be increasing.

Previous quality assurance history: NZQA carried out external evaluation and reviews (EER) of ATI in September 2011 and August 2012. Summative judgements in 2011 resulted in ATI becoming a Category 4 status provider.

Summative judgements in 2012 were Not Yet Confident in educational performance and Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment. As a result, ATI became a Category 3 status provider.

ATI has received visits from Immigration New Zealand and NZQA Risk. In August 2012, the NZDipBus was the subject of an NZQA Monitoring Report. The visits and the report identified a number of issues and noted that ATI had failed to comply with obligations under both education and immigration legislation. As a result, compliance notices were issued.

The identified issues involved external moderation, plagiarism, student files, internal assessment of English language ability, attendance, ‘non-aligned’ work placements for students, and the qualifications and professional development of tutors.

Subsequently, the following has occurred:

Plagiarism. ATI’s purchase of, and processes to use anti-plagiarism software have been monitored, and in October 2013 NZQA deemed these practices to be effective.

Student files and non-aligned work placements. ATI has ceased incorporating ‘non-aligned’ work placements into the NZDipBus programme.

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Immigration New Zealand had suspended ATI from processing student visa applications as student enrolment records were found not to contain all necessary information in relation to invoices and receipts for fees, copies of student visas, and copies of insurance. Following a submission from ATI and a visit from NZQA in September 2013, NZQA and Immigration New Zealand were satisfied that ATI was compliant with requirements.

NZQA compliance follow-up. NZQA conducted follow-up compliance visits to ATI in August and September 2013. At these visits, all files and records were found to be complete. In November 2013, a Monitoring Report for the NZDipBus was conducted and concluded; most focus areas from the previous Monitoring Report (August 2012) had been addressed, including strengthening moderation processes, internal assessment of English language ability, attendance, and the qualifications and professional development of tutors.

External moderation. Between 2009 and 2011 ATI had not consistently met moderation requirements for some NZDipBus prescriptions. In 2011, as a condition of ATI’s accreditation to provide the NZDipBus and the NZIM Diploma in Management, full pre- and post-moderation of all ATI’s materials was instigated by NZQA. Since late 2012, ATI has also returned to the standard national external moderation process. Over this period, three out of five ATI submissions have met requirements.

NZ Institute of Studies, ATI’s moderation partner for the past two years, notes that there has been an improvement in the quality of ATI’s assessment materials and assessment decisions over this time.
2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Following a scoping meeting between the lead evaluator and the principal of ATI, the following focus areas were agreed for inclusion in the EER:

- Governance, management and strategy – this is a mandatory focus area.
- International student support – this is a mandatory focus area.
- New Zealand Diploma in Business (NZDipBus) (Level 6) and NZIM Diploma in Management (Level 5). These are the only programmes ATI offers.

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.

The team of two evaluators conducted the EER over two days on site in Auckland. The EER included interviews with the governance board and all five staff of the PTE, most of whom hold several positions within the small organisation. In addition, members of the local advisory group and most students were interviewed. Graduates and external stakeholders were interviewed by phone. A range of documents was reviewed, including self-assessment documentation.
Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **South Canterbury School of English Language Limited trading as Aotearoa Tertiary Institute.**

ATI is a provider of business programmes to a small number of students. There is clear evidence that its educational performance has improved over the past two years, through close monitoring of priority areas and changes to its internal processes, practices and staff development.

Furthermore, the PTE is meeting many of the most important needs of learners by:

- Managing the successful achievement of qualifications
- Engaging with an approved moderation partner to ensure the validity of reported assessment results.
- Achieving improved NZQA external moderation results over the past two years. Graduates are gaining jobs that are relevant to the qualification achieved.
- Improving organisational self-assessment processes and capability.
- Providing reliable and sound pastoral care of students.

There are informal indications that the programmes offered by ATI may also be achieving other valuable outcomes such as personal and work-ready skills in areas that are relevant to study and integration into New Zealand society. It would be beneficial for ATI to formally gather and utilise this anecdotal information in order to gain a better understanding of its educational performance and effectiveness.

Should ATI decide to expand beyond its current ‘niche’ provision, it will be also necessary to undertake further review and consolidation of staffing and resources.
Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is Confident in the capability in self-assessment of South Canterbury School of English Language Limited trading as Aotearoa Tertiary Institute.

ATI has undergone purposeful review and development of its internal systems, processes and practices, resulting in a variety of self-assessment activities that are robust, authentic and sufficiently comprehensive for the size and function of the PTE.

