



NEW ZEALAND **QUALIFICATIONS** AUTHORITY  
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# Report of External Evaluation and Review

International College of Auckland  
Limited

Not Yet Confident in educational performance

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 19 September 2017

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*Final Report*

# 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:	International College of Auckland Limited (ICA)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	2002
Location:	Level 5, 131 Queen Street, Auckland
Delivery sites:	As above and level 7, 115 Queen Street, Auckland
Programmes currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diploma in Business (Level 7) with five specialisations: Finance and Accounting, Healthcare Management, Project Management, Management and Marketing and Business and Computing</li><li>• NZIM Diploma in Management (Level 5)</li><li>• NZIM Diploma in Management (Advanced) (Level 6)</li><li>• National Diploma in Business (Level 5)</li><li>• New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 6)</li><li>• New Zealand Diploma in Information Technology Technical Support (Level 5)</li><li>• Diploma in Computer System Support (Advanced) (Level 7)</li><li>• Diploma in Electrical Engineering (Level 7)</li><li>• New Zealand Certificates in English Language (Levels 1-4)</li><li>• English for Migrants</li></ul>
Code of Practice	Yes

signatory:	
Number of students (2016):	<p>Domestic: 26 (12 EFTS (equivalent full-time students))</p> <p>International: 654 full-time students from India, China, Philippines and other countries (448 EFTS)</p> <p>680 students were enrolled at ICA in 2016 compared with 628 in 2015.</p> <p>404 students were enrolled at the time of the site visit.</p>
Number of staff:	43 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	<a href="http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/ngf-accreditations.do?providerId=748806001">http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/ngf-accreditations.do?providerId=748806001</a>
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Programmes offered are divided into modules so that new students can join every ten weeks. From 2017, all full-time programmes are taught over 2.5 days.</p> <p>ICA is funded for approximately 18 EFTS by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) for students undertaking the Diploma in Electrical Engineering (Level 7) under a blended learning model.</p>
Recent significant changes:	<p>A new academic quality and compliance director was appointed in 2016. A new team leader for business commenced in 2017.</p> <p>The PTE opened a new campus at 115 Queen Street, Auckland specifically for business programmes in 2016.</p> <p>There were 292 students enrolled in Academic English and General English programmes until the end of 2016, but these programmes have now expired. The New Zealand Certificate in English Language began in 2016 and had 29 enrolments at the time of the external evaluation and review (EER).</p>
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>At the previous EER in October 2013, NZQA was Confident in ICA's educational performance and Confident in its capability in self-assessment. At that time, 265 students were enrolled. The evaluators made the following recommendation: 'NZQA recommends that ICA continue to focus on developing capability within the PTE to ensure external validation of student achievement occurs and is sustained, such as in the areas of external moderation and compliance with the Code of Practice'.</p>

### **NZQA Tertiary Assessment and Moderation (TAM)**

In 2015, TAM exempted ICA from external moderation requirements for 2016 for the New Zealand Diploma in Business (NZDipBus) as the PTE had met moderation requirements for the majority of samples for three consecutive years.

In 2014-2015, NZQA externally moderated assessment samples for 13 standards. Assessor decisions for 29 of 31 samples of student work were accepted. Assessments for three standards required modification.

In 2016, TAM wrote to ICA stating that a large number of credits reported to NZQA were for standards omitted from the PTE's annual assessment plan. This was for 12 standards in business and computing at levels 5-7. Results for 453 learners were reported. The PTE was required to supply NZQA with a plan of action to address these issues.

### **NZQA level 7 diploma monitoring**

The monitoring visit for the Diploma in Electrical Engineering (Level 7) occurred in September 2016. The monitoring report shows a well-run programme with some concerns and suggestions stated including the quality of students' learning as it relates to 10-hour teaching days and the need for more convincing external moderation. Teacher qualifications, programme-related guidance and the quality of the industry advisory panel were all commended. Graduate have good employment outcomes. No assessments were collected for external moderation because the monitor expressed no concern about the samples viewed on site.

The monitoring visit for the Diploma in Computing Systems Support (Advanced) (Level 7) also occurred in September 2016. The report makes some recommendations: undertake a review of the programme to ensure teaching and assessing is at level 7; change the delivery of the programme from two to three days per week; develop a staff workload policy; amend the re-sit/reassessment policies and practices; review the current entry criteria. Of 47 samples of student work moderated, the NZQA moderator stated that the marking reflected an appropriate range in all cases, but modifications to materials or practice were required to ensure consistency and to more convincingly meet prescription requirements.

