



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Making Futures Happen International
Institute Limited

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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, 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: Wellington

Type: Private training establishment (PTE)

Size: Students: 94 (24 domestic, 70 international)

Staff: 15 (includes part-time)

Site: One as above

Making Futures Happen International Institute Limited (MFH) is owned and managed by its sole shareholder. It was first registered by NZQA as a PTE in 2003. MFH operates on one site, occupying two floors of a building in central Wellington. It offers English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses and the New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 6) (NZDipBus) to international and local students with a wide range of abilities, qualifications, and competencies in English. International students are recruited by agents in many countries.

MFH has 15 staff in total, in full-time or part-time roles, and an average number of 95 students at any one time. The majority of MFH students are in ESOL and International English Language Testing System (IELTS) programmes. In 2005 MFH gained a contract with the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) as an approved provider of the English for Migrants programme involving workplace literacy and numeracy and intensive literacy and numeracy courses, each with a roll of ten students. Since 2009 MFH has been an approved branch of Edenz Colleges New Zealand (Edenz) to deliver the NZDipBus, and currently has a roll of ten students. In 2006 MFH became a partner of the Immigration New Zealand.

Executive Summary

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **highly confident** in the educational performance of Making Futures Happen

In 2010 performance has exceeded organisational goals, with 95 per cent of students completing the training they enrolled for, 80 per cent achievement of desired scores in IELTS, and more than 60 per cent of students going on to further tertiary education, the latter being one of a broad range of objectives MFH has for its ESOL students. Graduates report that MFH provides a good foundation for further education and good preparation for the social environment of universities and polytechnics. Follow-up at these locations affirms that students are well prepared.

More than 80 per cent of students give MFH an excellent rating for teaching, with 90 per cent being satisfied with the language and social skills they achieve. Word-of-mouth recommendations are reported by agents as an important factor in their choice of MFH for an ESOL learning site in New Zealand, and this has contributed 22 per cent of the new students in 2010. Homestays consistently report that communication is good with MFH and that staff are “very helpful”.

MFH has comprehensive systems in place for enrolment, needs assessment, orientation, curriculum planning, assessment, and feedback and consults widely among stakeholders in business, education, and in the students’ countries of origin to ensure the relevance and value of the learning provided. Feedback sampled from these sources is uniformly positive with regard to the teaching, the care of students, and the outcomes achieved.

These factors indicate that MFH is meeting the most important needs of students and other interested groups. Programmes are effective and students are achieving well.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **confident** in the capability in self-assessment of Making Futures Happen.

Early in 2010 MFH embarked on an ambitious programme of self-assessment towards developing ongoing improvements to sustain its present status in the sector and to prepare for growth. A detailed strategic plan exists and is being systematically put into effect, with the aim of significantly advancing this by the end of 2010.

In preparing this plan, MFH has reviewed its structure, functions, and relationships, translating its findings into a group of “balanced score cards” to monitor and measure action towards improved outcomes. This is now a permanent feature of the organisation. Existing assessment of the relevance and value of programmes, and of student support and guidance, is well developed, with formal and informal feedback requested from every stakeholder and frequent visits by management to stakeholders in New Zealand and countries of origin. Analysis of feedback from a local advisory committee is well developed and is used in programme planning. External moderation of the NZDipBus

programme is provided by NZQA, with MFH providing its own internal monitoring of programme design, delivery, and assessment for the ESOL programme. Benchmarking is considered problematic due to variability between student groups and learning targets. Presently, 80 per cent of students achieve the skill levels required by their target destinations, such as entry to a university, within specified learning times. This is a satisfactory outcome.

Teaching is assessed by management observation and mentoring, frequent and rigorous assessment of student progress, frequent student feedback, informal consultation with students and colleagues, and systematic stakeholder feedback from many sources. For these factors self-assessment is good. However it would be enhanced by more focussed self-assessment by teachers on their effectiveness, more collegial observation and mentoring, and more focussed professional development plans. The strategic plan specifically focuses on these issues and a systematic programme is under way to address them.

