

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

New Zealand Institute of Science and  
Technology Limited

Not Yet Confident in educational performance

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

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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:	New Zealand Institute of Science and Technology Limited (NZIST)
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	25 July 2002
Location and delivery sites:	Levels 9 and 10, 87 Albert Street, Auckland
Courses currently delivered (Scope of active accreditation):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• General English (Level 2)</li><li>• General English plus Examination Preparation (Level 4)</li><li>• NZIST Diploma in Business (Level 5)</li><li>• NZIST Diploma in Business (Level 6)</li></ul>
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Usually around 200 international students enrolled at any one time; English learners enrol for an average duration of 12 weeks.
Number of staff:	Management – two full-time Academic – 11 full-time and two part-time Support – four full-time and three part-time
Distinctive characteristics:	NZIST is mainly an English language school, but also offers levels 5 and 6 diplomas in business in association with NCC Education (UK). <sup>1</sup>
Recent significant changes:	Commenced delivery of NZIST Diploma in

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nccedu.com/about-us>

Business (Level 6) programme in 2013 – currently two learners enrolled.

Change of ownership approved in March 2014.

Previous quality assurance history: The previous external evaluation and review of NZIST was conducted in 2011. NZQA was Confident in both the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of NZIST.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Governance, management and strategy is a mandatory focus area. As all NZIST learners are international students and most enrolments are for one of the General English programmes, International Students and General English were also selected as focus areas. Business programmes were not selected as they accounted for less than 7 per cent of the learners enrolled at NZIST.

## 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.*

Self-assessment materials were delivered to NZQA in a timely fashion to inform the scoping of this external evaluation and review. Prior to the scope being finalised, the lead evaluator met with the centre manager of NZIST to agree on the focus areas and logistics of the on-site visit.

The evaluation team comprised two evaluators, including a subject matter specialist in teaching English as a second language. The on-site visit at NZIST's Albert Street campus lasted over three days. The evaluation team interviewed the new director, the centre manager, six English teachers, five counsellors and the office administrator. Thirty learners from the two English programmes were also interviewed in five separate groupings. A wide range of documents and records were reviewed. Some 40 student files were sampled and examined for compliance checks, as well as for the evaluation team to gain an understanding of and insight into individual progressions and the pastoral support provided.

# Summary of Results

## Statements of confidence on educational performance and on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Not Yet Confident** in the educational performance and **Not Yet Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **New Zealand Institute of Science and Technology Limited**.

- Governance and management is extremely insular and appears unaware of the legislative framework it operates in. A number of instances of non-compliance were identified (see Findings 1.5 and 1.6). No one at NZIST seems to be aware of the Targeted Review of Qualifications and therefore no strategy is in place to respond to upcoming changes.
- Self-assessment practice appears static over the past four years. NZIST continues to collect good-quality data but did not take on board the recommendations from the previous evaluation in relation to analysing and using the data. .
- The evaluation team has reservations about whether NZIST fully complies with its obligations as a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students, especially in relation to learners under 18 years of age. Annual self-review of compliance with the code is ineffective (see Findings 1.5).
- The practice of NZIST counsellors deviates from documented policies. The evaluation team has concerns about the effectiveness of NZIST's policies and practice on attendance matters. Records appear inconsistent and raise questions about the accuracy of internal records (see Findings 1.5).

That said, the evaluation team found that the majority of learners achieve by completing their studies and progressing in their level of English (see Findings 1.1). Teachers are experienced and appropriately qualified. Teaching is generally effective and there is good self-assessment practice within NZIST to assure itself on this and to respond to any concerns on quality of teaching in a timely fashion (see Findings 1.4). Learners interviewed by the evaluation team confirmed positively their experience with NZIST, in line with NZIST's self-assessment.

The issues the evaluation team identified are the responsibility of governance and management. NZIST does have a solid foundation – it has a capable academic team and appropriate facilities, and has consistently produced positive outcomes for learners. NZIST has accepted the deficiencies identified with leadership, governance, management and strategy and advised the evaluation team of their determination to rectify the concerns identified, which the evaluation team agreed are fixable within a short period of time. Until improvements to governance and management as well as overall self-assessment is evident, NZQA is unable to express confidence in NZIST at this stage.

# Findings<sup>2</sup>

## 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**.

The majority of learners achieve by completing their enrolled period of study.

