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External Evaluation and Review Report

English Express (NZ) Limited
trading as NZ Institute of Business &
Technology

Date of report: 16 April 2021

About English Express (NZ) Limited trading as NZ Institute of Business & Technology

English Express (NZ) Limited, trading as NZ Institute of Business & Technology (NZIBT) is a small educational institute with 100 per cent international student enrolments. Originally delivering English language courses, NZIBT now offers a graduate certificate and graduate diploma in business.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Level 3, 238-242 Queen Street, Auckland ¹
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: nil International: 2016 – 11; 2017 – nine; 2018 – eight; 2019 – 10; 2020 – six
Number of staff:	One full-time, four part-time ²
TEO profile:	See the NZIBT page on the NZQA website
Last EER outcome:	In October 2016, NZQA was Confident in NZIBT's educational performance, and Confident in its capability in self-assessment.
Scope of this evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduate Diploma in Business (Level 7)• International Student Support and Wellbeing
MoE number:	7933
NZQA reference:	C40935
Dates of EER visit:	21-23 October 2020

¹ The EER was conducted virtually.

² At the time of the EER, one part-time staff was on parental leave.

Summary of results

NZIBT has experienced significant changes since the last EER: a new governance and management team, a new programme, and new delivery sites. Identified weaknesses, particularly in moderation, need to be addressed urgently for NZQA to have confidence in the educational provision of the organisation.

Not Yet Confident in educational performance

NZIBT has reported strong completions data since 2016. There are, however, a number of serious concerns around the organisation's moderation practices. This undermines strong educational performance. See 1.1 below.

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

The identified moderation gaps include weaknesses in assessment design which brings into question whether the level 7 standard is being met. The use of course content of another provider is noted as approved by NZQA. However, the mapping evidence – designed to show that the learning outcomes are of the same breadth and depth as approved for NZIBT – is unsatisfactory and does not contribute to NZQA's confidence that the programme is being delivered as approved.

NZIBT provided some evidence of the positive valued outcomes of the programme for the students and other key stakeholders. Students feel well-supported in their learning.

The new management team has introduced improved systems and processes and better self-assessment practices which will be helpful for the organisation moving forward. Dedicated and well-qualified teaching and student support staff assist management in the implementation of initiatives and in the daily operation of the organisation.

Most of NZIBT's compliance responsibilities are being met. However, there are identified breaches relating to programme approval and delivery site approval. See 1.6 below.

Key evaluation question findings³

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Marginal				
Self-assessment:	Good				
Findings and supporting evidence:	The submitted data from the PTE shows high qualification and programme completion from 2016 to 2019, as follows:				
Year	No. of students	No. of graduated students	Completion rate	Withdrawals or refunds	
2016	11	11	100%	0	
2017	9	8	88.9%	1	
2018	8	7	87.5%	1	
2019	10 ⁴	7 ⁵	70%	0	

NZIBT's moderation results in the last two years have not been satisfactory. Issues were identified that need to be addressed by the PTE, including, but not limited to, the following: over-generous marking or assessor decisions, English-language proficiency issues, insufficient feedback to students, and several moderation samples not meeting a standard to justify the marks awarded at level 7. In addition, there were identified issues with the design and presentation of assessment tasks, which did not provide assurance that the outcome had been achieved. There were also identified concerns with marking guides, and the lack thereof.

As such, the moderation results do not provide confidence in the educational achievement of the institute. It is noted that NZIBT is liaising with NZQA on how to better address the

³ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

⁴ The graduate diploma was initially offered at the Christchurch campus, and offered in the Auckland campus in 2019. Only two of the 10 students in 2019 attended the Auckland campus. None have completed the programme as of this writing.

⁵ Two of the 10 students started in November 2019 and are still enrolled in the programme as of this writing; one student re-enrolled in 2020 and is on track to complete.

	<p>identified gaps.</p> <p>In terms of skills, students reported that during their programme they acquire useful knowledge and skills such as problem-solving, decision-making, research, communication and writing skills, and confidence building.</p> <p>NZIBT monitors enrolment and achievement data on a regular basis and has a system for monitoring progress that is currently appropriate and effective for the size of the student population.</p>
Conclusion:	The various concerns identified in the moderation results undermine the strong educational performance presented by the organisation.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NZIBT reported that five of the 33 graduate diploma graduates⁶ went on to higher studies, and 24 were employed – two overseas and the rest in New Zealand. While the collected data includes job titles, there is no evidence of sufficient analysis to ascertain the relevance of the graduates' employment to their qualification. It is therefore unclear whether the employment pathway of the qualification is met.</p> <p>NZIBT conducted individual interviews with some graduates. However, there is no clear evidence of a structured data collection of valued outcomes among graduates and other key stakeholders. There is no evidence, for instance, of analysis of feedback from employers about the work-readiness of graduates. There is individual graduate feedback on the skills and competencies being applied in the workplace, but it is unclear how many of the graduates were interviewed. The presented data does not provide a comprehensive picture that allows for meaningful analysis of valued outcomes.</p>
Conclusion:	There is positive, albeit limited, evidence that the programme