TEO response

Making Futures happen has confirmed 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

The agreed scope of the external evaluation and review of MFH included the following mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management, and strategy.

The following programme focus area is included because this is the major programme and includes 90 per cent of MFH students.

- Making Futures Happen ESOL.

The following programme focus area was also included.

- Student support.

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 **Excellent**.

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

Explanation

To date in 2010, MFH's achievements have exceeded the target of 80 per cent of desired outcomes in IELTS. Individual students have a variety of desired outcomes, for example admission to a university, which is a goal of 60 per cent of students. Other outcomes include employment in a local business or competence in the English language and culture for an extended visit. Graduates report that MFH provides a good foundation for further

education and good preparation for the social environment of universities and polytechnics. Feedback from graduate students at these locations indicates that students are well prepared.

Seven external stakeholders were interviewed and ten written references received on the quality of programmes, outcomes, and business relationships from other tertiary organisations, employers of graduates, agents, and business partners. There was unanimous approval for the quality of learning as evidenced by MFH students and graduates. One respondent recalled mixed quality in earlier years, but ascribed that to an indiscriminate flood of students to New Zealand at that time, many with little interest in learning. Comments included expressions of “complete faith” in MFH; “great learning”; “excellent learning, I send staff and managers to them”; “a thorough approach to learning”; “will send any students to MFH”; “we send PhD students to them for competence in English”; “MFH Students are welcome as employees”; and one respondent commented on the “adaptability of learning for mixed abilities”. Students interviewed by the evaluation team corroborated the very high level of satisfaction with the quality of learning recorded in the written evaluations.

Evidence of a consistently high level of satisfaction from a wide spectrum of stakeholders, supported by a vigorous programme of consultation in New Zealand and in students’ countries of origin, indicates that performance and capability in self-assessment in relation to this key evaluation question are both excellent.

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 **Excellent**.

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

Explanation

There is widespread and ongoing consultation with MFH stakeholders on the value of outcomes. Sixty-five per cent of students are sent to MFH by agents in China, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, Europe, and South America. The director makes six-monthly visits to selected countries of origin and there is ongoing personal and written contact with an extensive stakeholder network of employers, universities, polytechnics, national representative bodies, business partners, and agents. An advisory group meets three times a year and is attended by senior management. Meetings are minuted and required action recorded.

A web-based survey is sent to all stakeholders and used by MFH to enable a swift and targeted response. Results are discussed at management meetings and action assigned as appropriate, with due dates for outcome reporting.

Recruitment agents are visited twice a year to receive feedback on student outcomes and to discuss improvements to programmes and services. Tertiary education providers who have enrolled, or may enrol, graduates are visited regularly for feedback on graduate performance and to discuss student needs. Spoken and written evidence from more than 15 external stakeholders strongly affirms their recognition of the value and relevance of MFH

policies, programmes, and practices for students and for organisations which may employ them or enrol them in further education.

Comments from stakeholders interviewed point to “an extremely successful programme” that was “widely respected”. Two respondents asserted that they had a “strong relationship with MFH” and were fully satisfied with the product. Evidence of the achievement of learners and of learner satisfaction in formal feedback and needs assessment verifies this feedback.

MFH has certification to assess the Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test. A collaboration has been set up with Edenz, an Auckland-based PTE, for the delivery of the NZDipBus. MFH shares workplace literacy partnerships with some industry training organisations such as Tranzqual and the Hospitality Standards Institute. These partnerships are evidence of the value ascribed to MFH in relation to their own programmes.

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 **Excellent**.

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

Explanation

The relevance of MFH learning for each student is reviewed continuously, with a fortnightly performance review for class re-allocation or adjustment. A needs analysis survey is completed monthly by each student which details positive and negative outcomes, with special attention to the relevance of learning and suggestions from students for improvement, for example in clarity of delivery and the relevance and level of difficulty of content. The survey also invites requests for assignment to another class, should that be preferred.

Programmes are contextualised as far as possible for the vocational and social needs of students, especially in regard to local employment or further education. Teaching arrangements are adapted for a range of student attendance options and delivery is focussed on students’ specific learning needs and cultural factors.

