External Evaluation and Review Report

International College of Auckland Limited

Date of report: 13 June 2019

About International College of Auckland Limited

International College of Auckland (ICA) offers a specialised suite of programmes from level 1 to level 7. Programmes are in the areas of English language (levels 1-4), information technology (levels 5-7), and engineering at level 7. The programmes are offered to mainly international students (and some SAC-funded domestic students) at two Auckland sites.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Level 5, 131 Queen Street, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic – December 2017 = 20; April 2018 = 14
	International – December 2017 = 638; June 2018 = 411
	An additional 24 students are funded through the Tertiary Education Commission English for Migrants fund.
Number of staff:	Full-time 29; part-time six; contractors five
TEO profile:	See: NZQA – International College of Auckland Limited
Last EER outcome:	In 2017 the PTE was found to be Not Yet Confident in educational performance and Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	The EER looked at the following focus areas:

- New Zealand Diploma in Information Technology Technical Support (Level 5) (one-year qualification with the option of RPL (recognition of prior learning) up to a maximum of 33 per cent)

- New Zealand Diploma in Systems Administration (Level 6)

- Diploma in Electrical Engineering (Level 7)

- International Students: Support and Wellbeing

MoE number: 7488

NZQA reference: C31442

Dates of EER visit: 18-20 September 2018

Summary of Results

This report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment. The findings are based on a representative selection of focus areas and a sample of supporting information provided by ICA or independently accessed by NZQA.

The focus area programmes are generally well managed and performing well based on the data and information provided to NZQA by ICA. A large proportion of the most important needs of students and key stakeholders are being met, although there are some inconsistencies in processes and areas where evidence of improvement is unfinished. It is too early to determine the effectiveness of these improvements, although they are well considered.

There are gaps in performance shown in the NZQA monitoring reports of three level 7 diploma programmes[1] (although these do not appear to be a problem across the focus area programmes).

For the reasons noted above and in the body of this report – and as a result of previous serious legal breaches – NZQA cannot yet be confident in the performance and capability in self-assessment of ICA at this time.

Not Yet Confident in educational performance	• ICA programmes have a clear industry and labour market relevance, and align with qualification graduate profile outcomes.
	• A mix of relevant project work integrated with theory motivates students to learn and progress to further study or related work.
Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment	• Students are well supported in a safe and caring learning environment to develop their skills and knowledge. This helps them to participate in employment and further study via an integrated approach to learning, good tutoring and up-to-date practical resources.
	• Systematic review, moderation of assessment, and monitoring processes – including compliance with

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[1] Diploma in Networks and Systems Administration (Advanced) (Level 7); Diploma in Mechanical Engineering (Level 7); Diploma in Civil Engineering (Building and Construction) (Level 7). These programmes proportionally cover 6 per cent (in 2017) and 17 per cent (in 2018) of total student numbers.

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the Code of Practice – are in place.

- There are some genuine areas of strength with a clear focus on the learner, but there are some inconsistencies relating to academic standards. These include issues with credit recognition and transfer (CRT) and weak assessment practices relating to the marking of group work. This calls into question the validity of these assessments.

- ICA is meeting many of the most important needs of its learners and other stakeholders. A more systematic approach is needed to manage compliance responsibilities and self-assessment processes because some issues identified by the EER team and in NZQA monitoring reports (including three non-focus areas) were not identified by ICA.

- ICA is rectifying the gaps and concerns identified by the external monitors[2] and is implementing an action plan in conjunction with NZQA.

- Many recent changes, including the impact of a new leadership team and NZQA monitors' recommendations, are yet to be fully realised.

- In 2019, ICA was convicted and fined $40,000 for breaching s342 of the Immigration Act 2009, 'Provision of False and Misleading Information', during the period 2015-2017. These breaches did not reflect effective governance and management.

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[2] NZQA (through external monitors) carries out monitoring of programme delivery and assessment and moderation.