The monitoring visit for the Diploma in Business (Level 7) occurred in November 2016. Excluding English language programmes, this is the PTE's largest programme in terms of student numbers, and the review report was critical of numerous aspects of the programme. For example, the monitors stated that in their view: there was an excess of group work in several courses; some assessment tools did not meet New Zealand Qualification Framework requirements for level 7; marking was often inaccurate and inconsistent and did not accurately reflect student performance or was not marked at level 7 (see also Focus Area 2.2 in this EER report).

### **NZQA programme applications and qualification transitions**

ICA's most recent programme approval and accreditation application was for the Diploma in Mechanical Engineering (with strands in Automotive Engineering and Mechatronics and Control Systems) (Level 7). It was approved in December 2016 but has yet to enrol students. More recently, ICA concluded delivery of the expiring National Diploma in Computing (Level 5) with the final cohort of students graduating in May 2017. ICA has a record of transitioning to newer version qualifications as they become available on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.

Other:

On 29 September 2016, ICA received a joint NZQA and Immigration New Zealand letter detailing concerns over Indian student visa decline rates in 2016. From 1 January 2016 to 31 August 2016, 69 per cent of students applying from India were declined a visa. The letter specifies expected improvements by the end of 2017 (recent Immigration New Zealand data shows there has been improvement in 2017). This concern is not isolated to ICA and is a sector related concern.

Immigration New Zealand has visited ICA in 2017 as part of routine monitoring of TEO and student compliance with visa rules.

ICA completed the required self-review of the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice and provided a copy to NZQA in November 2016.

ICA has memorandums of understanding outlining pathways for its graduates with Unitec, Griffith University (Queensland, Australia), NorthTec and Massey University.

After the onsite visit relating to the EER the NZQA Risk team visited on a separate matter. On this visit the team identified that ICA was issuing receipts to international students for the full cost of the course whilst only receiving part of the receipted monies. Additionally, they had obtained signed side agreements with the students that part payments were to be paid over the duration of the course. This appears to be a serious breach of NZ Immigration requirements and the matter has duly been passed to them for further investigation.

The team also identified that ICA had failed to alter start dates in Public Trust when students starts were delayed. This resulted in funds for the affected students commencing to be being drawn down before they were entitled to and was therefore in breach of the Student Fee Protection Rules. This has immediately been corrected by ICA by them changing the dates in Public Trust and lodging funds drawn down in error back to the trust.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

### Focus areas and rationale for selection

Four focus areas were included in this evaluation. Together they cover the majority of current student enrolments and the mandatory focus area for international providers.

<p><b>Focus Area 1. International students: support and wellbeing</b></p> <p>NZQA is committed to the responsible development and delivery of education to international students. It is essential to New Zealand’s ‘brand’ to ensure that all students are adequately supported in their programmes of study. To that end, from August 2016 NZQA introduced a standard focus area for all EERs of TEOs that enrol international students. This focus area examines how effectively the TEO under review is discharging its pastoral care responsibilities towards its international students.</p>
<p><b>Focus Area 2. Diploma in Business (Marketing and Management, Healthcare Management, Project Management, Business Computing) (Level 7)</b></p> <p>Approved in 2015, this programme is the PTE’s largest in terms of enrolments when English language programmes are excluded.</p> <p>Programme aim: to enable international and domestic students to gain a level 7 business qualification for employment or further study in other tertiary institutions; build upon the knowledge, understandings and skills developed in the NZDipBus and NZIM Diploma in Management (Advanced) (Level 6) in a chosen specialist</p>

area; provide opportunities for students to be exposed to the culture and context of new Zealand business through assignments, visits and visiting lecturers from the business sector; and expose students to a qualification exploring the connection between theoretical knowledge and practice in a New Zealand business environment.

Course design features: 120 credits; 40 gross weeks/36 teaching weeks; 21 hours teaching and 13 hours self-directed learning per week.

### **Focus Area 3. Diploma in Computer System Support Advanced (Level 7)**

Approved in 2010, this is ICA's third to largest programme and is growing.

Programme aim: to provide high-level computer support knowledge and skills, with a specialisation in computer networking, to industry recognised standards. Students will learn a blend of specific skills (e.g. programming languages) and theoretical knowledge (e.g. theory and design). Graduates will be proficient in both hardware and software support, and be able to operate as single and multi-user environment support personnel, in culturally diverse environments. Graduates will be ready either for the workforce or higher level study.

