



Report of External Evaluation and Review

ICL Education Limited
Trading as ICL Business School

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 31 August 2010

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MoE Number: 7548
NZQA Reference: C01230
Date of EER visit: 25 March 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.

Brief description of TEO

Location: Auckland

Type: Private Training Establishment

Size: Approximately 210 international students

Sites: Two sites: Level 3, 238 Queen St, and ICL Building, 71-77 Customs St East, Auckland

ICL Business School (ICL), which incorporates International College of Linguistics, was established in 2002. ICL currently operates out of two campuses based in central Auckland, although the Customs Street site is due to close. A previous agreement to deliver programmes for La Trobe University is in the final stages of being phased out. Another change witnessed at ICL is the change in the ethnic profile of the students. Whereas previously, most students were from China, currently there is a mix, with a larger number coming from India. Programmes currently offered at ICL include:

- National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care (Level 5)
- NZIM Diploma in Management (Level 5)
- New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 6)
- ICL Diploma in Business (Level 6)
- Diploma in Business Computing (Level 7)
- National Diploma in Computing (Level 7)
- General English and IELTS Preparation
- ICL TESOL Course (Level 4)
- Diploma of Business Administration (La Trobe University).

Executive Summary

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **ICL Education Limited, Trading as ICL Business School**.

Learners are achieving well in most of the programmes offered by ICL. For example, 95 per cent of the learners enrolled in the National Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care achieve the qualification. Many of these learners move to related employment.

A survey conducted to look at the outcomes of ICL students who had studied the La Trobe University Diploma of Business Administration shows that a significant number went on to study at university, with many gaining credit for their study with ICL.

There is low turnover of well qualified staff. Teaching and learning is mostly effective and most students are satisfied with their learning.

There is a gap between the expectations of some of the students who enrolled in the National Diploma in Computing and what they are experiencing at ICL.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **ICL Education Limited, Trading as ICL Business School**.

There are adequate processes in place to ensure that feedback from learners is collected and analysed by tutors.

Programme reviews are occurring and staff collaborate to share new ideas. The advisory board is used effectively to report on progress and issues and to gain feedback from key representatives external to the organisation.

The minutes of the management team meetings show that new initiatives are being tracked and monitored, for example the trial of the new placement tests.

Analysis and use of data on learner achievement is occurring, although this could be done more comprehensively across the programmes offered by ICL.

TEO response

ICL has agreed to the factual accuracy of this report.

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 (ITPQuality) 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).

Findings

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

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/for-providers/keydocs/index.html>

Outline of scope

For the external evaluation and review the following focus areas were chosen:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- Student support (including internationals).

These focus areas are mandatory. ICL is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. Other focus areas included:

- New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 6)
- National Diploma in Computing (Level 7).

The New Zealand Diploma in Business was chosen as this is the most popular programme offered by ICL. The National Diploma in Computing is a relatively new programme offered by ICL, with the first cohort of students completing a year of study at the end of 2009.

Part 1: Answers to Key Evaluation Questions across the organisation

This section provides a picture of the TEO's performance in terms of the outcomes achieved and the key contributing processes. Performance judgements are based on the answers to key evaluation questions across the focus areas sampled. This section also provides a judgement about the extent to which the organisation uses self-assessment information to understand its own performance and bring about improvements, i.e. capability in self-assessment.

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**.

Context

Learner achievement is analysed differently depending on the programme of study. The Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care is analysed by qualification completion whereas the New Zealand Diploma in Business is analysed at the course level. This is partly due to the goals of learners. A growing minority of international students are very focused on completing the qualification, while others want to complete only individual courses.

Explanation

Achievement rates in most programmes are good. The New Zealand Diploma in Business has an average course pass rate of 74 per cent compared with a national average of 82 per cent. This is a creditable achievement given that all students in this programme come from non-English speaking backgrounds. The evaluation team also noted in the Certificate in Early Childhood Education and Care, 95 per cent of students are achieving the qualification.