⁶ Thirty-three have graduated from the graduate diploma programme since it was first delivered in 2016.

	provides valued outcomes for students and other key stakeholders. The PTE needs to further develop its self-assessment practices to have a more comprehensive understanding of this area.
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1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>NZIBT's academic advisory group, with an independent chair and a student representative, serves as an internal quality check on the programme. A local advisory committee in each campus also provides input to ensure that the programme matches stakeholder needs. Learning activities are well-structured and allow for a good level of student engagement, e.g. business case research and field visits. The recently added internship component provides opportunities for students to be exposed to real-life learning.⁷</p> <p>The delivery of the graduate diploma programme is supported by iQualify⁸, which includes course content, assessment activities and supplementary learning materials, and is engaging and effective for students' learning. NZQA is concerned, however, that with the use of the iQualify course content there is insufficient evidence that the NZIBT programme is delivered as approved, particularly in relation to meeting its component learning outcomes. See 1.6 below.</p> <p>There have been identified gaps in moderation (as discussed in 1.1. above), including, among others, over-generous marking and the level 7 standard not being met, and issues with design and presentation of assessment tasks which did not provide a basis for judging whether the outcome has been achieved. NZIBT is currently working with NZQA to address the identified issues.</p> <p>Pre-assessment moderation is currently completed internally.</p>

⁷ To date, only one student has opted to undertake the internship.

⁸ iQualify, which NZIBT has contractual agreement to use, is an online delivery platform owned by another tertiary education organisation.

	<p>NZIBT needs to consider engaging an external moderator or liaising with another provider to contribute to the robustness of the process. It is noted that an agreement with another tertiary education organisation – which is planned to be in place soon – only covers post-assessment moderation.</p> <p>The tutors' monthly reflections include student feedback on their overall learning experiences, and feeds into the annual programme review. However, the findings in the moderation reports confirm that NZIBT's self-assessment practices need to be improved.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>The identified moderation issues, as well as the concerns around the programme not being delivered as approved, and the standard of the learning outcomes not being met, contribute heavily to the ratings in this key evaluation question.</p>

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>There is evidence that NZIBT provides support which makes students more engaged and involved in their learning. The senior marketing officer ensures that accurate and updated information is provided to learners through the agents, marketing materials and other publicly available information. The selection process has been improved recently to ensure that prospective students are carefully selected, their English language proficiency is suitable for level 7, and that they are the right fit for the programme by understanding their learning goals.</p> <p>The orientation attended by students at the start of the programme is helpful in ensuring that the rules and policies of the PTE are well-understood by the students. The lecturers and staff are also mindful of reminding students of relevant policies, such as the institute's policy on plagiarism and assessment resits.</p> <p>Students regard both lecturers and support staff as approachable and friendly, describing them as supportive in both their academic and non-academic concerns. Students reported that they are well-supported in the online delivery environment which began during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown. Regular</p>

	<p>communication between students and NZIBT staff is effective in engaging students and making them feel valued and supported. However, the prolonged online delivery following the lockdown⁹ is a concern to NZQA. The programme is designed for face-to-face delivery. Its stated distinguishing point of delivery in a shared commercial hub¹⁰ was the opportunity to network with business professionals and entrepreneurs on site. The extended online delivery means learners are not in their appropriate learning environment.</p> <p>The iQualify platform is a helpful tool for staff to gauge student involvement in their learning – one of its features shows students' log-in times and progress in their learning activities. Regular monitoring of student progress, with the help of the said tool, allows staff to provide early intervention when needed. Student feedback is actively sought, and upon identifying that surveys are not as effective in obtaining detailed feedback, a one-on-one session was initiated to ensure that the student support officer had a good understanding of any student concerns.</p>
Conclusion:	Students are engaged in their learning and are well-supported both academically and in other aspects of their student lives. Self-assessment practices in this area are generally strong and effective.

⁹ During the Covid-19 lockdown, NZQA allowed tertiary education organisations to temporarily provide online delivery, with the expectation that normal delivery would resume once the lockdown was lifted.