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Key evaluation question findings[3]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Marginal**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Course and qualification completions are high, with engineering and information technology (IT) programmes maintaining high rates of course completion at 93 per cent and 98 per cent respectively for 2016 and 2017. (See Appendix 1 for details of learner achievement and graduate destinations.) Achievement and progress data are collated and analysed, with weekly reports discussed at staff and management meetings. This data is used to inform reports to senior management and the board. Following a comprehensive moderation plan, pre- and post-internal and external moderation is undertaken regularly and required actions are completed and reported on. Findings from the NZQA monitors' reports around group work marking practices call into question the authenticity of achievement of individual learner work in group projects. This is currently being addressed and improved by ICA.
Conclusion:	Overall achievement is good and students are achieving programme outcomes. Despite high course completions across all programme focus areas, ICA needs to improve assessment and moderation processes, particularly in relation to individual learner achievement in group projects.

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

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

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Effective processes contribute to learning and other valued outcomes for key stakeholders, including students and their employers. This was verified in interviews with graduates and employers. Students on the IT and engineering programmes apply work skills in realistic work environments which include projects that are applicable to industry roles. Local advisory committees provide forums for stakeholder input into programmes to ensure their relevance to the marketplace. Heads of department and teaching staff maintain close and productive relationships with industry and academics from other tertiary education organisations. These relationships help to ensure ICA programmes meet the needs of learners and industry, and also provide paths to employment. Students gain valuable skills for life and work. Applied vocational projects and assessments require students to participate in presentations and team activities and to complete real-world projects. Graduates are interviewed as they leave and then at the three-month point and again at six months to establish the relevance of their study to their current employment. This feedback is beginning to inform programme updates. The rates of employment for graduates are increasing, with improvements in 2017 in both related and non-related employment. Fifty-five per cent of graduates gain relevant employment. Engineering has the highest rate, with 70 per cent of graduates placed in roles related to their study. Graduate and employer feedback shows that students have the knowledge and behaviours required for the workplace.
Conclusion:	Students are increasingly developing valuable key skills and knowledge that enable them to gain employment or engage in further study. ICA needs to continue to develop and strengthen its self-assessment in relation to how it uses the information gathered from its graduates.

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

Performance:	**Marginal**
Self-assessment:	**Marginal**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ICA's specialist programmes meet many of the employment and further study needs of the students. The PTE particularly targets enrolment for international students with Bachelor's degrees, and their previous qualification and experience are recognised for credit. Improvements are needed around the documented information gathered and evidence of mapping with the CRT process to ensure that the learning outcomes from previous study match the programme's learning outcomes (including graduate profile outcomes). The learning environments are well structured to ensure students can align the practical learning with theory through workshops where they reference their work. Programmes are regularly reviewed and updated, although approved learning hours need to be carefully reviewed to ensure academic integrity. The expert knowledge of teaching staff has a positive influence on the programmes. Staff keep themselves up to date by gaining the latest relevant certifications, although a small number are not yet holding teacher education qualifications. Systems are in place for moderation of assessment materials and decisions. However, the EER visit and NZQA monitoring reports have raised some concerns about the assessment of group-based projects.
Conclusion:	Programmes are engaging and reflect stakeholder needs. ICA has the capability and capacity to support sustained delivery of its programmes, but improvements are required in CRT processes, aligning learning hours as approved[4], and ensuring tutors have adult teacher qualifications. ICA also needs to show improvements in assessment design to ensure that individual

[4] For the Diploma in Civil Engineering (Building and Construction) (Level 7) and the Diploma in Mechanical Engineering (with specialisation in Mechatronics and Control Systems) (Level 7)

	learner competency can be measured in group projects.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Effective pastoral care and personal and academic support help students to achieve their goals. Students commented favourably on this support in feedback surveys and during the EER.
	Students receive comprehensive and accurate induction and orientation information and support. Engineering students wanted more structure in their programme, i.e. knowledge of timelines for upcoming papers.
	The expectation of 100 per cent attendance is clear to students and staff (although difficult to continually meet). ICA has observed that higher retention rates have resulted in high achievement.
	The PTE provides a positive environment for learner/tutor interaction. Students feel listened to and keep a diary of their learning to assist staff in addressing student concerns quickly.
	Staff have a clear understanding of the background, experiences and progress of full-time international students on an individual basis and engage regularly with these students.
	ICA has a free counselling service for students and has a clear process for dealing with student complaints.
	Self-assessment in this area is well developed and gives good information to add value to the learning, although an improved review of student files would have identified the anomalies found at the EER visit.
Conclusion:	Students are well supported with a high level of individual pastoral care, and barriers to learning are minimised. Teaching and learning approaches are effective in engaging the students in high-level study.

