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External Evaluation and Review Report

Talent International Institute Limited

Date of report: 9 June 2020

About Talent International Institute Limited

Talent International Institute provides English language and business courses to international students. The organisation is a subsidiary of a large international construction company, with strong links to the healthcare and hospitality industries. This provides a purpose and direction for delivering training that complements core business.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	282 Durham Street North, Level G, 1 & 2, Christchurch Central
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: six equivalent full-time and three equivalent part-time students (permanent residents) International: 68 equivalent full-time students
Number of staff:	15 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	Talent International Institute
Last EER outcome:	2016: Confident/Confident
Scope of evaluation:	New Zealand Business Diplomas (Level 5 and 6) ¹ ; international student support and wellbeing; level 2, 3 and 4 Academic English Language training schemes; governance, management and strategy
MoE number:	7592
NZQA reference:	C38416
Dates of EER visit:	4–6 March 2020

¹ As a result of a lack of business viability, NZQA quality assurance actions and Immigration New Zealand advice, Talent International has chosen to cease delivery of both business programmes beyond 2020.

Summary of Results

Comprehensive support and meeting the learning needs of each student drives programme development and review. Organisational growth is planned to continue with the complementary self-assessment structure developing alongside.

Confident in educational performance

- Low class numbers enable staff to provide support and close involvement with students. This also results in focused actions to continuously improve programmes and enhance learning experiences for students. The sustainability of this approach may need consideration as the organisation grows.
- Value for students is evident. There is a strong focus on and an informed understanding of what each student needs. There is less evidence of value for other stakeholders.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Recent NZQA monitoring of the business programmes identified significant issues with assessor decisions and assessment instruments and practices. In turn, this raises concerns about the reliability of the achievement data. However, positive actions in response to the findings have resulted in improvements in assessment and moderation practice across the organisation.
- A new organisational structure and leadership is supporting Talent International in delivering a new strategic direction in a changing environment. Organisational frameworks for consistent self-assessment beyond the programme level are in the early stage of development and implementation.
- Staff feel valued, supported and empowered to make decisions. Greater collaboration between the campuses (Christchurch and Dunedin), where there is programme commonality, would create stronger cohesion and development of shared practice.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Talent International delivers face-to-face learning to a primarily international student body. Consideration of the distinctive characteristics these students bring to their study results in an individualised approach to teaching and learning. Additionally, feedback from students and teaching staff is used effectively to focus on learner needs and to positively influence student achievement. As the PTE has expanded, the use of this information to drive strategic, organisational-level decisions is becoming more apparent.</p> <p>Both campuses deliver English language training. Student achievement is measured solely through language skills acquisition and progress towards personal academic goals (unless the students undertake IELTS or OET³ testing). Course completion is high at between 96 and 100 per cent over the past four years.⁴ An in-depth analysis of the trends seen in and between campuses could provide understanding for further improvements.</p> <p>Only the Christchurch campus delivers the business programmes. As no qualifications have been gained to date, student achievement is measured through successful course completion. Initially, course completion was slow but has increased to 80 per cent and above⁵ during 2019.</p> <p>In December 2019, NZQA undertook moderation of assessments across the business programmes, identifying significant issues with assessment design and assessor</p>

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

³ IELTS – International English Language Testing system; OET – Occupational English Test

⁴ See Appendix 1 for English language and business diploma results 2016 to 2019.

⁵ See Appendix 1 for English language and business diploma results 2016 to 2019.

	judgements that raised concerns about the validity of achievement. Remedial actions were sighted, indicating changes to assessment design and marking practice to improve achievement validity.
Conclusion:	Student achievement throughout the organisation is effectively measured using skill acquisition, resulting in progression to higher levels and/or course completion in all programmes. Self-assessment is focused on the student and meeting their needs. External monitoring has resulted in some remedial changes to the business programmes.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Over 300 students have studied English language with this organisation to gain the IELTS score, enabling them to undertake the Competency Assessment Programme (CAP) in order to gain work in the healthcare industry. Feedback from graduates indicated that they were able to meet their employment goals, and employers highlighted the cultural preparedness of these graduates in understanding the requirements of their patients.</p> <p>An increasing number of other students, mainly at the Christchurch campus, are studying in the lower-level training schemes to improve their skills and knowledge of English or because the courses are shorter and more targeted. After completing their study, English language graduates are contacted by the PTE to ascertain the impact of their learning on their personal lives at home or in the community. There is evidence that this contact is occurring, and the data is being used to enhance the programmes.</p> <p>At the time of the EER there were no business graduates to provide graduate and destination data. However, regular field trips and guest speakers provide opportunities for interaction between the students and potential industry contacts. This is understood as contributing to the graduates gaining knowledge</p>