Learners in the General English programme felt they were achieving, and the Preparation for IELTS programme enjoys a good reputation for students achieving well in IELTS exams.

Students in the National Diploma in Computing are achieving less well. At the time of the external evaluation and review, of the 26 students enrolled for a year or more, eight have completed their qualification, seven have withdrawn, and 11 are yet to submit their late assessments.

Course and qualification achievement is monitored across the organisation, although the analysis and use of data is not consistent across all the programmes. For example, achievement was not being monitored at the course level for the National Diploma in Computing.

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**.

Context

The value of the outcomes varies according to the goals of students entering ICL. Some students want to pathway to further education. Other students are aiming to achieve a qualification that supports their application for permanent residency. ICL has a number of external relationships that enable its students to continue to study.

Explanation

Valued outcomes are achieved by ICL students, particularly in the General English and Early Childhood Education (ECE) programmes. The organisation tracks the destinations of the ECE graduates and a significant number move into work and further study. The learners valued the opportunities that the qualification gave them in terms of a pathway to further study, work preparedness, and the recognition of the qualification overseas.

ICL has a strong reputation for supporting learners to gain high IELTS scores, which enable them to enter diploma and degree-level programmes or to achieve immigration or employment objectives. The results of ICL students who attempt the IELTS exam are collected and monitored where possible, and the high scores achieved by some learners are celebrated.

There is good evidence that a number of students from the La Trobe business programmes, which are currently being phased out, went on to study at a higher level at university. A significant number gained credit recognition for their time studying at ICL.

ICL has established good external relationships to advance students' prospects of gaining entry into further study, with recognition of their prior learning. For example, ICL has a relationship with NCC Education, a provider in the United Kingdom, whose International Advanced Diploma in Business is embedded in the ICL Diploma in Business. This qualification allows credit transfer to a number of business programmes at universities in the United Kingdom and Australia.

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 **Adequate**.

Context

All students who arrive at ICL are interviewed. If students are unable to provide evidence of IELTS-level achievement they are required to take ICL's placement test. The current placement test is new and is being trialled.

Explanation

ICL is meeting the educational needs of most of its students. Programmes are current and teaching staff have industry-relevant qualifications. There is ongoing needs analysis, especially in the English and ECE programmes. Most learners are given opportunities to give feedback about their courses, and the feedback is analysed.

The programmes at ICL are structured to meet the needs of students who wish to work part time while they study. For example, the New Zealand Diploma in Business can be studied in the evenings as well as during the day, and the National Diploma in Computing is taught for only four days of the week.

The programmes offered, or under development by ICL, are designed to meet the needs of the New Zealand market, with the Diploma in Computing and the ECE programme targeting vocations where there are skill shortages. There is a strong demand for people with ECE qualifications and this is evident in the number of graduates who are finding related employment.

The facilities at ICL are adequate, although students did have complaints about the computer system and the accessibility of library. The shift to open source software was not well communicated to staff or students.

ICL is not meeting the needs of some of the learners who are studying the National Diploma in Computing. Students told the evaluation team that they would like more practical networking experience and more tutor-led teaching. Learners said there was a wide gap between their expectations and the delivery of the programme. Staff are endeavouring to ensure that learners find work placements to ensure they get practical networking experience. Learners who had work placements were highly positive about the experience.

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**.

Context

There are 26 people employed by ICL, most of whom are full-time teaching staff. A strong focus on qualifications means that most staff employed have a high level of relevant qualifications. Two new appointments have been made to support the management of teaching and learning, with moderation and new programme development being a particular focus.

Explanation

ICL employs a strong, stable staff, most of whom have teaching experience and/or qualifications. Students are generally satisfied with the teaching they are receiving and many spoken to by the evaluation team acknowledged the specialist knowledge of their tutors.

All courses are surveyed on a regular basis to gauge learner satisfaction, and it appears that for the New Zealand Diploma in Business the level of satisfaction is increasing.

