

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Duke Institute of Studies Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 11 December 2015

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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:	Duke Institute of Studies Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	12-14 Huron Street, Takapuna, Auckland
Delivery sites:	12-14 Huron Street, Takapuna, Auckland
First registered:	14 December 2001
Courses currently delivered:	General English Proficiency – Elementary General English Proficiency – Pre-Intermediate General English Proficiency – Intermediate Certificate in General English Proficiency including IELTS preparation
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: five International: 23
Number of staff:	Three full-time equivalents, and four part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	Refer: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/course-accreditations.do?providerId=744978001&delSiteInd=0
Distinctive characteristics:	Duke Institute provides English language training for international students. These students are mainly from the traditional markets of China, Japan and Korea or students are migrants who have settled in the local area and wish to learn English. Individual student

	support is a key feature of this organisation.
Recent significant changes:	<p>Change of ownership and management in 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original owner no longer involved in the organisation. • Complete change of management and administration staff during 2015. • Markets have expanded into Europe and the Middle East. • New training schemes approved in 2014 under the previous management. • Significant and sustained drop in student numbers in 2015.
Previous quality assurance history:	NZQA last conducted an external evaluation and review (EER) of Duke Institute in 2012. The summative statements of confidence were Confident in both the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of the organisation.
Other:	<p>Duke Institute is a signatory to the <i>Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students</i>. The PTE has approval to enrol students under the age of 18.</p> <p>A SKIDS (Safe Kids in Daily Supervision) programme is run from the Duke Institute premises after school. Duke Institute students volunteer to assist on this programme to increase their knowledge of the New Zealand education system and gain experience working with primary school age children.</p>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of this EER included the mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy.

NZQA selected General English as the other focus area. This is the English language training area which enables learners to pathway through the levels to meet individual goals and aspirations.

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.

Prior to the EER, a scoping meeting was held at Duke Institute with the lead evaluator, the principal/managing director and the director of studies. At this meeting, the site visit was discussed and the focus areas selected. Following this meeting, Duke Institute provided relevant key documents to the evaluation team to support the plan of enquiry.

A team of two evaluators visited the Takapuna site over one and a half days. The team had discussions with the owners, director of studies, teaching and administrative staff, learners, and external stakeholders.

When the team was on site, the organisation provided a range of documents requested by the evaluators to support the evaluative conversations. The evaluation team reviewed these documents.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Duke Institute of Studies Limited**.

Duke Institute is achieving a good standard of educational performance.

- Learner achievement is a strong focus for the organisation. Learners acquire English language skills within a learner-centred environment, which focuses on developing communication strategies and applying these skills in a variety of contexts inside and outside the classroom. The organisation enables learners to achieve their own individual goals and aspirations and build confidence in their ability to transition to living in New Zealand. The outcomes of the entry and exit interview process demonstrate these achievements.
- Learners highly value the supportive, inclusive learning environment and the experience and commitment of the teaching staff. This contributes to improving their English language skills enough to pathway to higher levels of English language tuition within Duke Institute, to meeting the entry requirements to study at secondary or tertiary level, to gaining employment or to engaging more fully in the community. There is good evidence that most learners gain the necessary English language skills to match their chosen pathway.
- The organisation provides learner support from a learner's entry to exit and beyond in a wide range of areas such as arrival in New Zealand, orientation. Learning occurs within a family environment with relevant personal support to meet the needs of each cultural group.
- Duke Institute is undertaking a major organisational refocus. The changes to ownership, management and administrative staff, as well as the reduced number of learners, have had a great impact on the organisation in 2015. With the development and initial implementation of the Strategic Plan 2015-2018 there is good evidence that the organisation is managing the change in a planned and purposeful way. The key strategic priorities are well documented and align with The Vision 2018.¹ There is a commitment 'to move from survival mode to growth mode' over the next two to three years.

¹ Duke Institute of Studies, 2015-2018 Strategic Plan, September 2015

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Duke Institute of Studies Limited**.

- There is a reflective culture embedded across Duke Institute. Teaching staff regularly reflect on learner progress and the outcomes of teaching and assessment. There are clearly structured manual recording processes to track improvement for individual learners and units of learning.
- There is evidence that Duke Institute has appropriate manual processes to record learner progress and feedback: such as from learners, homestay families, and secondary schools that accept learners from Duke Institute, as well as other stakeholders, such as agents. This data can be further collated and systematically analysed to better understand performance at an organisational level, and to inform improvement initiatives.
- There is good evidence that self-assessment is being used effectively to identify management systems and practices which need to be reviewed, to systematically monitor management initiatives and to improve organisational practice. A recent example of management recognising the importance of professional development resulted in an increased budget allocation for the current period. Gaps and weaknesses are being identified and there are plans for further improvements, which are being prioritised to ensure maximum benefit while working within financial constraints. It is too early in the implementation phase to understand the effectiveness of these improvements.