Course design features: 243 credits; 74 gross weeks/64 teaching weeks; 20 hours teaching and 18 hours self-directed student learning per week.

### **Focus Area 4. Diploma in Electrical Engineering (Level 7)**

Approved in 2014, this is the PTE's third-largest and also growing programme. Uniquely, this programme also contains a mix of international and domestic students.

Programme aim: to provide an advanced programme of study covering core knowledge and skills in electrical and electronics engineering, and two specialist strands: telecommunications and networks, and electronics and embedded systems. The programme has been designed for students who have already completed a course of study in electrical engineering at level 5, or who have equivalent skills and knowledge and wish to develop more specialist knowledge and skills.

Graduates of this programme will be able to architect and engineer electrical designs. They will have the skills and knowledge required to design and implement electronic systems, configure and install telecommunication and networking equipment, solve complicated engineering problems, and perform a variety of hardware and software testing. They will be equipped to work with various types of electrical and communication devices to provide solutions to business and service industry problems.

Course design features: 240 credits; 80 gross weeks/72 teaching weeks; 21 hours teaching and 13 hours self-directed student learning per week.

### 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-eeer/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.*

A pre-scoping meeting was held at ICA before the on-site visit. Three evaluators conducted the on-site enquiry over three days at the main campus and the new site. The evaluators met with or interviewed by phone: the PTE owner, academic quality and compliance director, heads of department and a team leader, administration manager/pastoral care officer, programme leaders, tutors, and marketing staff.

The evaluators interviewed groups of current students from the focus area programmes as well as some recent graduates. These interviews were supplemented by information from student and graduate surveys gathered by the PTE. Stakeholders interviewed in person or by phone represented advisory input and industry stakeholders with whom ICA has or is seeking to establish memorandums of understanding. The evaluators also contacted Immigration New Zealand.

Documentation considered as part of the evaluation included:

- A self-assessment summary and data on programmes and the volume of training and success rates across programmes since the previous EER. Components of the quality management system and related policy and procedure documents, surveys, meeting minutes, course outlines (including NZQA approval records), and curriculum material. Samples of students' marked work alongside assessment materials were sampled from TEO files.
- Moderation and assessment records, website and written guidance material.

A significant proportion of the documentation viewed was selected both purposefully and at random based on reference by staff to key tools and processes during the interviews or to check compliance.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Not Yet Confident** in the educational performance of **International College of Auckland Limited**.

Although ICA is meeting many of the most important needs of learners and other stakeholders, at this time NZQA cannot express confidence in the PTE's educational performance. There are some genuine areas of strength, but there are significant gaps to be addressed. That said, although there is a concerning gap in performance shown by the monitoring of the level 7 business programme, this is not a systemic pattern or problem across programmes. ICA is managing its compliance responsibilities, albeit often in response to external cues.

The programme portfolio, which has been strategically broadened to include higher-level information technology and engineering-related subjects, is being overseen and delivered by highly qualified management and teaching staff. Student retention and qualification rates are high (see Findings 1.1), although these are now thrown into question by deficiencies in assessment identified by NZQA monitoring. These programmes have clear industry and labour market relevance, as shown by the quality of graduate outcomes (see Findings 1.2) and feedback from industry representatives, particularly in engineering. Rates of progression to relevant work by graduates are modest overall (although a high number of engineering graduates gain employment and nearly half of information technology graduates progress to further study). The PTE's follow-up, quality of data and robust decisions in what counts as a 'relevant' employment outcome are sound.

Industry advisory committees are active and are suitably involved with the programmes – bringing insights and experience which has shaped programme development and to an extent teaching. The advisory committees are increasingly informing the relationship between programmes and industry. Industry stakeholders support these programmes and their design and goals.

There is evidence of effective processes which contribute to learning and other important outcomes, and have led to a range of improvements (see Findings 1.3-1.5). Examples include: improved facilities and teaching resources; Moodle-supported delivery and the use of apps to enhance learning; teacher professional development and research; and the overall quality of staff engagement with students and students' involvement in their learning. Curriculum documentation, course outlines and associated guidance to students are clear and updated as needed.

Staff have had relatively limited personal contact with industry, in New Zealand, related to programme aims and content, especially but not exclusively in the business programme (staff do, however, often have useful overseas experience or

qualifications). Coupled with poor results of level 7 business monitoring, this undermines the credibility of that programme area (business programmes account for the largest number of students). The increase in the number and proportion of full-time, permanent teaching staff and less reliance on casuals is a positive sign.