	<p>and understanding of business practices in the New Zealand context before experiencing them.</p> <p>Community and industry representatives alongside subject matter experts are used, for all programmes, in an advisory role. This not only provides an understanding of current and future practices, but also promotes professional and social networks for the students.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>All students are provided with knowledge contextualised to the New Zealand environment, and exposure to professional industry and social communities. The value of this approach has been confirmed by graduates successfully undertaking their CAP and gaining employment. However, a summary of the value for graduates completing the lower-level training schemes would strengthen this understanding.</p>

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Talent International operates a learner-centric pedagogy that is currently easy to manage because of small class numbers. Talent International set expectations for learning behaviour during 2018 which has provided guidelines for attendance, in-class activity, self-directed activity and assessments. Regular feedback mechanisms ensure the emerging needs of students are well understood and teaching can be adapted quickly so that needs continue to be met. This organisation is aware that, as student numbers increase, this approach may need change to ensure student needs continue to be effectively met.</p> <p>This method of teaching and learning fits well with the programmes, which align delivery and assessment with the requirements of a qualification or training scheme. NZQA monitoring has raised questions about the alignment of assessment tasks and assessor judgements to the learning</p>

	<p>outcomes in the business programmes. This has resulted in an organisation-wide review of assessment tools and practices.⁶</p> <p>Robust internal and external moderation policies and processes are in place and practised. External moderator recommendations for pre-moderated material are mostly actioned and the materials pre-moderated again before delivery. All business assessments are now being internally and externally post-moderated prior to determining the final grade. Any changes to assessment tools as a result of post-assessment moderation are made and the tools are moderated again before delivery.</p> <p>Further maintenance of academic standards is seen in the close adherence to the approved programme documentation and academic policies that have been developed and implemented to ensure academic integrity.</p> <p>Talent International has an extensive network of subject matter experts and consultants. Additionally, advisory groups with local community representatives meet regularly. These groups have created current and future academic and social networks for the benefit of the students and the organisation. Business students take field trips and listen to guest speakers to gain real-life experience related to their study.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Small numbers of students have allowed for a successful learner-centric approach to programmes that are designed and delivered in accordance with approved programme documentation. Practices have been strengthened through feedback from NZQA and the development of extensive external stakeholder groups within the Christchurch community.</p>

⁶ Mapping of each assessment tool with programme requirements and learning outcomes was evidenced. Internal and external moderator reports now include detailed comments on alignment to/achievement of learning outcomes as well as on assessor judgements.

1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Extensive information is provided to students during the inquiry and enrolment phase with their agents. On arrival, students undertake orientation which enables the administration and support team to establish a rapport to monitor progress and needs alongside the programme staff. Student feedback attests to the weekly campus-wide activities and the readily available support, providing a holistic educational experience.</p> <p>As mentioned in 1.3, Talent International operates a learner-centric pedagogy that focuses strongly on meeting learner needs. Additional to this, support staff work closely with management and teaching staff to ensure students are supported within the PTE's broader learning context. This has provided the students with a structure in which they feel their wellbeing and learning needs are being met.</p> <p>In English language, the learning goals of the students are identified and fully understood from the start of their study. Regular progress checks and portfolios (which are the students' to keep) provide conversational feedback which enables adjustments to be made to the learning pathway in a timely manner.</p> <p>Business students are constantly monitored throughout class, and self-directed learning expectations are discussed and regularly reviewed. Tutorials allow for targeted clinics and workshops to meet support needs⁷ which are identified by students and teaching staff.</p> <p>Overall, there is a high level of effective and supportive interaction provided to all students. Systematic and embedded feedback processes allow for an effective self-assessment cycle focused on improving learner progress and achievement while maintaining academic integrity and standards.</p>
Conclusion:	Comprehensive information about student needs and progress is gained and actioned throughout the learning journey. Frequent

⁷ Specific learning difficulties are not supported within the organisation. However, external assistance can be accessed when necessary.

	contact with students ensures learning needs are met in a timely manner. Currently for the small student body, the high level of interaction and regular feedback to and from students has enabled effective self-assessment leading to improvements to programmes and achievement.
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1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>When the PTE was English Advantage⁸, the boutique nature of the organisation enabled a very clear purpose and direction to be understood throughout the organisation. Following the 2017 purchase, the rebranding to Talent International and the expansion into a new region and new programmes required changes to the PTE’s direction and purpose. The purpose and direction, though changed, are still clear.</p> <p>The organisation’s academic leadership has changed a number of times over the last few years and is still being altered and refined as Talent International continues to grow. Such change has been effectively managed and is strongly focused on ensuring that students are gained and retained and the programmes being taught are fit for purpose. Self-assessment is programme and student-centred and has allowed this organisation to respond quickly to the NZQA monitoring report. The focus on student and programme growth has meant a reflective self-assessment cycle at organisational level is not yet fully embedded. However, actions to address this are occurring with the new director requiring regular reporting to the board of student achievement, completions data and the value of the outcomes to stakeholders.</p> <p>The new facility in Christchurch and a new facility planned for Dunedin attest to the organisation’s commitment to providing a high level of resources for learning and teaching. Tutorial staff spoke openly and with gratitude about the ability to purchase</p>

⁸ English Advantage was the name of the PTE purchased by Huadu International during 2017. The name of the PTE was changed to Talent International Institute Ltd at this stage.