Much of the learning is focussed on the achievement of an average IELTS score of 6.5, achieved by 85 per cent of students to date in 2010. Students interviewed by the evaluation team said the programmes and activities were helpful in their adaptation to New Zealand culture and language. Ninety per cent of students record satisfaction with the English language and social skills they achieve. Comments include, “good value”, “helpful and useful”, “learning is fine”, “surprised at how much I am leaning in IELTS”. Word-of-mouth recommendations from students and graduates are reported by agents as a significant factor in their choice of MFH for an ESOL learning site in New Zealand, contributing 22 per cent of new students in 2010. Graduates available for follow-up have reported such thoughts as they are “pleased with their preparation for tertiary education”.

External stakeholders affirm the relevance of the learning to their contexts. This is demonstrated by the range of student destinations, for example employment in hospitality, restaurant management, and business management and progression to other courses at level 5 on the National Qualification Framework (NQF) and beyond, where complex language structures and taxonomies are involved.

The evidence available indicates that MFH seeks feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, including students, and that their responses to this, in programme design and delivery, result in excellent outcomes.

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 **Adequate**.

Explanation

In formal feedback surveys more than 80 per cent of students give MFH an excellent rating for teaching. Study begins with a pre-entry placement test, an Oxford model covering five learning factors and detailing previous study, learning interests, and future plans. The IELTS assessment scale is explained to students, and although not always the chosen pathway, preparation for IELTS examinations is embedded in other curriculum options. Objectives for pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced intermediate levels are given in detail and graded texts are provided, focussing on a wide range of social, vocational, and cultural skills. This enables students to make intelligent choices about their learning and contributes to a lucid picture of what will be required in the programme.

The learning progression of each student is monitored in a “student life-map”. This records every advance of the student’s “learning cycle”, from enrolment to graduation, with daily and weekly assessment and feedback, a monthly report on each student comparing achievement with expectations, and a six-weekly “school test” of the four basic skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. A progress track record details continuous movement in test results for IELTS learning. In the sample observed, 90 per cent of students had achieved or exceeded expectation.

ESOL students are given a placement test with a learning needs analysis and a detailed introduction to learning options and needs. This is monitored by feedback and assessment daily, weekly, monthly, and six-weekly and continued throughout the student life-map of each student. The map may change at any point in the programme to suit needs and objectives. A comprehensive orientation handbook gives essential information about the programmes and the MFH environment, with supplementary material on New Zealand geography, society, and culture.

A needs analysis report is completed fortnightly by each student, giving positive and/or negative comment, with a request for suggestions for improvement of teaching and of the school environment. A formal “change of class” request is an option taken by students with scheduling or learning problems in their assigned class. A feedback survey is conducted on all available graduates some weeks after completion of the ESOL course.

Teachers are trained and experienced practitioners in ESOL. They are on hourly payment contracts, an arrangement which MFH is aware may negatively influence motivation and discourage participation in extra-curricular activities, mentoring, and guidance.

Recruitment interviews enquire and record detail about ESOL qualifications, previous experience in ESOL, nationalities and ages taught, levels, and style of teaching. Appointees receive a 50-page orientation handbook, curriculum outlines for their classes, and necessary guides and resources. They are observed and mentored initially and at six-monthly intervals by the academic director, who emails all staff weekly on a variety of teaching matters. Teachers are required to write and teach to a weekly plan and submit “work-done” sheets for every class. This is a good contributor to self-assessment and would be enhanced by more self-reflection in comments about student achievement

The academic director conducts monthly professional development sessions with teachers on a variety of topics and distributes reading material on teaching skills and classroom management from a variety of sources. This practice contributes well to professional development within the limits of time and availability. It will be enhanced by a plan to introduce independent professional development plans for every teacher,

The learning outcomes are excellent, but attribution of these to the work of individual teachers is necessarily inferential. Students interviewed by the evaluation team strongly affirmed the good quality of teaching but had some qualifying comments. One student preferred more discussion about New Zealand and its culture, while another commented that the library could be better stocked. Another again thought the library adequate and enjoyed the current practice of directing students to the nearby city library for supplementary reading.