It is appropriate that the robustness of assessment and re-sit policies and the quality of internal and external moderation (and hence credibility of high pass rates) are now under closer scrutiny by both the PTE management and NZQA.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Not Yet Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **International College of Auckland Limited**.

Although there is good evidence of effectiveness in using findings to make improvements to performance, self-assessment at ICA is not sufficiently rigorous or strong enough to avoid performance lapses. ICA needs to strengthen its critical thinking and the positive impact of the PTE's own self-assessment so that issues are addressed and changes made based on internal findings. In some respects ICA has a reactive quality culture, an over-reliance on external critique, and a somewhat patchy staff understanding of educational quality and the expectations of regulatory bodies.

Documentation examined during the on-site visit gave the evaluators reasonable assurance that authentic and documented systems and processes are in place to monitor or improve performance and align delivery to quality standards. Weak performance and gaps in assuring the quality of educational performance were not PTE-wide, and some areas are performing very well. Monitoring outcomes and analysis of findings in relation to tracking graduate outcomes is strong.

ICA demonstrates very capable data capture, quantitative analysis, documenting and reporting at the delivery level. Strategic planning and monitoring of performance using key performance indicators is useful. The quality management system is being used and self-assessment is organisation-wide.

The PTE has many of the most common self-assessment processes in place, and these appear to be actively used to match the needs of students and industry in general. However, ICA has not been sufficiently self-critical to question and challenge some weak practices at programme level. This has undermined the credibility of the business programme and to an extent the validity of achievement. Self-assessment in relation to learner assessment does not consistently match NZQA requirements.

There have clearly been gaps in the robustness of oversight in terms of the impact of some academic policies, and with academic oversight of the business programme. Self-assessment has not been sufficiently comprehensive to address priority areas; nor has it been effective. Findings are not routinely being used to

make useful improvements. Rather, some important improvements have followed external review. This is most apparent in the significant areas of: Indian market visa declines and what that signals about agent quality; the recent move to strengthen the educational credibility of course delivery by dispensing with 'compressed' delivery over two long teaching days; the newly applied constraints to re-sit policy and practices (which were still under consideration for engineering during the on-site visit).

Positively, ICA is responding credibly to the lapses identified by Immigration New Zealand/NZQA and the level 7 monitors. New appointments are improving managerial oversight. Management is implementing processes and policies, both historical and recently refreshed. The programme portfolio has been broadened to include higher-level information technology and engineering-related subjects. Self-assessment in these interrelated focus areas was rated as excellent in this evaluation.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students 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**.

Most students are retained on their programme and pass their courses and qualifications. Course and qualification completions over the past two years have been high across programmes as set out in Table 1.<sup>2</sup> Similar patterns of high pass rates were recorded in 2013 and 2014, with a median qualification completion rate of 94 per cent, and a lowest qualification completion rate of 84 per cent in the NZDipBus in 2013. Overall, however, NZQA is more confident in the credibility of the information technology and engineering programmes than those of the business department, for reasons outlined under TEO in Context and summarised under the statements of confidence.

**Table 1. ICA enrolment and achievement data (2015 and 2016)**

Department	Students		Course completions		Qualification completions	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Business	238	222	88%	93%	88%	93%
Information technology	97	90	97%	98%	98%	100%
Engineering	36	56	100%	96%	n/a	100%

Source: ICA student management system and self-assessment records

At the higher programme levels, which were included as focus areas in this evaluation, students have often completed a tertiary qualification (including in many cases a relevant degree in their home country). This experience supporting achievement was evident in the information technology and engineering programmes. The evaluators found evidence that plagiarism controls are in use, including software and qualitative processes. Teachers compare students writing skills with their formative assessments and/or in-class work. Some examples of students being sanctioned for plagiarism were also noted on files.

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<sup>1</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

<sup>2</sup> ICA applies the following definitions. Qualification completion: total number of learners in the starting cohort who complete a qualification within a given timeframe, divided by the total number of learners in the starting cohort. Course completion: total number of learners in the starting cohort who complete a course within a given timeframe, divided by the total number of learners in the starting cohort.