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**.

At Duke Institute there is a very strong focus on individual learner achievement and helping each learner meet their goals and aspirations, as demonstrated by the ongoing review and recording of each learner's progress from entry to exit. Learner achievement is individualised with different lengths of enrolment and placement into appropriate levels of study programmes. Success is measured against learners' own specific personal goals, aspirations and desired educational pathways, as well as achieving goals set by teachers against outcomes for specific units of learning.

The organisation assesses these outcomes through progress tests for English language skills: Individual Achievement Records show that learner achievement and progress is strong. Almost all learners complete their elected period of study and progress to their chosen pathway. This is reflected in the exit interview records.

The organisation places a high priority on ensuring that learners acquire a range of useful language and communication skills. Teaching staff and management monitor and review learner progress and achievement for all courses at regular staff meetings. Staff also use weekly management meetings to identify and reflect on what improvements are needed to provide relevant focus and support in the next teaching block.

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 **Adequate**.

Learners achieve goals at each level and progress (where desired) to higher levels of English study when they are ready to move on. Skills in English enable learners to transition to study within New Zealand educational settings (secondary or tertiary study). Targeted mentoring and support assists learners to understand life in New Zealand as it relates to each culture. The feedback from schools shows that Duke Institute prepares newly arrived international learners to pathway successfully into studies at secondary school.

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

There is good evidence from current and ex-students that their English language skills, knowledge of the New Zealand lifestyle, and enhanced confidence and wellbeing have prepared them to successfully move through the levels of study at Duke Institute, and on to their chosen educational or employment pathway. For example, one English for Migrants learner returns each year for a short block of study to improve their English language and communication skills. This learner highly values the individualised and inclusive learning within a small class.

Many past learners maintain contact with Duke Institute informally through visits, emails and letters. There is no formal evidence of any data collection and analysis of the pathways, destinations and outcomes for Duke Institute learners over time and across programmes of study.

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 **Adequate**.

Duke Institute has ensured that its programmes continue to meet the needs of its stakeholders, especially the learners, in a valuable way. There is a very good understanding of the needs of learners in English language training. The course materials and resources are adjusted to ensure they are relevant to the learner and class profile and context.

Duke Institute provides an effective preparation pathway for mostly young international learners who want to attend local schools, gain entry to tertiary studies or find employment. A flexible and learner-centred approach enables learners to progress through skill levels at their own pace and under their own motivation, working towards their own goals rather than the set time frames of courses.

Orientation and placement testing processes are designed to ensure that learners are studying at an appropriate level. Regular testing of progress, informal conversations between teaching staff and management, and recording individual learner goals and aspirations help to determine individual learning and support needs and maximise the success of the learner. Learners can request to move up or down levels to match learning needs and skill level. Management considers these requests and agrees if they are reasonable. Where relevant, the learner has a trial week in a higher level to confirm the suitability of the decision.

SKIDS (Safe Kids in Daily Supervision) runs daily from the Duke Institute premises. This is an effective community engagement initiative providing after-school care for primary-school-age children. It also provides Duke Institute learners with an opportunity to volunteer their services and gain valuable experience in the wider community and increase their understanding of some aspects of the New Zealand education system, such as homework, use of textbooks, and reading.

Duke Institute has been delivering the current programmes for some time. New training schemes were approved in 2014 with planned delivery from 2016. With the change in management, there is an identified need to review whether the proposed change will meet current practice in the sector and also the needs of the learners. It is important for Duke Institute to network within the sector and obtain external professional feedback on the relevance and currency of delivery of these newly approved training schemes.

Management have indicated that this review is essential and is currently working on solutions with relevant external bodies. A recent staff appointment is providing additional knowledge and experience in current markets and training needs to assist with confirming programme needs.

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**.

The teaching at this organisation is effective. The teaching staff have good experience, are appropriately qualified, and are passionate, caring and dedicated to learner achievement within the context of English language training. They are highly valued by management and learners, know their learners well because of the small class sizes and are responsive to individual learner needs.

In their feedback on the learning at Duke Institute, learners comment very favourably on the quality of teaching, the support received from teaching staff, and the positive, happy learning environment. Teachers value the autonomy within the classes to adapt programmes to meet learner profiles and the inclusive learning environment. For example, the text of workbooks was changed to suit the needs of a group of younger learners.

There is good evidence of good practice among the staff:

- Evaluations inform improvements.
- Individual teaching practice observations by an external advisor provide feedback on improved practice.
- Strong communication channels are used informally on a daily basis to share classroom issues, course materials and ideas for teaching.