¹⁰ The PTE's delivery site in Christchurch is a shared office space, with various small businesses and individual entrepreneurs/contractors on site.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>There is evidence of improved systems and processes, including better self-assessment practices, put in place by the new management of NZIBT. The small team works well together in the daily operation of the institute, with a well-structured reporting system from staff to the board. The two teaching staff¹¹ have doctorates in business, with adult teaching qualifications and relevant experience. They are research-active, with publications and/or conference presentations, and their continuous professional development is supported by the PTE.</p> <p>The fact that there are only two teaching staff¹² covering the whole programme does not provide assurance that at all times, the said staff members have expertise in the specific subject area of the component they are teaching. The size of the teaching staff needs to be revisited as the PTE grows its student population and programme offerings as planned. Increasing the pool of well-qualified lecturers should make teaching and learning, and moderation activities, more robust.</p> <p>The institute's financial viability is a concern for NZQA. NZIBT has been operating at an ongoing loss for a couple of years. The 2020 global pandemic – which closed international borders, i.e. international students were not allowed entry into the country – did not help improve NZIBT's financial situation. NZQA notes that one of the directors has made a commitment to continue their personal financial support to NZIBT until they see positive gain.</p> <p>The business plan presented to the EER team has high aspirations, with plans of gaining accreditation to deliver Bachelor's and postgraduate, degree-level programmes and projecting high international enrolment numbers. These will be crucial to ensuring the organisation's financial viability. It is unclear, however, how the projected enrolments for the next few</p>

¹¹ There were only two teaching staff at the time of EER. A number of teaching staff were made redundant in the first half of 2020 as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

¹² A third teaching staff was on parental leave at the time of the EER.

	years will be achieved, given the PTE's historically low enrolment numbers.
Conclusion:	The implementation of a new management structure and key staff changes in 2020 brought about improved systems and some effective self-assessment practices. However, it is too early to fully ascertain the effectiveness of some of the changes made.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The new management ensures there are sufficient checks and oversight of the organisation's compliance accountabilities. Regular catch-ups among staff are guided by a compliance calendar to better ensure regulatory requirements are met in a timely manner. NZQA annual attestations are submitted on time.</p> <p>Responsibilities under the Code of Practice¹³ are satisfactorily met, in particular monitoring of agents, accurate information provided to prospective and current students, entry requirements, visa and insurance requirements, 24/7 contact person, and general pastoral care of students. However, the prolonged online delivery following the Covid-19 lockdown is a potential breach of student visa conditions, which require students to attend face-to-face delivery. There is a clear communique from NZQA that tertiary education organisations were expected to go back to their normal delivery once the lockdown was lifted. There is no clear evidence that Immigration New Zealand has agreed for NZIBT to extend online delivery.</p> <p>Evidence provided with regard to the graduate diploma programme does not give assurance to NZQA that it is being delivered as approved. It is noted that the licensed use of iQualify is part of the approval. However, NZQA is not satisfied that the content is being delivered and assessed with the critical approach inherent in the approved NZIBT component learning outcomes. There is no satisfactory evidence that Rule 11.1(a) of</p>

¹³ The Education (Pastoral Care of international Students) Code of Practice 2016

	<p>NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018 is being met by the organisation.</p> <p>The delivery site in Christchurch, approved in 2019, was a designated area within a shared office hub. This was not the same area occupied by NZIBT during the monitoring visit in October 2020 – NZIBT moved to another, adjacent area not specifically approved by NZQA. This was considered a breach of Rule 5.1.1(d)(i) of the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018. However, at the time of finalising the EER report, NZQA had become aware that the Christchurch site is no longer being used, and that all students are now at the Auckland site. It is unclear whether the tutors are all located in Auckland and working on campus, particularly those who used to work at the Christchurch campus.</p>
Conclusion:	Some of the PTE's key compliance responsibilities are being met. However, there are identified breaches in the areas of programme approval and approval of a delivery site.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Graduate Diploma in Business (Level 7)

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Conclusion:	The ratings for this focus area are greatly influenced by the identified gaps and weaknesses in programme delivery and assessment and moderation.

2.2 Focus area: International Student Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Conclusion:	International students are well-supported in their learning and in other areas of their lives in New Zealand. NZIBT is generally compliant with the Code of Practice.

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 English Express (NZ) Limited, trading as NZ Institute of Business & Technology:

- Further develop its data-gathering and analysis of graduate destinations and valued outcomes in order to have a more comprehensive evidence base upon which to draw/reach reliable conclusions
- Consider engaging an external moderator, or liaising with another provider, in pre-assessment moderation to ensure robustness of the moderation system
- Review its business plan to better ensure feasibility, i.e. that projected data has a sound basis
- Return to face-to-face delivery as a matter of urgency, to ensure that students are meeting the requirements of their visa and that they are learning in the appropriate and approved learning context.
- Ensure that any changes in delivery sites are approved by NZQA.

Requirements

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

NZQA requires English Express (NZ) Limited, trading as NZ Institute of Business & Technology, to review its programme delivery and assessment to ensure that NZQA approval is met, as per Rule 11.1(a) of NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018

Appendix

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 fraud¹⁴*
- *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.*

¹⁴ 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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