ICA's programme portfolio has been strategically broadened to include higher-level information technology (from 2010) and engineering (from 2014) programmes. Most ICA enrolments are in English language programmes, although business programmes comprise a sizeable proportion of delivery towards formal qualifications. All programmes have specialist areas and content relevant to the New Zealand business or industrial environment. English programmes to migrants and overseas students also add value to the programme offering and achievement by students. In two non-focus area training schemes, General and Academic English, programme retention was 93 per cent and daily attendance 97 per cent, and 56 per cent of students progressed to the next level of English language study (all figures 2016).

ICA has a very positive record in meeting NZQA external moderation requirements since the previous EER, and this has not been discounted in this evaluation. However, more recent and randomised sampling of assessments in the business diploma during the level 7 monitoring visit have identified weak marking practices. This has lessened NZQA's confidence in the provider overall.

A sample of students' marked work from 500 and 600-level courses was checked during this EER. It seems that when assessments are 'language rich', requiring students to provide analytical responses with reference to research, some struggled to adequately show mastery of the content. Although the grades students received did to an extent reflect this, internal moderation comments were in general not sufficiently critical of marking. Assessors at times fail to comment on poor English writing skills.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, these students had met entry requirements, and one had earlier completed a three-year business degree at Massey University – taking four years to do so.<sup>4</sup> One student from the Philippines entered with an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) of 6.5, produced high-quality writing, and received a top grade. All assessments sighted had been checked for plagiarism. Language issues as they relate to valid assessment are sometimes complex but, as has been identified by level 7 monitoring sector wide, what is accepted by markers at ICA needs urgent improvement.

Results monitoring, data analysis, internal use, and year-on-year benchmarking all occur at ICA. Regardless, the quality of student work, the quality of marking, and the quality of internal moderation and academic oversight need strengthening in the business programmes (see also comment under Focus Area 2.2 below). Flow-on improvement effects to other programmes should also be sought by heads of

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<sup>3</sup> This was an issue also noted in the level 7 monitor's report.

<sup>4</sup> Understanding the motivations of students studying similar programmes at different levels with different TEOs is beyond the scope of this EER but could be a wider policy question in relation to international education and work rights visas.

department (although issues affecting the validity of achievement were not apparent in the other focus area programmes). ICA’s strategic plan includes a key performance indicator for departments to achieve a 90 per cent course and qualification completion rate, which may be a laudable goal but carries with it the risk of undermining the quality of both teaching and student achievement.

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

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 **Excellent**.

Graduates from ICA gain employment or undertake further study and achieve their goals of staying and working in New Zealand in large numbers. The data collected by ICA on graduates’ whereabouts is credible, and given the PTE’s cautious decision-making around what is deemed relevant employment, the claimed rates are reliable (see table below – source ICA).<sup>5</sup> Self-assessment is strong here.

### Graduate Destination Data

Department	2015			2016		
	Relevant	Non Relevant	Further Training	Relevant	Non Relevant	Further Training
Business	33%	17%	16%	16%	69%	16%
IT	33%	16%	51%	24%	19%	49%
Engineering	n/a	n/a	n/a	83%	17%	0%
English	n/a	n/a	33%	n/a	n/a	31%
Total	33%	17%	33%	41%	35%	24%

The PTE compares their graduate outcome rates with those published on sources such as Education Counts. As shown, 41 per cent of ICA’s 2016 graduates had by March 2017 secured employment relevant to their subject area, compared with 33 per cent in 2015. This is slightly below the 45 per cent rate recorded for all international students progressing through employment to residence, and also the

<sup>5</sup> As supplied by ICA in March 2017. The further training figures for the information technology department is higher due to an accumulative calculation for level 5 and level 7 graduates.

national domestic student benchmark of 43 per cent finding employment one year out of study.<sup>6</sup>

Low-paid service sector work, to give one commonly occurring example seen among similar PTE records, is not being considered a valued and 'relevant' employment outcome by ICA, although it is counted as a 'non-relevant' outcome. Level 7 graduates from 2016 are on open job search visas and some will still be searching for employment deemed by ICA as 'relevant'. The PTE has a reasonable expectation that the percentage will gradually increase in 2017 based on the previously observed trends.

As with similar PTEs that offer educational programmes as a bridge to New Zealand residency, it is difficult to determine whether the throughput of students and the high recorded pass rates are robust indicators of success and value or more simply matched needs. As indicated under Findings 1.1, there was some evidence from student files that among the target group some circulate between education providers, achieve qualifications, and presumably gain benefits from the experience in relation to the costs they incur. Notwithstanding these reservations, the PTE has gathered plausible evidence that a good proportion (around half) of their graduates in recent years have obtained paid employment in New Zealand relevant to the qualification they achieved.