Teaching staff use comprehensive testing and reporting processes to provide individual progress reports at regular intervals. A systematic moderation process is used to confirm consistent outcomes and valid marking practice.

Teachers use mid and end-of-course evaluations to review learner achievements and make improvements to teaching practice, making overall comments on areas for review and the learning outcomes achieved. This feedback indicates any

learner concerns, and changes to learner group (left, new). The feedback also leads to a reflective overview of the teaching and improvements to be made. An annual performance review process is in place and professional development has an allocated budget.

The current teaching resources have been in place for some time and there is a need to review whether the resources and teaching practice match current trends in the English language teaching sector. Management has identified a need to explore opportunities for benchmarking, networking with other similar providers, researching new teaching practice ideas/initiatives and engaging with the professional sector.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Individualised learner guidance and support at Duke Institute is highly effective in helping the international students to achieve educational success and reach their personal goals and aspirations. This includes, for example, providing Korean students with a Korean-speaking support person and Chinese students with a Mandarin-speaking support person. The student handbook contains rules and regulations which are aligned to the Code of Practice and designed to help learners understand their responsibilities and academic commitments.

Small class sizes enable individualised support, strong relationship building with both the teacher and other learners, and promote the organisational vision of 'a family-oriented education facility'. Teachers provide strong, caring support for each learner to pursue and achieve their chosen pathway. Learners can access additional tutorial help outside the classroom to support additional learning.

Management responds to learner needs in a timely manner, gaining information on learning requirements from a variety of sources, including learner feedback. An example of this is the recent addition of Wifi access to the campus following learner requests.

Effective strategies are in place to support international students from entry to exit and beyond. This includes arrival in New Zealand, orientation, enrolment, monitoring of attendance, and regular communication with homestays. Staff reflect on learner wellbeing and progress daily, which enables resolution of any learner issues in a timely manner. Staff are available for learner contact 24 hours, seven days a week if it is required. Some evidence of this is a recent example of an unhappy learner in an unsatisfactory homestay contacting Duke Institute on a Saturday and being moved that day to more suitable accommodation.

There is good evidence that learners are happy, feel well-supported and enjoy the positive, learner-centred environment. This enables them to develop confidence in dealing with the social and community demands of living in NZ.

Staff are knowledgeable and up-to-date with the requirements of the Code of Practice. Duke Institute currently undertakes informal review processes of Code-relates policies and it is important that the PTE formally reviews policies and processes annually against the Code of Practice.

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**.

Duke Institute has had a number of challenges during 2015 with a change of ownership, decreasing learner numbers, new management and administrative staff and structures, and financial constraints. There is good evidence that the organisation is undertaking a review in a systematic and purposeful way with the development of the Strategic Plan 2015-2018. A new management structure and appointment of experienced management staff has been a key focus to support strategic priorities and there are key performance indicators in place going forward.

Strategies implemented to strengthen governance and management include:

- Weekly management meetings to monitor individual and team goals (targets are recorded)
- Experienced manager targeting new international markets to increase learner numbers with small increase in numbers already achieved
- Building strong working relationships among managers with clear strategic intent to have the right people in the right jobs with complementary skills and a shared vision for the future
- Use of appropriate external mentors to support managers in their roles
- Focus on relationship building, cementing positive communications and developing teamwork
- Feedback from staff on overall level of management support for teaching staff.

Duke Institute has a clear vision to strengthen the organisation and ensure it has a sustainable future. Strong working relationships are developing between management and staff to implement organisational change.

There is a lack of evidence of engagement with the professional community for English language teaching within the region. This would provide networking

opportunities to keep teaching staff up-to-date with current teaching practice and resources.

Comprehensive manual systems and processes are in place to monitor learner achievement, learner feedback (e.g. surveys), learner attendance, and individual goals. A planned move to a more effective student management system to meet external and internal requirements will provide information and data to support self-assessment at an organisational level.

There is clear evidence that good progress has been made towards strengthening the organisation, and the evaluators are confident that this will continue with the current management structure. There is evidence of an emerging approach to self-assessment across the organisation, with some understanding of the effectiveness of the improvements implemented so far.

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: General English Proficiency

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Duke Institute of Studies:

- Explore opportunities for networking with similar providers, keeping up-to-date with resources and teaching practice ideas/initiatives, currency of teaching programmes and engaging with the wider English language teaching sector in the region.
- Review strategies and practices to get stakeholder feedback, information and appropriate data that can be systematically analysed to inform worthwhile improvements.
- Explore ways to measure and record learner achievements (such as confidence, motivation, and enhanced wellbeing) to inform learner achievement at an organisational level.
- Develop processes to record and analyse pathways, destinations and outcomes for learners over time and across the training programmes to support identifying the relevant training programmes for learners.

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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