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

Performance:	**Marginal**
Self-assessment:	**Marginal**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Governance and management are in transition following a change of management from one owner/director to a leadership of two part-time contracted management/quality professionals. This separation of duties is allowing for a more open culture and a shift towards a clearer purpose and direction.
	The new leadership team has reviewed ICA's processes, programmes and student body and has worked to address the areas for improvement. This has led to some immediate changes, including employing mainly full-time staff, a greater focus on professional development and moderation, selective use of fewer agents (from 200 to 20), and a change of culture in the academic board. The PTE has also invested in additional resources, including laboratories, special project rooms and specialised training for staff.
	ICA has well-documented self-assessment to inform day-to-day operations. Programmes and activities are regularly reviewed, incorporating feedback systematically gathered from tutors, learners and graduates. However, self-assessment and review are not robust or effective in identifying non-compliance or areas requiring improvement. These include the three diploma programmes previously monitored by NZQA where some, but not all, areas of improvement were listed in an improvement plan.
	Action plans have been created by ICA in response to the recommendations from NZQA programme monitoring reports. It is too soon to see their outcomes or the impact of implemented changes.
	In 2019, ICA was convicted and fined $40,000 for breaching s342 of the Immigration Act 2009, 'Provision of False and Misleading Information', during the period 2015-2017.
Conclusion:	Governance and management's actions in regard to the breaches of immigration requirements was seriously at odds with effectively supporting educational achievement. The structure of governance and management has changed since the previous

	EER in 2017. Under the newly contracted leadership team, ICA has put in place changes as a result of the last EER.
	ICA needs to continue the current considered changes for quality development and concentrate on improving group assessment, moderation and CRT. Further work in supporting educational achievement by embedding self-assessment activities across the organisation will identify areas requiring improvement.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Marginal**
Self-assessment:	**Marginal**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ICA understands NZQA requirements for maintaining registration and meeting programme approval requirements, and submits documentation on time.
	Retention on programmes is high due to ICA's close management of attendance and the support mechanisms available. Regular internal audits of student files monitor the accuracy and completeness of enrolment documentation and decisions. Students have appropriate visas and insurance and meet English language requirements. The evaluators found minor gaps in information on student files.
	ICA has increased the oversight of systems and processes to review and monitor compliance with NZQA Rules, but a more proactive approach is needed.
	The 2017 Tertiary Education Commission audit report noted that the audit trails for CRT were incomplete with regard to the evidence assessed and how it had been mapped against course requirements. At the EER visit, improvements were seen to have been made to the CRT process. However, the documented evidence requires development to demonstrate that students meet the learning outcomes for the courses being credited.
	As noted, NZQA's monitoring of three level 7 diploma programmes and this EER identified: minor under-delivery in two programmes, concerns with individual assessment within the context of group assessments, and the necessity to improve CRT processes.

	In 2019, ICA was convicted and fined $40,000 for breaching s342 of the Immigration Act 2009, 'Provision of False and Misleading Information', during the period 2015-2017.
Conclusion:	The previous legal breaches relating to immigration requirements show that ICA significantly failed to manage its compliance responsibilities in this area over an extended period. ICA's current intent is to manage its compliance responsibilities to meet accreditation and programme approval requirements. The PTE is readily responding to external prompts and outcomes from external monitoring reports. Further work is needed to be consistent with NZQA Rules[5] around assessment. Improvements have been made to the CRT process, but documented evidence to demonstrate student achievement of learning outcomes needs further development and strengthening.

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[5] Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, specifically:
4.1 Criterion 5 Regulations (There are clear, relevant, and appropriate regulations that specify requirements for: assessment procedures, including authenticity of student work).