Graduates are contacted as soon as they graduate and then again six months from their date of graduation to establish the relevance of their employment/study and to collect feedback on the relevance of the programme to their job roles. The head of department analyses this data in consultation with the marketing team and prepares a six-monthly progress report which is shared with the local advisory committee and ICA senior management and departmental staff. This is a robust, ongoing, and documented process which yields useful data and information.

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

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**.

ICA's programmes have been extended to include higher-level programmes. Students have a range of programme pathways towards higher qualifications. All

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0019/163036/Factsheet-Outcomes-for-International-Students.pdf](http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/163036/Factsheet-Outcomes-for-International-Students.pdf) (2011); and Percentage of young domestic diploma graduates who stay in New Zealand. First year after study by all fields of study (2013).

programmes have specialist areas and content relevant to the New Zealand business and industrial environment. The links between programme levels and government changes to work rights and residency is apparent. In that light, there is a good match between the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders. The clearest industry stakeholder match is reflected in the high, relevant employment outcomes for engineering graduates into electrical companies, including into apprenticeships. This reflects the current shortage of skilled tradespeople in New Zealand.

There is a stronger focus on learners demonstrating critical thinking and communication skills in computing, and a more structured/formalised approach to external moderation in engineering. These are responses to student need, advisory input and monitors' recommendations. The way assessments are planned to include oral and written presentations as well as projects and tests reflects good practice. There are numerous observations and recommendations arising from the monitors' visits which ICA should and is responding to, particularly in the business and information technology departments.

In common with international students at other TEOs, ICA students have voiced a desire for more work experience, internships or other forms of work-integrated learning. Although the PTE has or is establishing memorandums of understanding with potential partners, this is still an area of challenge given the crowded market for such arrangements in Auckland due to the proliferation of courses and numbers of students (both domestic and international). ICA is, however, responding and is building networks.

Some teachers lack significant New Zealand industry work experience at or above the qualification level or the level of the subject being taught. This limits their knowledge of the labour market, and may limit the breadth and depth of their teaching. This is significant, particularly in relation to the intended graduate outcomes from the business diploma (Focus Area 2.2). ICA is mitigating this to some extent with industry speakers and advisory input. The monitoring report for the engineering diploma states that in relation to that programme 'teaching staff are very well qualified and this has had a very positive influence on the programme'.

The advisory committees have had an impact on the quality of programme design and delivery. Examples include the engineering group's work around appraising student projects to ensure alignment with real-world industry applications, and the gradually increasing exposure to industry views through guest speakers and site visits to industry. A research and ethics committee and related database have been set up. Three research outputs developed by ICA staff were selected for journal publication. Teaching staff are now maintaining 'industry engagement logs' which shows an intention to engage with business.

Using external moderators from universities and institutes of technology/polytechnics in particular shows increasing attention to the validity and

integrity of assessment, and this is needed. The PTE has credible engagement with stakeholders such as The Skills Organisation (industry training organisation) and IPENZ (Institute of Professional Engineers New Zealand), including seeking their advice and views on the training and technology in use at ICA. The Skills Organisation stated that 'they were impressed by the projects of the students we met [which] showed practical application of their knowledge'.

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

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**.

Students are well supported to achieve at ICA, and a range of approaches are fully in place or being embedded to involve them in their learning:

- ICA has small-to-medium class sizes (groups of less than 25) which allows for sufficient contact time and availability of teachers, according to students.
- Very experienced and long-serving support and administration staff demonstrate a sound knowledge of the Code of Practice <sup>7</sup> and a commitment to meeting its requirements. Review processes are appropriate.
- Effectively matching students with the right programme.
- Availability and uptake of English and APA referencing tutorials. Improved student support – for example, an on-site counsellor is being seen by some students.
- Attendance monitoring occurs daily, is suitably recorded and communicated to students.
- Student satisfaction rates for teaching, support and resources are all very high according to survey results, and no formal complaints have been recorded. More CV and job search assistance is meeting students' aspirations and responds to survey feedback by adding generic, outside-of-core curriculum teaching and coaching.
- Establishing student societies in the three main subject areas is also a recent innovation which involves students in a novel way. The groups hold formal meetings which build communication and organisational skills, and organise a Facebook page.

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<sup>7</sup> Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice.