The embedding of these activities and practices over the past 18 months has resulted in useful information being gathered for analysis from which ATI can base decision-making and planning. This is particularly evident in the engagement of the governing board, which leads the strategic planning of the organisation by using self-assessment information, including achievement and attendance data, to establish benchmarks and determine the goals of ATI. In this way, the board guides the organisation to meet internal and external standards and requirements.

To some extent, ATI’s self-assessment improvements have been brought about in response to external compliance requirements. However, ATI has since taken responsibility for these processes, making changes that better reflect the context of the organisation and the needs of the students. ATI staff agree that they are able to identify the benefits and value of these improved processes for themselves, and they recognise the improved operation of the PTE.

There are some areas where self-assessment could be further formalised or refined and analysis made more detailed, but self-assessment activities are capturing the most important needs of stakeholders.

NZQA can have confidence that the developed systems and processes ATI uses to gain evidence of its effectiveness are sufficiently embedded, comprehensive and robust.
Findings

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

ATI is collecting and monitoring reliable achievement data – per paper and trimester – as well as qualification outcomes. Educational performance is reviewed and discussed at all levels of the organisation. The detail provided is appropriate and relevant to the function of the group reviewing the data. The introduction of a new student management system supports collection and analysis of additional useful information, including student grade achievement, resubmissions and withdrawals.

The pattern of qualification completion over the past two years for the NZIM Diploma in Management and NZDipBus is presented in the following tables.

| Table 1. Qualification completions NZIM Diploma in Management (Level 5), 2012-2013 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Course | Trimester | No. enrolled | No. completed | No. did not complete | % qualification completion |
| NZIM Diploma in Management 2012 | T1 | 15 | 14 | 1 | 93 |
| | T2 | 10 | 8 | 2 | 80 |
| | T3 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 100 |
| NZIM Diploma in Management 2013 | T1 | 0 | - | - | - |
| | T2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 33 |
| | T3 | 8* | *Continuing students in 2014 |

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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 The figures are based on ATI achievement data provided during the EER.

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Table 2. Qualification completions New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 6), 2012-2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Trimester</th>
<th>No. enrolled</th>
<th>No. completed</th>
<th>No. did not complete</th>
<th>% qualification completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NZDipBus 2012</td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 (2, continued studying into 2013)</td>
<td>57 (29% continued studying into 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZDipBus 2013</td>
<td>T1</td>
<td>3 (includes 2 from T3, 2012)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1* still studying</td>
<td>66 (33% continuing in study*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T3</td>
<td>3*</td>
<td>*Continuing students in 2014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This representation of achievement data (Tables 1 and 2) is influenced by new enrolments each trimester and the significant decrease in students in 2012-2013 as a result of ATI's category status (see ‘TEO in Context’). Nevertheless, most students are achieving the qualifications they enrol in, which is their primary goal.

ATI monitors students’ reasons for withdrawing from study. Over the past two years, these have related to attendance issues as ATI has strengthened its expectation of students in this regard, reinforcing its own internal benchmark of 100 per cent. This strengthened expectation has resulted in a number of student withdrawals. In addition, during the period when ATI was unable to renew student visas, some students were obliged to study elsewhere.

Internally, ATI has strengthened moderation through targeted staff development and training. ATI’s moderation partner and the NZQA Monitoring Report of November 2013 confirm improvement in this area and in the redevelopment of assessments, which staff are now undertaking. External moderation results (NZQA) over this time support this pattern of improvement (see also Findings 1.4).

ATI has benchmarked successful completions against its own achievement over recent years and through reviewing NZQA EER reports of similar providers offering similar programmes. ATI comparisons indicate that it has a similar rate of achievement across all programmes, although, as mentioned, the low student numbers affect the usefulness of these comparisons.

Based on student and graduate interviews and informal graduate follow-up by ATI, the skills and knowledge gained are applicable, useful and valued by learners.

*Final Report*
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 **Adequate**.

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

Programmes are relevant to students and stakeholders. National qualifications are offered at levels 5 and 6 and have recognition in the labour market as well as meeting Immigration New Zealand requirements for international students studying in New Zealand. The valued outcomes for students are the achievement of the qualifications (as discussed in Findings 1.1), and indications are that most students are achieving this goal. Achievement of the NZDipBus qualification specifically supports graduates to gain employment and, for those interested, potential permanent residency in New Zealand.