**Table 1. NZIST General English 2015**

	General English (Level 2)	General English plus Examination Preparation (Level 4)
Total enrolments to date	296	98
Withdrawals to date	35 (11.8%)	5 (5.1%)
Current students	108	81
Completions to date	153 (81.3%)	12 (70.6%)

Data source: New Zealand Institute of Science and Technology Limited

The figures provided in Table 1 have not been gathered as part of NZIST's self-assessment practice. The data was collated for NZQA's purposes. NZIST advised that it does not look at achievement from an organisational level and therefore did not undertake analysis of trends on completion and progression. However, all staff, including governance and management, monitor achievement at an individual level. Learners' progress is evaluated at six-weekly intervals using standardised tests as part of the text that NZIST uses, with more regular assignments and assessments depending on the class. Feedback is provided to learners from the teachers, although the format of such feedback varies according to individual teacher's practice – the process is not standardised within NZIST. There is no evidence of the use of individual learning plans. The centre manager advised that a benchmark for level progression at the six-weekly assessment is 80 per cent, but the evaluation team sighted inconsistencies in practice, with some learners moving up before achieving the required results. Progression seemed to be driven by the learners in these instances.

NZIST's centre manager maintains a database on learner progression and achievement. The evaluation team was generally satisfied with the progress most learners made with their English language.<sup>3</sup> However, a couple of learners who

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<sup>2</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>3</sup> Through the sampling of learner progression records on file.

made slow progress were also identified during the evaluation team's sampling process and, while this represents a small proportion of what the evaluation team reviewed, it was clear that NZIST lacks a strategy and a coherent approach to support learners in need academically.

NZIST continues to collect individual progression and achievement data of good quality. However, there is lots of room for improvement in the use of such data, as well as how associated analysis can be shared within NZIST.

While the NZIST Diploma in Business programmes were not selected as focus areas, there is evidence that learners on that programme are achieving well and the results have been validated through robust external moderation process by the UK associate, NCC Education.

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

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

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

The value of outcomes to independent, capable learners is generally positive. Many learners interviewed by the evaluation team commended on the range of nationalities in class which led to international friendships and cross-cultural understanding. They also commented favourably on the 'price-to-value ratio', given that they have achieved their objective of English improvement at a fraction of the cost than at other English language schools, with no noticeable difference in teaching quality (as advised by one learner who had previously studied at a Category 1 English language school). The majority of learners were referred to NZIST for enrolment by word-of-mouth and many extended their studies. Both indicators show that learners and graduates are generally satisfied with the value of outcomes.

NZIST successfully collects destination data from all learners through its counsellors. All learners are interviewed effectively to understand their destinations post-NZIST. While some destination data is expressed as changes in immigration status (see Table 2), nevertheless, these changes indicate the value of the outcomes to learners. However, it is unclear to the evaluation team how the destination data is used to inform any decision-making process within NZIST.

**Table 2. NZIST General English (Level 2) outcomes for learners completed in 2015**

	General English (Level 2)	General English plus Examination Preparation (Level 4)
Returned to home country	57	1
Changed to working holiday visa	29	1
Changed to visitor visa	25	2
Changed to work visa (partnership)	10	-
Changed to work visa	7	1
Continued travels in New Zealand	3	-
Further studies at another institute	19	6
Pathway to NZIST Business programmes	3	1
<b>Total completions to date</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>12</b>

Data source: New Zealand Institute of Science and Technology Limited

### 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 **Adequate**.

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

NZIST's counsellors ask learners about their study objectives, but this information is not systematically recorded and passed on to academic staff. However, the English teachers are always aware of individuals' aspirations as part of class activities (sessions practising speaking skills). There is some anecdotal evidence that learners receive targeted support based on their specific needs, but there is no standardised process within NZIST for teachers to follow. Nor is there a system in place to analyse such information or to provide evidence that learners' stated study objectives are actually met.

There is no evidence of systematic programme reviews occurring within the past four years. The learning outcomes for the different levels within General English were revised mid-2015 on the suggestion of an academic staff member. Every teacher was assigned to review and rewrite the learning outcomes for their class. No leadership or guidance appears to have been provided in the process. In the end, different learning outcomes were derived for classes of the same level (for example, the intermediate level has three classes with three different teachers and three sets of inconsistent learning outcomes); and outcomes across different levels were expressed/presented differently. There is also no indication of what is appropriate to complete within a given timeframe. What otherwise may have been a valuable exercise resulted in an overall programme that is structurally incoherent, due to a lack of academic leadership.

There is no evidence of engaging any external input to programme design, reviews and evaluation. There is also no evidence of NZIST connecting to the sector for

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continuous improvement. The only example the evaluation team found in relation to understanding and meeting the needs of learners was the provision of afternoon and evening English classes, a response to enquiries from prospective learners. Other than that, the evaluation team struggles to understand how governance and management assures itself, at an organisational level, that learner needs are met.