Comments from staff and students during the on-site visit indicated that 10-hour teaching days were not conducive to alert, engaged students, and the decision to end this model from 2017 was correct. ICA state that the 'decision to review the 2-day model was initiated [on their own initiative] prior to all three monitors reviews.'

### 1.5 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**.

Documentation selected both purposefully and at random during the on-site visit gave the evaluators reasonable assurance that authentic and documented systems and processes are in place to monitor or improve performance, and align delivery to quality standards. Weak performance and gaps in assuring the quality of educational performance were not seen as being systemic PTE-wide, and some areas are performing very well. Crucially there is good evidence that where weaknesses are identified, the PTE management responds promptly to manage and/or address those issues. Two examples of this are closer monitoring and culling of agents in both the Chinese and Indian markets, and discarding the 'compressed' teaching model which, according to the PTE, was 'serving [neither the] quality of teaching or student learning'. That said, this model matched many students' part-time employment patterns, although it compromised the quality of their learning.

At the time of the EER, the PTE was in the early phase of implementing a new student management system, with a view to having more real-time data on students, their progress and the academic management's view of the programmes. ICA demonstrates very capable data capture, quantitative analysis, documenting and reporting at the delivery level. Strategic planning and monitoring of performance using key performance indicators is useful. The quality management system is being used and shows multiple levels of self-assessment: teacher monitoring by observation is formalised and documented, as is staff professional development and research planning; the evolution of a results ratification meeting to a formal academic board is in line with the PTE's move into higher-level programming; feedback is sought and used from students at multiple points; and feedback is gathered from both graduates and their employers are all indicative of the multiple levels of self-assessment.

Staff turnover, especially but not exclusively in the business programme, coupled with poor results of level 7 business monitoring undermines the credibility of the business programme. The increase in the number and proportion of full-time, permanent teaching staff and less reliance on casuals is a positive sign. There

have clearly been gaps in the robustness of management oversight of some academic policies in the business area in particular.

There have been several improvements at ICA since the previous EER:

- The successful move into engineering-related qualifications, with significant related capital investment in teaching resources.
- Leasing additional space to manage programme growth and improve the quality of students' experience.
- An increasingly broader mix of student ethnicities, which aligns with ICA's strategic intentions and marketing plans.
- Improved performance in NZQA moderation. This and new and amended programme development and approval (especially in 2016) and Type 2 changes indicate updating and maintenance of course compliance show compliance with programme requirements.

Some improvements have been very recent: new academic leadership appointments; more and closer engagement with industry; changes to students' timetables to deliver teaching over 2.5 days; reducing the number of overseas agents; and early signs of improved visa approval rates in India. These are positive aspects but need time to show that they are fully embedded.

Some of the most important improvements came following external review. This is most apparent in the significant areas of: the quality of Indian market agents; the recent move to strengthen the educational credibility of course delivery by dispensing with 'compressed' delivery over 2x10-hour teaching days; and the newly applied constraints to re-sit policy and practices (which were still under consideration for engineering during the on-site visit). Despite having all of the most common self-assessment processes in place and being used, ICA still has work to do in establishing and retaining a professional teaching workforce with the skills and managerial oversight to maintain consistent academic quality.

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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**.

ICA is managing its compliance accountabilities. The PTE owner recently employed two new management staff with significant tertiary education experience. Collectively there are indications of strengthening staff understanding around compliance with the requirements of NZQA, the TEC and Immigration New Zealand.

The intended outcomes from the Code of Practice are being met. Retention on programmes is high, and student surveys are conducted early on during study and at exit and show a high level of satisfaction with the support provided and the overall experience of the students. Most of the student support staff have been with ICA for some years and are familiar with the Code of Practice and their responsibilities. Self-assessment of this is appropriate. More broadly, the administration of entry and enrolment and the scrutiny of agents has improved, as required by Immigration New Zealand and NZQA. Attendance expectations as they pertain to programme success and visa rules are very actively managed. Warnings and sanctions are fairly applied when student attendance falters. Data from daily attendance registers is collected and monitored closely by department heads, with summaries provided to the chief executive and management team.

Random sampling of 18 student files revealed that all necessary information on each student was accurate and readily accessible. This included pre-entry guidance and verification of entry criteria, including English test scores, formative assessments at enrolment, insurance and visas. Three students were enrolled using the NZQA-approved English test by the PTE; all others had IELTS or Pearson Test scores. Two cases appeared of a student having less than the required IELTS 5.5 score. Both were accepted into a level 5 programme and both completed it with some additional tuition. Their grades were variable. A few insurance coverage gaps of a few days each were noted, but ICA showed evidence of monitoring and student follow-up process around this, with recent examples of its effectiveness. Overall, student files showed compliance with requirements.