	<p>whatever resources are requested and commented that this allows them to ensure all needs of the programme are met.</p> <p>Staff have relevant industry experience that meets the requirements outlined in the respective job descriptions. They are also supported to develop their teaching skills, and further professional development is supported and planned for on an annual basis and monitored through regular meetings. However, tutorial staff have expressed a wish to increase contact and collaboration between campuses.</p> <p>At the time of this EER there were a number of external influences affecting this organisation. The owner-shareholder has provided assurance to the organisation that investment will remain as the strategic direction is adapted to respond to the decision to exit delivery of the New Zealand Diplomas of Business and continue operating in the international market during and after the Covid pandemic.</p>
Conclusion:	Talent International has a current focus on campus and student growth based on the development of new programmes. An effective management system has and still is being refined and will be maintained through ongoing organisational level self-assessment.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The recommendations from the last EER suggested development of the teaching staff, self-assessment capabilities, moderation systems and a quality management system. These recommendations are being actioned, particularly since the growth in the organisation and appointment of a new chief executive. Further organisational growth will ensure these recommendations are addressed fully.</p> <p>Since the change of ownership, the PTE has introduced a position dedicated to ensuring compliance with NZQA rules and regulations. On the appointment of the chief executive during 2018, a comprehensive annual calendar of compliance was instituted, assisted by regular meetings of the management</p>

	<p>group. NZQA compliance requirements, declarations and attestations are met in a timely manner.</p> <p>With a mainly international student body, managing the organisation's accountabilities to the Code of Practice⁹ is a main focus. The PTE has developed robust processes to manage and regularly review the use of agents, accommodation and the pastoral care of the students. Over the past year, the student management system has been expanded to enable effective monitoring of insurances and visas.</p> <p>A quality management system outlining policies for all aspects of organisational functions has been developed since the last EER. The efficacy of this system with regards to assessment practice was challenged by the monitoring activity undertaken by NZQA in late 2019. Development of procedures to enable a translation of these policies into measurable work processes is still to be completed.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>There is strong evidence of good practice and management of compliance with the rules and regulations that apply to this organisation. Management of compliance activities is being further developed with growing internal capability and as issues arise, including responses to NZQA monitoring.</p>

⁹ Education (Pastoral care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 (including amendments 2019)

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: New Zealand Diplomas of Business (Level 5 and Level 6)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

2.2 Focus area: International students: support and wellbeing

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Extensive processes and procedures are in place to ensure the students' wellbeing and support. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation activities that enable students to gain an understanding of New Zealand culture, create social networks, access 24/7 emergency contacts and meet study expectations. • Regular visits by PTE representatives to the homestays to monitor the students' living situations. • A reception space dedicated to supporting the students including notification of each week's staff points of contact. • All staff and agents undergoing training to enable an understanding of how to provide holistic support for the students and compliance with the Code of Practice. <p>Regular student surveys are collected, but it is not clear how they provide feedback to further the development of support services to international students. Evidence also shows that while regular self-review is occurring, the completion of the resultant action plans is not always evident.</p>

2.3 Focus area: Intermediate Level (Level 2), Advanced Level (Level 3), and Critical Discourse (Level 4) English Language training schemes

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

2.4 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that Talent International Institute Limited:

- Complete the development of the organisation's measurable operational processes to provide the ability to monitor and review each policy.
- Create collaborative opportunities for English language tutorial staff across both campuses to enable an organisation-wide consistent approach and sharing of practice.
- Consider the sustainability of a student-centric, individualised approach as student numbers increase to ensure student needs continue to be met effectively.
- Complete development of the consistent use of self-assessment data at an organisational level to clearly demonstrate achievement, value and performance.
- Review and develop further robust assessment and moderation practices that meet the requirements of programme and qualification documents and external monitoring.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

There are no requirements arising from the external evaluation and review.

Appendix 1

Table 1. Student achievement data 2016–2019

Programme	Enrolment	Retention %	Progression of retained %	Case completion of retained %
2016				
English language Dunedin	64	100	100	100
2017				
English language Dunedin	44	98	99	99
2018				
English language Dunedin	35	100	100	100
English language Christchurch	11	100	92	100
Diploma in Business Level 6	4	100	N/A	N/A
2019				
English language Dunedin	38	98	99	99
English language Christchurch	86	96	87	96
Diploma in Business Level 5	7	100	N/A	80
Diploma in Business Level 6	27	100	N/A	85

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. 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.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud¹⁰*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

¹⁰ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 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, training schemes and consents to assess and 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. 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). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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Final