There were some recommendations from teachers interviewed. One advocated a more structured approach to teaching, week by week, and more analysis of student needs. Another suggested “broadening the demographic”, while a third commented that more social activities would enhance teaching.

The academic director is meticulous in her supervision of teaching and promotes professional development as far as time allows, but current employment conditions limit its scope. Teachers are serious in their approach to their work, there is a good collegial environment, and a willingness was evident to discuss teaching situations and challenges and their responses to them. This is evidence of an informal culture of self-assessment among the teachers, a good feature which would be enhanced by a more formal process and more dedicated time.

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**.

Explanation

Student support and guidance is intense, varied, and continuous and is organised and monitored by the school manager. Before leaving their country of origin, students receive a “departure pack”, detailing flight departure and arrival times, arrangements for meeting, homestay arrangements if required, and personal profiles. Travel and accommodation are organised and monitored by the school marketing manager. On arrival, students are introduced to the teaching environment, which is warm, bright, and spacious, with open-door access to both management and teaching staff.

The school manager has responsibility for the pastoral care of students and maintains an ongoing personal record of each. A database records 31 factors of each student’s life and learning history, from initial placement to postgraduate destination. Problems with learning, personal and social life, and homestay arrangements are reported, monitored, and actioned, with referrals to teaching staff or externally as appropriate. Mediation is provided where required.

The school manager gives personal learning guidance to students in need, with supplementary teaching in listening and reading. He will mark any extra work and conducts rehearsals for speaking tests. There are dedicated weekly sessions on a variety of social and vocational needs, including CV preparation, job application, letter writing, dress, and appropriate language for various situations. Workshops are organised, with a variety of guest speakers on educational and cultural matters.

A valuable and popular feature is “Andrew’s Culture Class”, in which students learn and rehearse a wide range of cultural adaptations to New Zealand culture, including perceived good manners, vernacular expressions, entertainments, food, sport, making friends, and other cultural matters.

This is an exemplary programme of student guidance and support. It is comprehensive, watchful, enabling, and stimulating, giving every student a sense of belonging in a new culture and providing a range of challenges for learning and adaptation.

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

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**.

Explanation

The directors of MFH set a mood of meticulous professional practice, both in their personal conduct and in their policies, standards, directions, and guidelines. The strategic plan, currently being implemented, is a step-by-step, “how-to” model for improved outcomes

across the organisation. It creates an open, challenging, and critical environment, with designated outcomes and timelines as the signals of success. It is based on an ongoing evaluation of every function, resulting in statements of objectives, with a sequence of balanced score cards to monitor and measure their implementation. Scorecards include learning cycles, detailing stages of learning, teaching, and administrative support. Student life-maps include a detailed account of the progress of each student from orientation to graduation, in learning, adaptation to the culture, and in preparation for employment or further education.

All managers participate in the process and have personal responsibility for implementation in their areas.

This depth of evaluation has shifted the culture of MFH from maintenance of existing programmes and relationships to critical self-assessment, improvement, and growth, with a range of new perspectives and initiatives already in development. Immediate objectives in teaching and learning are the creation of long-term teaching contracts, with security of tenure and professional development plans for individual teachers. For the present, self-assessment in teaching is less robust than it would be if teaching staff were more actively involved, such as with self review and peer observations.

The current performance of MFH in relation to stakeholder needs and satisfaction, according to a substantial body of written and spoken evidence, is excellent. The meticulous self-assessment in stakeholder management, in the relevance and quality of evaluation of programmes, and in student support and guidance with the recent introduction of a comprehensive, organisation-wide self-assessment structure, contribute to an overall rating of excellent.

Part 2: Performance in 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 **Excellent**.

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

2.2 Focus area: Making Futures Happen ESOL

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

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

2.3 Focus Area: Student support

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

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

Actions Required and Recommendations

Actions required

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.

Recommendations

- Explore options for benchmarking, such as with other ESOL providers, against previous student cohorts, or against individual students' progress.
- Explore options for further enhancing self-assessment of teaching, such as involving teachers in self-review and peer observations.

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