Controls exercised over the ICA local English test and how it is conducted are sound. Monitoring and analysis of pass rates for the different test versions is well documented. PTE staff managing testing are suitably qualified and are well aware of potential changes to English testing requirements.

Communications within the PTE are clear and well documented, as are the minutes and actions arising from operational and planning meetings. These provide evidence of active conversations, monitoring and strategic intent towards maintaining compliance.

Some non-conformities in programme delivery were found by level 7 monitors. The specific concerns regarding assessment are reflected in the overall ratings. The PTE is also under scrutiny for high visa decline rates for applicants in India.

## Focus Areas

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

### 2.1 Focus area: International Students: Support and Wellbeing

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: Diploma in Business (Marketing and Management, Healthcare Management, Project Management, Business Computing) (Level 7)

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

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

Excluding the English language programmes at ICA, the Diploma in Business has the most enrolments. Assessment and internal moderation of student assessment on this programme is weak.<sup>8</sup> This undermines the credibility of the pass rates – which for business programmes overall are reported to be 93 per cent for both course and qualifications in 2016. The findings of the 2016 monitor’s report point to numerous deficiencies in the way the programme is currently delivered. While ICA had contested numerous of the findings, the PTE has promptly adopted numerous of the recommendations (for example restricting re-sits). The programme meets minimum expectations as far as can be currently determined. Self-assessment or programme management (or both) has not been sufficiently rigorous or effective to avoid lapses identified by external scrutiny.

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<sup>8</sup> ‘A total of 82 pieces of student work was moderated. Of these 82, ICA had marked 7 as a fail. The moderator considers that of the remaining 75 pieces of student work marked as a pass, 23 should have been marked as a fail.’ Source: Monitoring Report Diploma in Business International College of Auckland 22.5.2017.

### 2.3 Focus area: Diploma in Computer System Support Advanced (Level 7)

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

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

Needs assessment, teaching and resources, the effectiveness of the industry links and the relevance of the programme and its apparent match to the skills of students enrolled are strong and positive features of this programme. The integration of Microsoft Certifications as supplementary qualifications matches student aspirations and industry needs, and provides a useful parallel component to the main curriculum. The programme is highly practical and applied, and those students with tertiary qualifications gained overseas in technical areas value this highly. The direct monitoring of students' self-directed learning time is also notable. As identified by the monitor, a number of programme elements need revisiting to ensure consistency and quality. ICA is responding to those findings.

### 2.4 Focus area: Diploma in Electrical Engineering (Level 7)

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

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

Strong outcomes have been achieved to date, and particularly for international students, as shown below.

Retention	2015-2016: 88 per cent (target 90 per cent) International students: 97 per cent; domestic: 60 per cent Domestic students who left after one semester did so for 'employment' and 'personal reasons'.
Course completion	2015-2016: 96 per cent (target 90 per cent) International students: 99 per cent; domestic students 76 per cent
Qualification completion	2016: 30 of 30 students retained on the programme achieved the diploma
Attendance 2016	International students 92 per cent; domestic students 86 per cent
Graduates from this programme obtained high, relevant employment outcomes in 2016: 25/30=84 per cent six months out from graduation (target 50 per cent). Through the programme, student become members of IPENZ, but most employment is in electrician and similar roles which may involve further on-job training and not necessarily engineering, at least initially.	

This programme is unique at ICA in having domestic, TEC-funded students. Although their performance is less impressive than their international colleagues, this is mitigated by the fact that they are all in full-time employment studying part-time and there have been justifiable instances of withdrawal.

The programme is highly practical and applied, and this is of strong value to students. A strong, active and well-engaged industry advisory committee contributes to the relevance and betterment of the programme. Students are well supported and actively engaged in their learning, including through relevant project work, links to industry, passionate and knowledgeable staff, and engaged advisory professionals. The learning environment is appropriate and well regarded by industry.

# Recommendations

NZQA recommends that ICA:

- Continue with strategies to lift the quality of student work, the quality of marking, and the quality of internal moderation and academic leadership in the business programme; and seek flow-on improvement effects to other programmes.
- Consider a review of the numerous components of self-assessment to identify which are most effective, and any gaps and any components which could be discontinued to ensure that staff efforts and time are focused on teaching.

# 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](http://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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