



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Auckland Language School

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 2 February 2011

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	4
Summary of Results	5
Findings	6
Recommendations	11
Further Actions.....	11
Appendix	12

MoE Number: 7499
NZQA Reference: C03315
Date of EER visit: 23 November 2010

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

Location:	130 New North Road, Eden Terrace, Auckland
Type:	Private Training Establishment
First registered:	2002
Number of students:	Domestic: One International: 24 mostly Korean nationals
Number of staff:	Two full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate in English• Certificate in English (Advanced) (Level 3)• TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Course (Level 4)• National Diploma in Business (Level 5)• ALS (Auckland Language School) Interpreter Course (Level 5)
Sites:	One only
Distinctive characteristics:	Auckland Language School (ALS) shares premises with TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) College of New Zealand Limited. The governing body is listed in the NZQA database as TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) College of New Zealand Limited.
Recent significant changes:	The academic manager with whom NZQA had been liaising left ALS the week before the EER visit.
Previous quality assurance history:	Auckland Language School was previously quality assured by NZQA by audit in 2008. The one requirement not met was for staff work permits and has

been addressed since the audit.

Other: Signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students for students aged 14-17 and 18 upwards.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas selected were:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- Student support, including international students.
- ALS Interpreter Course
- Certificate in English.

These areas were selected because governance, management, and strategy and student support are mandatory focus areas. The ALS Interpreter Course and the Certificate in English were selected because the ALS Interpreter Course is unique to ALS and most students are enrolled in the Certificate in English.

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 EER team was made up of one lead evaluator and one external evaluator. The team met for one day with the director, systems support officer, staff, and students at the Auckland site shared with TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) College of New Zealand Limited. The two schools share premises but do not share staff or students.

Auckland Language School has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Auckland Language School**.

Students achieve well as they have a strong desire to acquire proficiency in English language. Eighty-four per cent of students complete their course of study. However, only 40 per cent complete an actual qualification, such as the ALS Interpreter Course or the Certificate in English.

The retention rate is only 12 per cent due to visa issues, which means students often have to leave the country before completing their study. Half the students at ALS are on 12-week visas and return home after this time. Many students are local and some of them go on to further study at university.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Auckland Language School**.

Some ALS students who complete the interpreter course gain employment in the court or hospital systems where they contribute to community life and support the successful integration of Korean nationals into New Zealand society. These organisations confirmed that they seek ALS graduates for these roles.

ALS has always maintained contact with former students and in the last six months has formalised this by compiling data on students post-study. Over time, such data will allow ALS to inform marketing, curriculum planning, and the relevance of course outcomes. ALS said that formalising the collection of this data is a result of its self-assessment in preparation for the EER visit. The EER team was impressed with the staff and management's open, honest, and responsive approach which showed good understanding of self-assessment as a means towards improving student achievement

Findings¹

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**.

ALS is a small school with 24 international students and one domestic student. Eighty per cent of students are Korean nationals, with the remaining students coming from Europe or Russia. They have varying reasons for being in New Zealand, but all share a strong study ethic, in particular the desire for English language study. The students range in age from 14 upwards and may be school students taking a year off to study English, businessmen, mothers or other relatives taking care of school-aged children, or people seeking permanent residence in New Zealand. The retention rate is only 12 per cent due to visa issues which means students often have to leave the country before completing their study. Half the students at ALS are on 12-week visas and return home after this time. Many students are local and some of them go on to further study at university.

Students achieve well against their desire for English language acquisition, with 84 per cent completing their course of study. However, only 40 per cent complete an actual qualification, such as the ALS Interpreter Course (a six-week course that enables the interpreters to help new immigrants), or the Certificate in English.

ALS has always maintained contact with former students and in the last six months has formalised this by compiling data on students post-study. Over time, this will allow ALS to inform marketing, curriculum planning, and the relevance of course outcomes. ALS said that formalising the collection of this data is a result of their self-assessment in preparation for the EER visit. The EER team was impressed with the staff and management's open, honest, and responsive approach which showed good understanding of self-assessment as a means towards improving student achievement.