#### 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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**.

All English teachers are appropriately qualified. Some have overseas experience in teaching English to speakers of other languages. Most teachers have served NZIST as full-time employees for at least four years, and are highly passionate and enthusiastic and enjoy the autonomous nature of their role. The learning environment at NZIST is effective – there is a highly positive rapport between learners and teachers, and a sufficient level of hardware resources to support effective teaching and learning, although the professional development of teachers has been practically unfunded (at \$200 per annum per teacher).

Annual performance appraisals are conducted on all teaching staff, taking into account findings from the quarterly evaluations completed by learners and an observation conducted by the centre manager. Individual quarterly evaluation results are shared with each teacher separately as they are collated, to inform teachers of the effectiveness of their practice from a learner perspective. The centre manager also conducts ad hoc observations when issues are raised by learners. The teachers reported that the practice of managerial observation is valuable.

There appears to have been some level of informal collaboration among teachers throughout the last four years. Brief academic meetings occurred at somewhat irregular intervals. Internal professional development workshops were recently introduced to provide a formal platform for teachers to share knowledge and practice – although there appears to be no strategy to guide the topics selected for these workshops. There is anecdotal evidence that internal moderation on speaking and writing assessments has occurred on ad hoc basis. There is room to strengthen the current processes and further encourage collaborative efforts within the academic team. The English teachers interviewed by the evaluation team agree. For example, they raised the possibility of conducting peer observation to cross-pollinate ideas on teaching practice. Peer observation can be highly beneficial as currently there is no movement between levels for the teachers. Therefore, there is no opportunity for them to reflect on their teaching practice in relation to another level of linguistic ability or programme need.

Overall, the evaluation team is satisfied that NZIST has a reasonably coherent and comprehensive approach to assuring its teaching effectiveness. Teaching is

generally effective, although not yet at a level where the evaluation team would consider performance as generally strong.

## 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

The evaluation team is not convinced that NZIST is meeting all of its obligations as a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. Under article 13.6 of the Code of Practice, signatories must communicate regularly with parents of international students under the age of 18. There was evidence of such communication where the ethnicity of the underage learners was Chinese, but it was not evident for another group, for which NZIST does not have a native-speaker counsellor. This situation was exacerbated by an incident involving the personal circumstances of a learner. This incident warranted immediate contact and clarification with the parents and/or nominated guardians, especially given the learner's drop-off in attendance, and some other intelligence the provider received. However, there appears to be no evidence of follow-up by NZIST on what could have been an alarming situation. NZIST appears unaware of the potential consequences of, and risks associated with, such lapses in practice. It also appears that no NZIST staff have been visiting the homestay premises and nominated guardians of underage learners in recent years to ascertain suitability.

None of NZIST staff were involved in the annual self-review on compliance with the Code of Practice, other than the centre manager. In fact, academic staff appear to be ignorant of the Code of Practice, advising the evaluation team that pastoral services are the responsibility of the counsellors. Self-review of the code is ineffective. For example, there continues to be inaccurate information on refunds published on NZIST's website; NZIST did not identify the gaps in meeting its requirements for underage internationals. The evaluation team found the level of pastoral care support largely dependent on whether a native-speaker counsellor is available within NZIST. This is a critical issue since NZIST does not use agents. While NZQA is neutral on this business approach, it means that NZIST staff are directly responsible for the enrolment experience, including the amount of information and level of support provided to new learners. NZIST is relying on more proficient learners or family members to translate in these instances, and has not developed any alternative strategy when the usual assistance is unavailable.

NZIST has documented policies on attendance and its record-keeping requirements, but it appears counsellors are applying the policies and processes liberally. The evaluation team found NZIST to be overly lenient in granting leave and holidays to the learners. Internal attendance records were inconsistent (where the official attendance records on the NZIST system differ from the pen-and-paper sign-in times recorded by students). Learners are sometimes marked present despite being over 90 minutes late – and when they are marked late, there is no

impact on their attendance rate. Warnings have not been consistently given to learners at the level stated in the institute's attendance policies (below 80 per cent), with some learners not getting their first verbal warning on attendance until some three months after their attendance rate has dropped below 80 per cent. Follow-up action on poor attendance appears ineffective, with one learner under 18 years of age (different to the example cited above) consistently late for classes for at least three times each week over the past three months. The evaluation team also found instances where Immigration New Zealand is not notified promptly when learners 'disappear'. NZIST must tighten up its practice around attendance policies and record-keeping.

Class sizes have increased since the previous evaluation in 2011, when class size was noted as a positive factor as the institute then maintained a maximum number of 15 per class. The maximum has now increased to 22. Given the focus on individual learning, the class size is too large for effective academic guidance and support.

