

Report of External Evaluation and Review

New Zealand Institute of Science and
Technology Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 23 November 2011

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. NZIST in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	6
Findings	8
Recommendations	15
Appendix	16

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, learners, prospective learners, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. New Zealand Institute of Science and Technology (NZIST) in context

Location:	Level 10, Albert Plaza, 87-89 Albert Street, Auckland
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	July 2002
Number of learners:	No domestic learners 305 international equivalent full-time learners
Number of staff:	22 full-time equivalent staff
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NZIST Diploma in Business (Levels 5 and 6)• General English (Levels 2 and 4)• IELTS Examination Preparation (Level 4)
Sites:	One site only
Distinctive characteristics:	The NZIST Diploma in Business (Level 5) comprises eight modules from the NCC Education International Diploma in Business ¹ , and two local modules: New Zealand Business and Society and New Zealand Legal Systems.
Previous quality assurance history:	At the previous quality assurance visit by NZQA, an audit in December 2008, a number of issues were noted. Attestation forms had been late. The

¹ NCC Education International is a UK-based education provider and awarding body.
<http://www.nccedu.com/our-qualifications/diploma/international-diploma-in-business>

uptake of professional development by staff was limited as they were required to undertake courses outside of paid working time; there was no evidence of annual appraisals and no planned professional development documentation. The audit also identified a lack of insurance evidence for some learners and a lack of records of moderation of assessments. On 9 March 2011 NZQA wrote to NZIST to notify that conditions might be imposed on its registration. The issues were largely around recording the results of English language capability testing for learners enrolling in the business courses. NZQA has now confirmed that all students on the diploma programme have appropriate levels of English prior to enrolment. NZIST is audited by NCC Education International.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas selected for this EER were:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- International student support
- General English
- NZIST Diploma in Business (Level 5).

Governance, management, and strategy and international student support are mandatory focus areas. The other two focus areas cover all of the education that this PTE is currently delivering.

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 comprised two NZQA lead evaluators who visited the Albert Plaza campus for two days. The team met with the director (who is also the administration and marketing manager), the centre manager, teachers, student counsellors, and a group of learners. The team also reviewed a number of the organisation's documents and records, including the quality management system, meeting minutes, student destination data, and the student handbook.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **New Zealand Institute of Science and Technology Limited**.

There is good evidence that the educational outcomes achieved represent quality and value for the learners, and NZIST is meeting their most important needs. Learners complete courses and gain qualifications. For example, in 2009 and 2010:

- 76 per cent of the General English learners (who comprise 91 per cent of learners) completed the full course they enrolled in and made good progress with their English
- 82 per cent of the level 4 General English learners completed their courses and made good progress with their English
- the qualification achievement rate for the NZIST Diploma in Business (Level 5) (9 per cent of learners) averaged only 47 per cent over these two years
- all who completed the diploma programme achieved the qualification.

General English graduates engage with further study, both within NZIST and externally. Approximately 75 per cent of the NZIST Diploma in Business (Level 5) learners are graduates of NZIST's English department. Graduates of the diploma go on to further study and employment.

Valuable longer-term outcomes include further education, employment, and residency in New Zealand and NZIST has good descriptive information to substantiate these outcomes. NZIST has a very inclusive learning environment and learners have the advantage of studying with students from a wide range of other cultures. The main advantages of this are that learners speak to each other in English and learn about the cultures of the very different nations represented in the TEO. This enables them to adapt more easily to local societies.

There was good evidence of adequate quality in the processes that contribute to learning and student support, and the areas of weakness identified by an NZQA business diploma review team have been addressed.

Learners at NZIST develop the skills and knowledge they need in English language and those needed for further study or employment. There was anecdotal evidence from higher institutions and from employers that NZIST graduates were well prepared and had the required knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **New Zealand Institute of Science and Technology Limited**.

NZIST has accurate data and information on student achievement and graduate destinations. With only 300 learners and many long-term staff, there is rich information about graduate outcomes, and this informs self-assessment informally but justifiably, rather than through a database. Self-assessment at NZIST is purposeful and appears to be genuinely directed at improving the learners' experiences and outcomes. The information has been used to make the following worthwhile improvements:

1. Control of class sizes. Enrolments in English classes have been controlled to keep within the limit of 16, which staff and students are comfortable with.
2. Improved internet speed. The recently installed wi-fi system has been upgraded.
3. Improved kitchen and lunchroom facilities.

Staff and management have also considered how to make professional development more effective. The standard staff development practice of sending teachers to courses has been critically evaluated by conducting post-course reviews with staff. A new model of in-house staff development using the skills of current staff and outside experts is being implemented. Another example of self-assessment is the strategic consideration that has taken place to decide on the best growth path for the school itself. Planned slower growth retains the culture that promotes educational achievement.