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Information Technology Technical Support (Level 5) (NZDITTS)

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	This is a one-year qualification with the option of RPL up to a maximum of 33 per cent. Student numbers are lower than previous years, with 11 in 2016 and a drop from 67 students in 2017 to 17 in 2018.
	The total number of students enrolled since 2016 is 95, of whom 89 have been retained to pathway to further study of the level 6 New Zealand Diploma in Systems Administration. Fifty per cent went on to further study in 2017 and 91 per cent in 2018.
	Course and qualification completions (2016-2018) have dropped over the past three years, from 100 per cent to 90 per cent course completions; and 88 per cent to 80 per cent qualification completions for 2016-2017. However, these rates still meet ICA's internal benchmark of 80 per cent. The drop reflects changes made to the re-sit policy, reducing from three to two attempts, and careful monitoring and review processes recently put in place.
	The programme includes projects that are applicable to industry roles or full-time employment.
	An articulation arrangement with Griffith University (Queensland, Australia) allows a credit transfer of 80 points from the NZDITTS towards a Bachelor of Information Technology.

2.2 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Systems Administration (Level 6)

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	There were low student numbers (seven) at the time of the EER. Retention and course completion rates for this programme are high at 100 per cent in 2017. The programme is yet to be completed for 2018. The programme provides students who already have a foundation in IT with specialised knowledge in network and systems administration. Students get the opportunity to learn and apply work skills on projects that are applicable to industry roles. An articulation arrangement with Griffith University allows a credit transfer of 140 points towards a Bachelor of Information Technology.

2.3 Focus area: Diploma in Electrical Engineering (Level 7)

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The Diploma in Electrical Engineering has been delivered since 2015. The total number of students enrolled is 165, with 150 students retained and 98 graduates to date; of those, 71 per cent have gained full-time employment. Students get the opportunity to learn and apply work skills in realistic work environments which include projects that are applicable to industry roles. ICA was granted SAC funding in 2017 for domestic students in the engineering programmes. However, supporting the success of part-time students who are in full-time work has been a challenge. Many of the students have found it difficult to regularly attend weekend classes due to their employment commitments. A different model would need to be developed if the programme delivery to this target group is to continue. Engineering students felt they needed more structure in their

	programme, i.e. knowledge of timelines for upcoming papers.

2.4 Focus area: International Students: Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Staff clearly understand their responsibility for the progress and welfare of the international students. Staff use a range of strategies to ensure that students have access to academic and personal support. Feedback from students indicates that they value the learning environment. Their tutors are readily available to provide individual support when needed. Processes have been improved to include additional academic study workshops in areas such as APA referencing, academic essays and plagiarism.
Conclusion:	International students are well supported to achieve their goals, both personal and academic, for studying and living in New Zealand

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory, but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that International College of Auckland Limited:

- Implement effective assessment processes to gain evidence of individual learner achievement in group projects.

- Continue to review academic processes and documentation and monitor the evidence of their effective application to ensure alignment of ICA academic processes with NZQA and other regulatory requirements.

- Verify with tutors that the learning hours are being delivered as approved by NZQA.

- Implement an effective and robust CRT process to ensure that for any learning recognised there is well-defined documented mapping with relevant prior learning/programme outcomes.

- Ensure that teaching staff are enrolled and actively engaging on an adult education qualification to ensure completion.

Appendix 1

Table 1. ICA overall achievement data (2016 and 2017)

Department	Students		Course completions		Qualification completions	
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

Table 2. Overall graduate destinations – employment (2016 and 2017)

(Excludes English Language programmes)	2016 (%)	2017 (%)
Employment related to qualification	41	55
Employment not related to qualification	35	41

Source: ICA student management system and self-assessment records

Table 3. Overall graduate destinations – employment; Diploma in Electrical Engineering (Level 7) (January 2016-December 2017)

	2016	2017
Total graduates	30	34
Overall graduate destinations – employment	100%	88%
Employment related to qualification	77%	79%
Employment not related to qualification	23%	9%
Overall graduate destination pathway to further study	0%	6%

Source: ICA student management system and self-assessment records

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Table 4. Overall graduate destinations – employment; New Zealand Diploma in Information Technology Technical Support (Level 5) (January 2016-December 2017)

	2016	2017
Total graduates	Nil	8
Overall graduate destinations – employment	N/A	50% (4/8)
Employment related to qualification	NA	50% (4/8)
Employment not related to qualification	NA	0%
Overall graduate destination pathway to further study	NA	50% (4/8)

Source: ICA student management system and self-assessment records

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud[6]*

- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*

- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

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[6] NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

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Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). The Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 are available at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/qa-rules/external-evaluation-rules-2016/1/, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/.

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