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# External Evaluation and Review Report

Auckland English Academy (1988)  
Limited

Date of report: 20 September 2022

# About Auckland English Academy (1988) Limited

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*Auckland English Academy (AEA) offers communication English programmes for international students who want to improve their English, or to prepare for external examination and certification. Study is tailored to the individual needs of students.*

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Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Level 1-3, ICL Education Centre, 10-14 Lorne Street, Auckland Central
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: nil International: 70
Number of staff:	27 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	See <a href="#">Auckland English Academy</a> on the NZQA website.  There have been a number of significant changes at AEA since the previous evaluation in 2018, many of them brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on student numbers, and the corresponding reduction in staff numbers. Repeated lockdown events led to the introduction of online teaching, initially as a temporary response, but since then leading to the development of hybrid teaching. Hybrid delivery enables some students to study in class and others to study remotely as part of the same class.
Last EER outcome:	The previous external evaluation and review (EER) of AEA, held in March 2018, resulted in summative judgements of Highly Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	The current EER looked at the following focus areas:

- English for Speakers of Other Languages (Training Scheme) – this currently constitutes AEA’s entire delivery.
- International Students: Support and Wellbeing

MoE number: 7940  
NZQA reference: C47709  
Dates of EER visit: 19-21 July 2022<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> AEA operates in partnership with Bridge International College and ICL Graduate Business School. The three PTEs share premises, student support, marketing and corporate services; and are collectively owned and governed by the ICL Group. The EER of all three organisations took place simultaneously over a two-week period as most of the services and performance are common across the three PTEs.

# Summary of results

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*There is clear and comprehensive evidence that AEA is providing quality education and support leading to high levels of satisfaction and positive outcomes for its students and graduates.*

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## **Highly Confident in educational performance**

- AEA has strong course completions and sound rates of progression, along with high student satisfaction with their education. Students are achieving their academic and personal goals.
- AEA is effectively using its expertise to develop, deliver and continuously improve programmes that closely meet individual and stakeholder needs.
- Students are engaged in their learning and are experiencing a supportive and caring learning environment.

## **Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment**

- Courses are taught by experienced, qualified staff who use their qualifications and experience to ensure that the education delivery is engaging and relevant to students' aspirations.
- The organisation is well managed and has a clear philosophy and values which are reflected throughout its operation. The learning activities are well resourced and AEA uses its resources effectively. Important compliance accountabilities are being managed effectively. The contributing processes that underpin AEA's high performance are well established and have been refined over time.
- Records and discussions indicate that self-assessment is well embedded and is comprehensive, authentic and transparent. NZQA is highly confident that AEA will continue to use its self-assessment findings insightfully to maintain high performance.

# Key evaluation question findings<sup>2</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students at AEA are completing and progressing in their courses at a consistently high rate. They acquire useful skills and knowledge and develop their cognitive abilities through the successful completion of English language study and IELTS<sup>3</sup> preparation courses. This enables them to meet their study goals – whether they be general language improvement for social interaction or personal satisfaction, work-related communication, or further study upon successfully reaching a target IELTS score.</p> <p>The PTE was able to provide a comprehensive overview of student progression over time, demonstrating that the students are progressing through levels at a satisfactory rate. Progression is contingent on six-weekly summative test scores, as well as formative weekly progress tests and portfolio tasks, and the professional judgment of the class teachers. In some cases, the students’ input is also considered where this does not undermine the fairness of the process or undermine teachers’ professional judgements. Notwithstanding variation level-to-level, and across review periods (particularly COVID-affected 2020-21), AEA Communication English students maintain a median rate of progress/achievement of 11.93 weeks per level (refer Appendix 1).</p> <p>Staff at AEA demonstrate a good understanding of, and commitment to, the factors that lead to student achievement, and they regularly analyse, discuss and implement ideas for improving achievement. The organisation has weekly staff meetings where ideas for improving course delivery and student achievement are discussed and agreed.</p>
Conclusion:	Students are retained in study and show strong progress in using English language and meeting their personal goals.

<sup>2</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation’s activities.

<sup>3</sup> International English Language Testing System

	Systems for thoroughly understanding and using achievement data to bring about improvements are well embedded.
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## 1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Good</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>English language students benefit from their time at AEA. Students' goals and motivation are identified when they start and regularly assessed by staff to see if those goals are being met. For instance, most students enrol to improve their speaking and listening skills. At fortnightly one-on-one discussions with their teachers, students are encouraged to reflect on their goals and staff help them to identify any barriers to achieving them.</p> <p>Through exit interviews, staff know the immediate destination of every graduate, and graduates are encouraged to keep in touch with the organisation via email and social media. AEA could strengthen its approach by collating and better understanding the information provided through social media.</p> <p>Although AEA does not formally measure the long-term benefits its courses provide to all of its graduates, the organisation has good anecdotal information about many of their graduates and the positive way in which the programmes have contributed to their lives.</p>
Conclusion:	Evidence indicates that English language students at AEA are gaining good value from their study by achieving their academic and personal goals.