TEO response

The New Zealand Institute of Science and Technology Limited has had an opportunity to comment on this report and has confirmed its factual accuracy.

Findings²

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

Learners complete courses and gain qualifications. Data compiled by NZIST shows that around 76 per cent of the General English learners in 2009 and 2010 completed the full course they enrolled for, and 82 per cent of the level 4 English learners completed their courses in those two years. These are good achievement rates, being above the average for learners at this level. There was also good evidence of many students moving to higher English language levels during their time on the course. The qualification completion rate for those enrolling in the NZIST Diploma in Business averaged only 47 per cent over these two years. However, all those who completed the course achieved the qualification. While the diploma qualification achievement rate is low, only 9 per cent of the student population is enrolled in the diploma.

Graduates engage with further study both within NZIST and externally. The data compiled by NZIST shows that over the last three years, between 14 and 22 per cent of English learners re-register for further study in General English. A further 15-20 per cent of learners progress to the IELTS course from level 2 General English, and about 75 per cent of the level 5 business learners are graduates of NZIST's English department. Developing the skills to engage with further study is a good achievement for the learners.

While the self-assessment data is of very good quality and is rich in information about learner accomplishments and destinations, analysis of the data is somewhat informal. NZIST needs to consider whether separating this data into a range of categories, enabling a view of trends, would be worthwhile to inform its self-assessment.

² 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 learners?

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

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

Besides the immediate qualification achievement outcomes, learners at NZIST achieve longer-term outcomes involving further education, employment, and New Zealand residency. For example, of the 21 learners who completed the level 5 diploma course in 2009, ten are currently working, two have progressed to higher education, four have partnership work permits, and one has gained permanent residency. Among the 21 who withdrew from the diploma before completing the course, seven have partnership work permits, two have work permits, and two transferred to another institute. International students are seen as a key pool of potential migrants, who can more easily adapt to local societies and opportunities than people with no previous in-country experience.³ Learners at NZIST are well prepared to adapt.

The learning environment at NZIST is very inclusive. Learners and staff spoke of the TEO having a family atmosphere and of the advantages of having a wide range of nationalities at the school. Learners and staff believed that this inclusive environment enhanced their achievements and led to valuable longer-term outcomes. The advantages stated were that all learners spoke to each other in English, which is often not the case in schools where one nationality predominates, and learners learned about different business practices and more widely about the culture of the various nationalities represented in the TEO. Statistics compiled by NZIST confirmed the multinational makeup of the TEO. NZIST has had learners from 39 different nations in the English classes over the last three years, and 16 nations have been represented in the business classes.

Learners at NZIST improve their well-being and enhance their abilities and attributes. Learners and staff gave examples of increased motivation, self-management, cultural awareness, and engagement with the community. There is a strong community spirit within NZIST, fostered by social activities and confirmed by satisfaction ratings in student evaluations. Over 90 per cent of learners would recommend NZIST to their friends, and many have already. Activities such as collecting for the Christchurch earthquake appeal show engagement with the wider community.

³ Leadership Statement for International Education, New Zealand Government, September 2011.

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**.

NZIST has identified its major stakeholders as the learners, NCC Education International, and agents. With respect to learners, NZIST has provided a team of six counsellors, many of whom are graduates of NZIST and who have a range of languages so learners can regularly talk to a counsellor in their first language. The counsellors comprehensively meet the needs of international learners as the learners experience living and studying in New Zealand. Student evaluations also confirm that the system of counsellors meets learners' needs very effectively.

NZIST has changed its strategy to meet the needs of its student stakeholders. Following a thorough assessment of its relationships with agents, NZIST decided that it is in the best interests of learners wanting cost-effective courses and good pastoral care to stop using those agents who are only interested in the level of their commission. The new strategy is to use NZIST counsellors and learners to drive "word-of-mouth" marketing. This enables NZIST to keep their course fees among the lowest in Auckland, and learners can build a relationship with a counsellor whose main responsibility is to help them and who is readily available from enrolment onwards.

Policies and procedures at NZIST minimise barriers to learning. Learners can start General English on a weekly basis, and NZIST has six different ability-level classes in which to place learners on the basis of their initial testing. There was evidence from teachers, learners, and counsellors of robust policies and procedures for moving learners between these levels. Learners can enrol in the NZIST Diploma in Business at the start of any of the three terms in the year. The diploma meets their needs in providing an internationally recognised qualification with a flexible start date. Learners benefit as they feel they are integrated into the culture of NZIST and believe that the institution will adapt its practices to meet their needs.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Teachers and learners at NZIST relate effectively to one another. Classes are small, generally fewer than 16 learners, and there was good evidence from the teachers and learners interviewed that the interactions between them were positive and enhanced learning. There was also evidence of good collaboration between learners and team work between staff members. Engagement with learning is more likely to occur when there are positive relationships between learners and teachers as well as among learners.