## 1.6 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

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

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

NZIST appears very insular and unaware of the changes occurring in the tertiary education sector over the last four years. For example, NZIST outsourced the delivery of all its business programmes but was not aware of rule 17 (in relation to approval from NZQA being required for sub-contracting delivery) and therefore did not seek approval from NZQA for the sub-contracting arrangement. NZIST was also unaware of the changes to rule 18 (in relation to Category 2 providers requiring NZQA approval before an internal test can be used as evidence of English language proficiency), and therefore continued to use its internal placement test to satisfy entry criteria to its business programmes. Government and management was totally uninformed of the Targeted Review of Qualifications, and therefore did not have any strategy in response to the upcoming expiry of its local level 5 and 6 business programmes. The evaluation team was surprised that the institute had managed to operate in a complete silo for the past four years while continuing to produce generally positive outcomes for most of its learners.

Self-assessment practice appears static. It is disappointing to learn that none of the recommendations from the previous evaluation, where the previous evaluation team suggested how NZIST's rich data could be used, were taken on board. Self-assessment is heavily reliant on the quarterly evaluation completed by learners. The evaluation comprises a comprehensive set of questions covering admission processes, teaching effectiveness, pastoral care and support, complaints handling, and overall quality from a learner perspective. However, based on the three quarterly evaluations the evaluation team sampled, only around 60 to 70 per cent of

learners participate. The silent minority were not followed up proactively. The absent voice of 30 to 40 per cent of the cohort has the potential to substantially change the collated outcomes from each evaluation, but NZIST does not appear to be aware of or have a concern about this. Learner evaluations are an important exercise but they cannot be the only self-assessment mechanism a private training establishment relies on.

NZIST has implemented some improvement initiatives over the past four years. Many improvements were related to infrastructure and the physical environment, such as cleanliness of the campus, Wi-Fi connectivity and kitchen facilities. Some were academically related, such as the review of learning outcomes and the commencement of internal professional development workshops, as discussed earlier in this report. Some processes have been formalised and/or improved in recent months. It remains unclear whether and how these changes have led to improvements in learner outcomes – in fact it does not appear that NZIST has a coherent strategy or approach to improve educational performance, especially around supporting learners in need of extra academic guidance. NZIST has been relying a lot on informal, ad hoc processes and operating on a status quo basis, but it can no longer afford to remain the same in a very fast-changing environment.

## 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 **Poor**.

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

### 2.2 Focus area: International students

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

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

Concerns of non-compliances in relation to the Code of Practice outweigh the relatively positive aspects of learner achievements and value of outcomes.

### 2.3 Focus area: General English

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

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

# Recommendations

NZQA recommends the New Zealand Institute of Science and Technology Limited:

- As a matter of urgency, build organisational capability and develop knowledge of the current operating context within the tertiary education sector.
- Also as a matter of urgency, review all current policies, procedures and practices to ensure full compliance with all applicable rules and regulations, as well as amend any incorrect information published by NZIST.
- Ensure a common understanding by all staff of all internal policies, and ensure alignment of practices against documented policies.
- Upskill academic and support staff knowledge on a provider's obligations regarding the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.
- Revamp the practice of self-review against the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students to ensure effectiveness.
- Establish or formalise processes on pastoral support and reporting procedures that are applicable to underage international students of all ethnicities.
- Develop a strategy for ensuring that pastoral needs are understood and addressed for the learners for whom NZIST does not have a native-speaker counsellor in-house (currently representing 22 per cent of all 2015 enrolments to date).
- Review and tighten up attendance policy and practices, as well as ensure accurate attendance records are kept on NZIST's internal information system.
- Enhance self-assessment by reducing reliance on quarterly evaluations from learners, as well as improving the validity of such evaluations by ensuring 'the voices of the silent minority' are heard.
- Develop a strategy to effectively and systematically identify learners in need of additional academic support and learners 'at-risk' from a pastoral perspective.
- Review class size policy and consider the cost-benefit of a smaller class size to support effective individual academic support and guidance.
- Consider adopting the use of individual learning plans to further support delivery towards better educational outcomes.
- Consider engaging external advisory in programme design and reviews.
- Establish ways to connect with the tertiary education sector and stay abreast of any changes/developments.
- Understand the importance of ongoing professional development in teaching practice and encourage English teachers' participation accordingly.
- Develop a strategic approach to internal professional development workshops.

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- Introduce peer observation between English teachers.
- Consider the need for academic leadership within the organisation.
- Review and consider how data collected for self-assessment can be analysed and used to inform decision-making within NZIST. For example, introduce a regular exercise whereby graduate destination outcome is compared against the learners' stated study objective, to assure the institute it continues to meet the needs of the majority of its learners.
- Understand that governance and management needs to operate at a higher level and be aware of organisational performance at all times, in addition to knowing selected individual learners' specific circumstances. Design and/or formalise systems and processes so governance and management can function at that level.

# 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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