ATI reports that recent tracking of employment outcomes has occurred, and all graduates from 2013 were followed up. Of these graduates, ATI reports that 44 per cent were employed and 56 per cent have a job offer and are awaiting approval of their work visa so they can commence employment. These results are reported to and discussed by the local advisory group and the governance team. ATI believes both students and graduates are integrating well into the communities in which they are living and gaining work.

Evaluator interviews also indicated that numerous graduates progress from part-time service sector roles, often as ATI students, into full-time work in areas relevant to the qualification achieved. Specifically, students and graduates emphasised the improvement in their confidence, especially in public speaking and working in a team. Both of these skills are identified as being important and of added value, and are components of ATI course work.

ATI has tried to engage graduates formally by including the past student council president in the local advisory group, and in 2012 and 2013 by offering graduates alumni events. The most successful of these is graduate representation on the local advisory group. The graduates’ recent experience of studying at ATI and their ability to consider how prepared they are for the workforce helps to identify areas that may be further enhanced. Although the alumni events and graduation and reunions offered are genuine, ATI is not reaching sufficient numbers of graduates to gather useful information.

Overall, a more comprehensive view of the outcomes being achieved and those that may be achieved would further support ATI’s own perception of the value of its programmes.
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.

ATI has a good understanding of student needs and uses a number of processes to monitor and respond to those needs. Students are seeking knowledge and business skills relevant to New Zealand business. ATI has good rates of qualification completion, and recent employment outcomes for graduates indicate that student needs are being matched and met.

The ability of ATI to understand the needs of students who are moving from education and life in Fiji, where most students come from, to living and studying in New Zealand, is of value to migrant communities. ATI is aware of the associated needs and is able to respond to those needs, which are informed by input from the local advisory group. Very recently, ATI introduced a survey to gather student feedback following orientation. This indicates that ATI provided an effective process and useful information for new students during the January 2014 orientation. Further feedback will assist in validating that all students’ needs are being met, especially as ATI has rolling enrolments.

The required entry criteria are being met for study at levels 5 and 6 for English-language level and academic ability. Enrolment requirements have been externally verified through monitoring by NZQA Risk during on-site visits and again more recently in the latest Monitoring Report. In addition, ATI engaged a Category 2 status PTE to review its improved processes and practices to ensure ATI is meeting Immigration New Zealand requirements and that records are complete. These activities give ATI confidence that its systems and processes in this area of enrolment are robust.

Class trips, events and occasional guest speakers are also linked to the course content. Although there is minimal choice of papers for students studying at ATI, careful consideration has been given to the curriculum to ensure requirements and prerequisites are met, while offering courses in areas where ATI is most capable. Programme planning is mostly informed by ATI’s resources and capability, which are somewhat restricted due to low student numbers. ATI expects that this situation will improve if/when student numbers increase.

ATI says the local advisory group input and course questionnaires (completed twice a year by students) provide useful information. These feedback mechanisms could be further strengthened through showing evidence of improvements to programme design and delivery that support the educational achievement of students.

Other formal and systematic processes, such as evaluation of tutors and planned student interviews, provide further useful information for ATI to reflect on. Student needs are also identified by the student council, which is an active group and meets...
regularly with the student support coordinator. The small number of students, and the accessibility of ATI staff to students, are an aid to the understanding of student needs.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

The teaching at ATI is generally effective. Tutors are suitability qualified and demonstrate a genuine interest in the students and their progress. Tutors are observed and are given feedback on their performance, including feedback from students. Students are given regular opportunities to provide feedback on their teachers, and to a lesser extent on the course. One-to-one interviews with students are scheduled and provide further opportunities to discuss any academic concerns students may have. The surveys sighted, and interviews with current students confirmed, that students and tutors relate effectively to each other, and students are largely very satisfied with the teaching activities and resources.

ATI tutors have a sound understanding of the progress and achievement of each student through the collection and analysis of a variety of achievement data. This data includes achievement per paper, student grade achievement, and resubmissions. The use of formative assessments, student engagement in group work, tutorials and informal presentations provide further indicators to tutors and students of the progress of students prior to undertaking summative assessments. Students indicate that they enjoy their learning, feel prepared for and get feedback on assessments, and have an opportunity to resubmit assessments.