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

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

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

Some ALS students who complete the interpreter course gain employment in the court or hospital systems where they contribute to community life and support the successful integration of Korean nationals into New Zealand society. These organisations confirmed that they seek ALS graduates for these roles.

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

Students also go on to further study at university or polytechnic. Students confirmed that they are given a lot of advice about further study options and some students have been supported to make career changes. Students are very positive about their experience at ALS. This was confirmed in interviews and by excellent tutor and course evaluations sighted by the evaluation team. However, students noted that they would like more organised outings to better familiarise themselves with Auckland and its environs.

While ALS has very strong links to the Korean and Chinese communities, overall engagement with the wider Auckland community is limited. ALS is aware of this and has initiated a “community initiative assessment process” to encourage students to move beyond their own language groups. This will enable students to practise their English skills with native speakers and assist them to understand “kiwi” culture.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

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

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

Students are provided with a comprehensive student handbook, receive an entry test before acceptance onto a course, and are involved in regular evaluation of their tutors’ teaching and the course content. ALS reviews all the courses each month and uses the information to guide improvements.

The director and systems support officer are available to students and were described by them as being very welcoming and responsive. Engagement with individual students is very good, but engagement with the wider community could be improved to ensure programme design is relevant and informed by the needs of the wider Auckland community. ALS understands why it needs to engage with the wider community and has a plan to achieve this.

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**.

Students confirmed that ALS provides a learning environment that is planned and structured for their benefit and that tutors use a range of teaching activities and motivate students to study hard. They described the tutors as friendly, cheerful, and helpful, both in and out of class time. The classes were described by students as challenging but relaxed and operating like a family, which helped them to learn well. Students also said they were given extra work to maintain their motivation. They described themselves as more confident and less shy than when they started at ALS.

Staff meet informally, often and as needs arise. They are encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities, are well resourced, and were actively involved in

developing ALS's self-assessment. Two of the staff, while highly experienced, are new to ALS and have not had the opportunity to gauge the benefit of their particular teaching approaches in the ALS environment. While they appear to be effective educators and were enthusiastic about their classes and teaching practice, there was insufficient evidence available at this time for a higher rating on the effectiveness of their teaching.

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 **Excellent**.

Students reported that they are offered excellent academic and pastoral support. They have access to same-language counsellors, described the learning environment as inclusive, and would recommend the school to their friends. In fact, several students had come to ALS on the recommendation of former ALS students.

All students have entry testing to establish a baseline, have agreed individual goals with their tutor, and have ongoing weekly tests to gauge progress. These goals are reviewed regularly and updated as required. Certificate of English students said they had improved their speaking in English and that tutors were very good at reducing barriers to their learning.

ALS understands and adheres to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students by ensuring that all staff adopt an open and honest approach to student needs and concerns and by following up any concerns that are identified to ensure they have been satisfactorily resolved.

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**.

The director commits to meeting staff needs by providing a clear strategy for the school, good decision-making, and the generous provision of resources. All staff were involved in the recent self-assessment and demonstrated a good understanding of the process. One outcome of the self-assessment was the introduction of additional entry testing to provide pre- and post-learning data to analyse. This will allow better tracking of individual progress and, over time, provide benchmarking data for ALS.

An external consultant is used to assist with course reviews, the development of new systems, and staff appointments. The consultant is highly regarded by the education community and has been involved with ALS for ten years.

An advisory group has four members with an appropriate mix of competencies: an educationalist, a business/marketing person, a person studying education, and one studying

law. The committee meets twice a year. It has been involved with ALS for about four years.

The evaluation team sighted advisory group and board minutes and discussed the need for these minutes to show more clearly the decisions made, actions to be taken, by whom and when. These suggestions were welcomed by the director. ALS understands the importance of ongoing review and the need to balance continuity and innovation.

Focus Areas

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 Student support including international students

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

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

2.3 Focus area: ALS Interpreter Course

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

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

2.4 Focus area: Certificate in English

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

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

Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review.

Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

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).

Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E eeradmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz