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Report of External Evaluation and Review

English Advantage

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 3 June 2016

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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.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	English Advantage Ltd
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location and delivery site:	95 Hanover St, Dunedin
First registered:	23 June 2003
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate of English Proficiency for Academic Purposes – Elementary (Level 1)• Certificate of English Proficiency for Academic Purposes – Intermediate (Level 2)• Certificate of English Proficiency for Academic Purposes – Upper Intermediate (Level 2)• Certificate of English Proficiency for Academic Purposes – Advanced (Level 3)• Certificate in Academic Critical Discourses (Level 4)
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	19 students enrolled at the time of this external evaluation and review (EER). This includes international students and New Zealand residents.
Number of staff:	Three full-time equivalents

Scope of active accreditation:	Please follow this link: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/course-accreditations.do?providerId=759265001&delSiteInd=0
Distinctive characteristics:	English Advantage is a small PTE delivering its own short courses in English language tuition to international students and resident migrants. It has a significant function in the local educational sector in the preparation of nurses from India to take part in competence assessment programmes at Otago Polytechnic.
Recent significant changes:	Nil
Previous quality assurance history:	This provider is not required to submit moderation procedures to NZQA or an industry training organisation. The previous NZQA EER was held in May 2012. At that time NZQA was Confident in the educational performance and Confident in the capability in self-assessment of English Advantage

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the EER included the following focus areas:

- Governance, management, and strategy – this is a mandatory focus area.
- English language programmes levels 1-4

This focus area encompasses all the programmes delivered by English Advantage. The focus on compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students is integrated into governance, management and strategy and plays an important part in student support.

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 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.*

Two NZQA evaluators visited the English Advantage office in Dunedin over two days. Prior to the EER, the NZQA lead evaluator and the director of English Advantage discussed the possible focus areas and EER procedures. English Advantage supplied the lead evaluator with descriptive information about the organisation and a summary of its self-assessment activities, including any changes that had occurred since the previous EER. This assisted the lead evaluator in developing the scope of this EER, in collaboration with the director of English Advantage.

During the on-site visit, the evaluation team interviewed the owner-director, the administration manager, the teachers and students on the courses, and some of the stakeholders at local schools, and the manager at the Otago University Language Centre.

A range of documents was examined to clarify items that arose from the discussions.

Summary of Results

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

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **English Advantage**.

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **English Advantage**.

English Advantage has generally good levels of student achievement. This is in part due to the nature of the provider's method of operation, which is typical of some English language schools in New Zealand. The evaluators conclude that the good levels of student achievement are partly due to the circumstances of the provider's mode of operation, and efficacy of managing a small number of students.

The school itself measures student success through feedback from the end-of-course student evaluations, by the amount of repeat business that English Advantage gains from its stakeholders, and the number of re-enrolments from its students. Student feedback is significantly positive, and repeat business is good given that English Advantage is a small PTE which does not engage in active marketing through agents abroad or in New Zealand.

The evaluators, in determining the level of student achievement at English Advantage, saw that the provider has two distinct streams of students: those who engage in the English Proficiency series and those who come to boost their IELTS (International English Language Testing System) ratings in the level 4 English language programme to enter the Competency Assessment Programme (CAP) at Otago Polytechnic. The latter group of students seek to meet the requirements to practise as nurses in New Zealand. The achievement rates in the IELTS and level 4 programme for CAP students are readily measurable, with very good outcomes as all students so far have achieved entry to the CAP at Otago Polytechnic. The quality of achievement in the English Proficiency stream was more difficult for the evaluators to discern. This is because the individual nature of student achievement made the outcomes difficult to measure and compare in a meaningful way. The evaluators saw that the length of a students' stay and level of English language ability attained was documented at English Advantage, but they conclude that more could be done to understand and document the achievement of individual students and how well they meet their personal learning aims.

The evaluators also identified that the good standard of pastoral care provided to the students by English Advantage is a further strong point, but noted again that the level of support is facilitated by the small numbers of students present at the school. Discussion with the students indicated that the outcomes of the learning generally provided good value to the learners. The immediate value of the learning to stakeholders is evident in some cases, as is shown by the positive feedback from local high schools who send a few students for after-school and holiday lessons. It is more difficult to gauge the value of the outcomes for other

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stakeholders on a long-term basis, but the provider does keep a record of destination data to indicate where the students go.

The management at English Advantage showed that it consistently collects completion data and is able to plot student progress. However, it is not apparent that the data was being collated and analysed to recognize trends, inform developments in delivery and programme planning, or to understand the long-term value of the outcomes, .

It is noted that an informal arrangement for moderation of assessments is taking place at English Advantage, but there is an absence of a system of documentation to show how this is taking place. The quality management system section on moderation of assessments is lacking in specific detail and needs review. Most of the assessments are from the published workbooks and so are pre-assessment moderated by peer review, but post-assessment moderation is informally done at this stage.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

Student achievement at English Advantage is good. The evaluators saw that English Advantage is typical of New Zealand ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) schools in that the students stay for varying lengths of time depending on their needs in New Zealand. Some students come to English Advantage in an earnest attempt to improve their standard of English language or to improve their IELTS rating. Others come to have a few weeks' holiday in New Zealand and to pick up a little English and appreciate some local culture. English Advantage assesses the ability and needs of each incoming student, and places them in the programme that suits their level of proficiency. The programme is tailored to suit the needs of the individual student. This makes the length of stay vary from student to student. The achievement rates of the CAP nurses from India are more measurable, as their programme has a prescribed outcome.

Overall outcomes are measured through the positive student evaluation feedback, good destination outcomes, and the achievement of IELTS results. The evaluators learned that students also achieve personal gains as shown in the gaining of raised confidence, cultural awareness, and employment skills. The level 4 nursing students have all achieved the required outcomes to go on to CAP studies. The management at English Advantage said that repeat business and student re-enrolment to do additional courses are considered the main indicators of organisational success. In this respect, the evaluators saw evidence that the provider is performing well. All students who pathway to CAP studies have so far achieved the desired IELTS results, and the evaluators saw that this was in part due to careful selection processes, needs analysis, individualised teaching methods, and a high standard of pastoral care.

English Advantage conducts student evaluations of the programme and learning, with each student completing an evaluation at the end of their time at the PTE. This evaluation is not systematically collated or analysed to determine trends or inform future programme development. While such exit surveys give information that may help future students, it would be useful to establish an evaluation system that allows the students' suggestions to be taken into account and enacted while they are at the PTE, so that they can see for themselves the benefits of giving

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

feedback. Most of the student evaluation feedback is positive, with students stating that they have had a rewarding time at English Advantage.

The PTE keeps good student achievement records showing when each student starts and finishes each level, but there is a lack of comparison and analysis of trends over time. English Advantage feels that because of relatively low student numbers, the achievement statistics can be dramatically skewed and therefore are not very useful for comparison. In many cases, the aspirations of the students are individual, which is also not helpful for making comparisons. English Advantage could do more to match each student's aims at the beginning of the programme with their achievements at the end to see how well their needs have been met at the conclusion of the learning.

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**.

The evaluators found that there is considerable value in the outcomes for the students at English Advantage. The level 4 nursing students find obvious value in attaining the level of English language competence required to enter the CAP programme at Otago Polytechnic and ultimately being able to register in New Zealand as nurses. They go on to find employment and permanent residency in New Zealand, and eventually some bring their families to New Zealand. This provides a tangible value to the healthcare system in this country, and is of great benefit to the Indian nurses who wish to emigrate.

English Advantage carefully identifies and integrates culture and life skills into its programmes, and the value of this is obvious. Some of the level 4 nursing students had enrolled in the programme even though they had met the IELTS requirements before they came to New Zealand. These students enrolled to gain an insight into New Zealand culture, and to learn New Zealand language pronunciation. These aspects are valuable when working with the public in rest homes and hospitals and are part of the introduction to the local lifestyle.

Student evaluations show that the learning also provides an important contribution to the confidence of students in gaining employment, in the workplace and in general life. Another value for the students is the emphasis on assistance with New Zealand cultural understanding and help with local idiom and language pronunciation, with particular emphasis on Te Reo Māori. Importance is placed on the immersion in Tikanga Māori and bicultural aspects which are integrated into the programmes to initiate understanding of New Zealand society. The learning also helps students to understand workplace culture.

The value of the learning is mainly determined by a systematic evaluation of the programme undertaken by each student at the end of their course. This evaluation generally indicates a good level of student satisfaction. However, collation and analysis of this feedback is not a strength, and there is little study of trends that emerge, and little indication of how this information is used to assist in programme development. Students are encouraged to speak freely and constructively, as illustrated by their suggestions on classrooms. Teaching staff add value by giving informal feedback on the programmes to management and producing improvements accordingly. The administration staff regularly contact graduates to obtain destination data, and this shows that many of the students go on to achieve their intended pathways to further studies or employment, further reinforcing the value of the learning. Management sees the positive relationships between English Advantage and local stakeholders as being an ongoing indication of the value the PTE brings to local schools and the community.

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**.

The evaluators have found that English Advantage meets the needs of the students and stakeholders quite well. This is illustrated in a number of ways. For example, the level 4 programme is tailored to meet the specific needs of the students that attend. Changes to this course, to make it more accessible, are made in consultation with present and past students and agents. The PTE's management has shown that local courses are best suited to meet the needs of students as the format of these is more versatile and so the courses are more readily adapted to suit individual needs. This is a strategy that works for this provider.

The needs of different students are met by having afternoon and morning classes at different levels, thus varying the intensity of the learning, and providing choices for the students. The teachers meet weekly, and the whole staff meet fortnightly, with students' individual needs being high on the agenda in both cases. The needs of Chinese migrant students were recently met when a Chinese-speaking teacher was contracted to help the interaction with these students. This proved very successful.

Further to this, English Advantage provides for the needs of local migrant school children who are accepted for study during the secondary school holidays, and after school for top-up courses. Other students come for supplementary activities while they are on holiday in New Zealand. English Advantage adjusts the teaching contact hours to take account of the students' employment needs. An additional innovation is the possibility for students to engage in casual studies. This means

that interested students, usually migrants living in New Zealand, can engage in learning whenever they like and pay for only the classes they attend.

Students' needs are ascertained through the profile sheet which is filled in by the students at enrolment. English Advantage also conducts a placement test to determine the level of the students' English language competence and to gauge their strengths and weaknesses. Destination data is collected to determine where the students go, but this only partially shows how well the students' needs have been met. The evaluators found that English Advantage is receptive to implementing ideas for adapting the programme. Although no formalised feedback is gathered from high school students, English Advantage compiles reports of high school students' achievement which are sent to the school. The evaluators were shown letters of appreciation from the secondary school principals to support the service to their students.

Programme review and development occurs as required and under guidance from the manager of English Advantage. It was apparent that the programme is often being adjusted to meet specific student needs.

One area that English Advantage could improve on is comparing students' aspirations at the start with their achievements at the end of the learning. This would give a further useful indication of how successful the PTE is in directly meeting the students' 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**.

The evaluation team found that, overall, English Advantage engages in effective teaching. The PTE has a system of 'rolling enrolment' which means that it takes students as they arrive, rather than having a cohort of students starting on a specific date. Traditionally, this rolling enrolment poses some challenges in the classroom for teachers, but English Advantage effectively manages this by having small class sizes of about six or seven students, enabling students to gain a lot of individual attention from the teacher.

High student achievement and satisfied students indicate that delivery is effective. The provider is active in using the feedback from graduates and agents to make appropriate adjustments to the programme and delivery. The evaluators found that there is a good learning environment at the PTE.

The teachers have a good mix of appropriate qualifications and teaching experience. There is a lively culture of the teachers mentoring the students in their studies and evidence of reflective teaching practices being employed. The teachers record the day's activities in the reflective journals they are encouraged to

use, and this helps them to reflect on their practice and make adjustments where necessary. A further innovation, started in 2015, is the introduction of a mentor scheme to assist the teachers with their self-assessment practices. These mentor services have been established with an external consultant who visits several times a year to conduct teaching observations and give guidance to the teachers. The mentor gives verbal feedback to the teachers. It may be more useful if this is formally documented as well. The use of a mentor is recent and it is too soon for the results to have become embedded, but it is a worthwhile initiative that should have a positive effect in time. Other than this, professional development in areas of enhancing teaching skills and discipline skills is not prominent. The evaluators found that the PTE is not being proactive in encouraging professional development at this time, but they were told that professional development opportunities are limited locally because there are few other English language schools in Dunedin. However, the PTE could link with other teaching groups through electronic means.

Assessment tools are pre-moderated because they are part of internationally published texts. The evaluators noted that there is some informal post-assessment moderation of marking, but this must become systematic and documented in order to show accountability in these areas. The quality management system needs reviewing to ensure it reflects current policy and practice, particularly with regards to moderation procedures.

As noted, the provider relies on student satisfaction, continued student referrals and repeat enrolments to judge its effectiveness. These considerations have commercial implications which will guide the business aspirations of the PTE, but more emphasis on measuring educational performance is required as well.

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 **Good**.

English Advantage gives a high standard of individual support to its students. The PTE provides a congenial, informal, family-like environment with a small group of selected staff whom the students find easy to approach.

There are good facilities and sufficient work space for the students. The evaluators saw that there are good induction processes for the students when they arrive at the PTE, and particular attention is given to assisting the students to acclimatise to their new surroundings. Student feedback shows that English Advantage has a welcoming environment and supports the students to establish themselves.

On commencing their programmes, the students are profiled to find out their specific needs. The provider is willing to adapt the learning strategy to suit an individual's circumstances, and the programmes are deliberately kept versatile for that purpose. Management is aware of the needs of different ethnic groups. For

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example, it is known that Indian students traditionally need more work on their handwriting of English language.

The evaluators met the local Indian immigration agent who meets the Indian students at the airport and escorts them to their accommodation or homestay. All the homestays are checked for suitability at the outset of the stay, and English Advantage has had certain homestays on their books for a long time, indicating satisfaction with the services they provide.

The evaluators found that there is good management knowledge and use of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. Students are assisted with their integration into Dunedin life through the likes of assistance with banking and insurance. Student orientation includes a guided tour of central Dunedin for the newcomers to acclimatise to the city.

The effectiveness of student support is demonstrated by the positive feedback gained from student evaluations and discussions with the immigration agent.

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**.

Governance and management at English Advantage is generally capable and effective. English Advantage has a single owner who is also the sole director, manager and the main teacher, as well as an accredited IELTS examiner. There are also two well-qualified and experienced part-time teachers who job-share.

The provider fills a market gap in Dunedin by remaining very versatile and fulfilling the needs of students who have varied needs. English Advantage prefers to use approved short courses based on the Cambridge system to maintain this versatility. There are few providers of English language study in Dunedin, and English Advantage is the only PTE covering English language studies in the city and is responsive and cost-effective for local students. This is seen as a market advantage for the PTE. It is described as a 'wee boutique school' by its owner. Its strategic advantage is its small size, smaller fees, versatility and personal teaching style.

Student achievement is high, with students succeeding in meeting their learning aims. Student outcomes are recorded, and IELTS testing is done at the Otago University Language Centre. The level 4 Indian students who want to get nursing jobs in New Zealand but need to meet Nursing Council criteria have all achieved their aims so far at English Advantage. The owner-director travels to Mumbai to secure these students, and this scheme has official endorsement in New Zealand. Otherwise, English Advantage relies on its website for marketing abroad and the

management does not travel overseas for this purpose other than to gather nursing students for the Level 4 programme, but largely uses local sources to refer students to the PTE.

The evaluators were told that benchmarking of results with local providers is difficult to do as providers in the sector are reluctant to share results for competitive reasons. The owner-director does make comparisons of student achievement against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. English Advantage also makes longitudinal internal comparisons of its IELTS results. The owner-director is aware of the problem of a small sample size producing skewed results.

The evaluators found that although the quality management system document appears to have been revised in January 2016, it is lacking in some details, especially in the section on moderation, and needs a thorough review.

Heavy reliance is placed on the results of student feedback to show that student needs are being met. Student surveys are not the most reliable form of data collection, and the results do not appear to have been collated and analysed. There is positive feedback from local schools and institutions. English Advantage relies on repeat business from these sources and student re-enrolment, as well as positive student feedback, to gauge its effectiveness. As there could be other factors that cause this repeat business, such as the low cost or lack of choice, judging the effectiveness of the learning on these commercial aspects lacks reliability.

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: English language programmes levels 1-4

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 that English Advantage:

1. Develop and implement meaningful professional development of teaching staff, especially in ways that allow interaction with others in the same field.
2. Engage in collation and analysis of self-assessment data to ascertain trends, influence future development of programmes and delivery, and determine the value of the learning in the longer term.
3. Implement a system of moderating student assessments with documentation that shows how this is done, and the accountability for the process.
4. Review the quality management system document, primarily the section on moderation.

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).

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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