Learning activities and resources are effective in engaging learners at NZIST. There was good evidence from student evaluations and tutor reviews conducted by the centre manager of effective learning engagement. The centre manager conducts student evaluations, observes teachers in class each term, and brings all this information together with student results for each tutor's performance review. Teachers are encouraged to keep up to date, especially with new teaching resources, and the teachers confirmed that they had little difficulty in obtaining new resources for the learners. The business diploma learners remarked particularly on being given relevant assignments which enabled them to apply their knowledge to current business issues in New Zealand and internationally. The use of appropriate activities and resources enhances learning by making it interesting and relevant.

Assessment provides learners and teachers with useful feedback on progress. Learners in General English classes are assessed every four weeks, and those in the IELTS classes every week. Business learners are also assessed regularly, and they commented on the feedback they received that guided their assignment writing to be more focussed. The final assessments for the eight NCC business modules are set and marked overseas and are subject to NCC's moderation systems. The assessments of the two NZIST business modules are now pre- and post-moderated by lecturers from Auckland University of Technology to ensure that these assessments are valid, sufficient, and fair. This good assessment practice provides useful, regular feedback to the learners, a major factor in effective 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 **Good**.

NZIST provides comprehensive and timely study information and advice. The learners interviewed confirmed that they had found the website and the pre-enrolment information from the counsellors helpful and accurate. The learners also confirmed that their experience of NZIST had matched their expectations, and many commented that the actual experience of the "multicultural family" learning atmosphere had surpassed their expectations. This guidance has enabled learners to make good study decisions and has improved their chances of completing their studies.

NZIST staff provide ongoing support to assist learners to pursue their chosen pathways. There was good evidence from the learners interviewed and examples from the counsellors of learners seeking advice and being able to modify their learning plans as a result. Counsellors and teachers combine effectively to inform learners of their progress in English language skills and promote them to higher-level classes to maximise their opportunities to progress. Staff also have good networks with other tertiary institutes and gave examples of using these effectively

to give learners a range of options for further study. This ongoing support and sound career guidance make it more probable that NZIST learners will achieve.

NZIST has effective systems in place for meeting the needs of new international learners. The office manager ensures good homestay experiences by visiting prospective hosts and explaining their responsibilities to them. NZIST staff meet learners at the airport, and they too are made aware of their responsibilities. Learners aged under 18 years sign in every day, and the student and the host complete an evaluation after the first month and regularly thereafter. The sample of student files checked by the evaluation team contained all the documents required such as copies of passports, visas, evidence of sufficient English competency, and certificates of insurance. Learners confirmed that they felt well looked after, confident about their study decisions, and safe.

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 purpose and direction of NZIST is clear: excellence in the delivery of quality training programmes providing the three “Rs” – reliable educational services, reputable courses, and realistic prices. The purpose and direction are well understood throughout the organisation and are supported by good policies and procedures kept up to date in a comprehensive quality management systems manual. The clear direction and purpose of governance and management functions focus decision-making and support the effectiveness of the learning experience.

Leadership is shared and effective. The majority owner is the director, who is also the administration and marketing manager, and regards himself as being there every day to look after the students and teachers and to be involved in the school. His approach of giving the learners good service is mirrored by the rest of the staff. There are monthly staff meetings, and staff interviewed confirmed that they were involved in decision-making. Good communication and cooperation between all staff was evident and appreciated.

The NZIST management team anticipates and responds to change. Meeting minutes show that the team has analysed the lessons of previous periods of rapid growth, considered opportunities in expanding markets, and resolved to maintain a conservative, slow-growth policy. Quality of education is paramount and management was conscious of the adverse effect on staff that could result if roll numbers were to suddenly decrease following a period of rapid growth. This response to growth appears to have enhanced the relevance and credibility of management with teachers and learners.

Staff are valued at NZIST. An example is the response to assessment of the distribution of statutory holidays. In consideration of heavy staff workloads, the school will be closed to give staff two days extra leave in the second half of 2011. Most of the staff have long service, confirming that they feel valued and that NZIST is a good place to work. There was a strong feeling that all staff shared accountability for the learners' progress and welfare. Staff felt valued and this made them more likely to be committed and effective.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management, and strategy

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

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

2.2 Focus area: International student support

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

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

2.3 Focus area: General 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**.

2.4 Focus area: NZIST Diploma in Business (Level 5)

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

NZQA recommends, in addition to those recommendations implied or expressed within the report, that NZIST:

1. Review the data it collects for self-assessment
2. Build capability in formally analysing this data
3. Reflect on the information obtained to generate changes
4. Assess the effects of changes to ensure that they are worthwhile improvements leading to better outcomes for the learners.

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 non-university TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses 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 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-eeer/introduction/>

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