There are good processes in place to monitor the quality of the teaching and learning including regular programme reviews and staff performance appraisals. Staff are encouraged to participate in professional development and in 2009 a number of staff were involved in attending workshops on moderation. Formal and informal feedback processes ensure that staff who are underperforming are identified and supported to improve their practice.

A variety of teaching methods is used and students in the ECE programme described their learning as fun. Class sizes vary and at times it is difficult for tutors to plan when new learners are added mid-intake without warning.

The organisation has good processes in place to ensure previous issues with moderation are being remedied. Reports, from NZQA and the New Zealand Diploma in Business monitor's 2009 report, highlighted moderation of assessments as an issue. Staff development, a new appointment, and close monitoring are currently in place to ensure moderation is occurring effectively.

Students reported an issue with the number of assessment attempts they have to make to reach competency in the unit standards for the National Diploma in Computing. No student has reached competency on all assessments on their first attempt and many students have taken up to four attempts. Although ICL do not accept that taking an average of 2.31 attempts to meet the assessment standards is an issue, the current ICL guidelines for unit standard assessment have confused some students, not all of whom understand that ICL requires full referencing before the unit standards can be achieved.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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**.

Context

ICL is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. The responsibility for student support is largely with the multilingual marketing and administration team.

Explanation

There are good processes in place to ensure that international students have the requisite documentation in place at the time of their enrolment with ICL. ICL is accredited to renew students' visas online and uses this privilege ethically. Student attendance is monitored carefully and a warning system is in place to alert students to potential action being taken.

Every student is interviewed on enrolment and learners spoken to at the time of the evaluation mentioned the effectiveness of this process for guiding them to the correct programme. Most of the information given to students is clear about the various educational pathways in place

for learners, both within ICL and upon gaining the qualification. However, some information given to some of the National Diploma in Computing students by overseas recruitment agents before they arrived in New Zealand misled them and consequently they are dissatisfied. ICL reports that it is pursuing this matter with its overseas agents.

Activity reports filed by marketing and administration staff ensure that management is kept in touch with issues as they arise. The activity reports are monitored for any patterns that may be emerging regarding the student experience.

The complaints process is clear and there is evidence that students feel safe approaching their tutors, the marketing staff, and the principal if they have any issues with the organisation. The students who are unhappy with the National Diploma in Computing have raised the issues with staff. ICL believes the issues relate to rigorous teaching methods which are unpopular. The evaluation team heard that these issues are frequently discussed informally by staff. However, at the time of the external evaluation and review these issues had not been 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**.

Context

ICL has an academic advisory board which meets once a year. The board includes representatives from business, industry, and education. New academic staff appointments have been made to support scheduling, moderation, and new programme development processes.

Explanation

The advisory board has a governance role and supports the directors with direction and policy. Minutes of board meetings show an openness and transparency in discussing the issues facing the organisation. Some achievement data is presented at the meetings. The organisation has a clear vision and a set of values to inform processes and planning.

The management team has a good understanding of the achievement rates for most of the programmes. Some of these achievement rates are benchmarked within the organisation across time and initial attempts have been made to benchmark externally.

While the management team is open and transparent, at times decisions which impact directly on staff are made without consultation. Staff are clear about their roles and duties. There is a loyal group of staff who are given independence and trust to undertake their work using their professional judgement. In addition, management encourages staff to participate in research and undertake professional development.

There are good processes in place to review programmes and courses and evidence of issues being raised that led to improvements.

Part 2: 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: 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: National Diploma in Computing (Level 7)

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

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

2.4 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Business

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

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

Actions Required and Recommendations

Further actions

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

Recommendations

- That ICL collect, analyse and use achievement data consistently across the programmes offered as a means of strengthening self-assessment practice and effecting improvements.
- That the unresolved issues with the National Diploma in Computing (Level 7) programme be addressed effectively.
- That ICL continues to communicate with overseas agents to ensure information given to students is accurate and realistic.

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