The validity of ATI’s assessment judgements is verified through ATI’s moderation partner, which reviews all student assessments prior to them being reported to NZQA. This arrangement has been in place for almost two years, and improvement has been noted by the partner PTE. NZQA external moderation of prescriptions also indicates improvement over the past two years, with three of four papers meeting requirements. Internally, ATI has strengthened moderation through targeted staff development and training, which is having an impact. ATI staff recognise an increase in their confidence, skills and knowledge around assessment. NZQA monitoring reports and the PTE partner recommend that ATI continue to further develop tutors’ skills and qualifications in this area, to ensure the quality of assessments and the validity of judgements are sustained.
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**.

A range of effective formal and informal processes are providing good guidance and support for ATI students. Staff at ATI have a genuine interest in the students, and the small number of students presents opportunities for students to provide direct feedback regularly, and for staff to engage with students on a daily basis.

Formal opportunities to identify support needs include one-to-one meetings with the student support coordinator at the beginning and midpoint of study, student surveys at the end of each paper, and regular student council meetings. The student council is active and adds value to the students and to school life. The student council says the student support coordinator is very responsive to any issues or questions that the council raises and seriously considers suggestions such as possible class trips.

Informally, the needs of students become apparent through the engagement of staff and students, particularly as all staff, bar an administrator, also teach at least one paper. Social activities and school events or outings provide opportunities for staff to interact and observe students and offer support where required, as well as providing enjoyment for students.

ATI provides the expected resources and supports for international students, such as an orientation, student handbook, 24-hour contact and access to native-language speakers. One-to-one academic support is available on non-teaching days. The close monitoring of achievement performance and attendance ensures ATI has a sound understanding of students’ engagement and progress, enabling staff to respond in a timely way. This has a positive impact on educational outcomes.

The religious and cultural practices of all students are observed and celebrated, which increases the students’ sense of belonging and being valued. The opportunity to learn about other students’ cultures and religious practices is welcomed.
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 **Good**.

ATI is a small PTE managed by a governance board which is supplied with useful information about the students and the PTE. The information is used to inform the planning of organisational goals and to establish internal benchmarks. There is clear communication between governance board, staff and students via the student council. Educational performance is closely monitored and discussed at all levels of the organisation.

ATI has undergone two previous EERs – in 2011 and 2012. As a result, it has had ongoing engagement with NZQA and, to a lesser degree, Immigration New Zealand, over the past two years. This engagement has involved external monitoring of key areas within the PTE. ATI has undertaken to, and has resolved, the areas of concern.

ATI now has the required processes in place and is sustaining improved practices, as shown through various monitoring processes: external moderation, ongoing engagement of the PTE partner for moderation purposes, the NZQA Monitoring Report, and on-site visits by NZQA Risk. The outcomes of these processes indicate that the problem areas previously identified have improved and are meeting compliance requirements to NZQA’s satisfaction. Most importantly, ATI staff have seen the added value in the improved overall operation of the PTE.

The key documents/processes that support self-assessment include the governance strategic plan, the ATI principal’s plan, and an implementation plan. These are linked to self-assessment activities, including an emphasis on the attendance and achievement of students, and which have specific indicators for review. Professional development, student evaluations and teacher observations further support the gathering of meaningful information for review.

Embedded self-assessment is becoming more refined with changes to processes that better reflect the needs of the organisation and the students. There are sufficient processes to capture useful information and, where necessary, to alert ATI staff to areas of concern. The sustainability and effectiveness of the current self-assessment processes were tested with the recent departure of a key administration person. Despite the inevitable adjustments, ATI continued to operate and manage to the same level, indicating that processes are sufficiently robust and personnel suitably able to continue the expected practices.

Resources at the PTE are sufficient. ATI students have access to the Wi-Fi network on site for accessing resources and information, which is beneficial to their study. More recently, an area has been developed to provide a small library on campus. The resourcing of the library is appropriate for the business programmes.
ATI is delivering. The general upkeep and maintenance of the building has been somewhat neglected as ATI has focused on the most important areas of tutor development and student and programme resources. Overall, ATI has improved its practices and processes, and this evaluation found good evidence that these changes are both embedded and sustainable. The improvement in the organisation’s self-assessment has produced a better understanding of its educational performance.
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 Good.

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: NZIM Diploma in Management (Level 5) and New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 6)
The rating in this focus area for educational performance is Adequate.
The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is Adequate.
Recommendations

NZQA recommends that ATI continue to:

- Review the effectiveness of the now-established self-assessment processes and practices.
- Monitor areas where improvement has occurred, to ensure the changes and improvements made continue to be worthwhile and meaningful as student numbers increase.
- Plan across the organisation for the changes likely to be required in the event of a significant growth in student numbers.
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).*