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>AEA's efforts to meet the personal and academic goals of their students is a compelling feature of the organisation. The PTE is well attuned to the needs of students through years of experience in the same market, and through constantly seeking feedback from students. It then uses the information gained to inform improvements to the design and delivery of programmes. AEA has maximised the New Zealand content and context in their programme design and delivery.</p> <p>Teachers identify the aspirations and interests of their students and, where possible, structure their teaching to align with those aspirations. This ensures that students' learning needs are being well met. There was evidence of the teachers regularly engaging in meaningful discussion about teaching practice and student progress. Teaching staff spoke about how they share ideas, experiences and knowledge through their daily interactions, staff meetings and professional development.</p> <p>Students regularly complete feedback surveys and engage in structured focus groups, to provide feedback on the learning methods, course delivery and learning environment. The results of this feedback are collated, analysed and used effectively to inform improvements to course delivery. Every classroom has a QR code posted on the wall which takes students to an online facility to provide immediate feedback, positive or negative, on their experience. Regular staff professional development sessions often centre around feedback from students.</p> <p>All programmes are reviewed every 16 weeks. Well-organised and managed external and internal moderation verifies the validity and reliability of assessments at AEA. All assessments are moderated by relevant academic staff from their external moderation partners to ensure that the academic performance of AEA students is at an appropriate level and context.</p>
Conclusion:	AEA's regular and purposeful interaction with its students and stakeholders, ensuring that programmes and activities meet their existing and emerging needs, is a strong feature of the organisation.

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students at AEA receive active, integrated and ongoing social and academic support from staff at all levels of the organisation. There was a clear sense of shared accountability across all staff for the support of students through complementary initiatives and excellent responsiveness to the multiple needs of students, especially during the pandemic lockdowns.</p> <p>The learning environment at AEA is supportive, providing an excellent foundation for enhanced success. Student voice is sought and engaged with by staff. Students have the opportunity to provide feedback in their first language if they prefer.</p> <p>Intending students are well guided into courses appropriate to their aspirations and capabilities. A comprehensive orientation programme is available to them in their first week of study. Teachers described numerous activities and initiatives to motivate, engage and encourage students to get the full benefit from their time at AEA. Current small class sizes ensure that teachers can give students individual attention as required.</p> <p>Attendance expectations are effectively communicated to the students and are monitored closely, with timely and appropriate follow-up as required. The system, while strictly enforced, is supportive and seeks to identify and address the reasons why students may not be attending classes.</p> <p>The organisation has effective processes to review how well it meets the spirit and intent of the Code of Practice.<sup>4</sup> AEA submitted an attestation to NZQA that they had completed a self-review of their implementation of the Code, as it was a requirement for all PTEs by 1 March 2021. Through the self-review they identified areas for further development and continue to address these. A recent innovation has been to use the Code's own information videos as a teaching resource – students are asked to paraphrase excerpts from the video.</p>

<sup>4</sup> [The Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners\) Code of Practice 2021](#)



	This, and other evidence sighted, provides assurance that international students are well supported.
Conclusion:	AEA has structured, client-friendly systems for the academic and pastoral care of its students. The organisation is providing a safe and supportive learning environment for its students.

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>AEA's organisational strategy is formally documented, and management and staff have a common understanding of the PTE's vision and direction. Governance structures are robust and regularly reviewed.</p> <p>AEA employs qualified and experienced staff, whom it manages effectively and actively develops. The value that AEA management puts on the experience and know-how of their teaching team is clearly apparent and makes a positive difference to educational quality. The performance of the teaching staff is formally reviewed annually, but this does not preclude regular and ongoing feedback of a formative nature.</p> <p>The organisation is well equipped with physical and learning resources for the number of students that it has, and is ideally located in the Auckland CBD. There are systems in place to monitor resourcing so that there are always sufficient resources to meet the learning needs of the students. AEA has well-established administration and management systems and procedures in place, with ethical practices.</p> <p>The organisation encourages reflection on its role and how to continue to make ongoing and continuous improvements to how it meets the needs of students and other stakeholders. Self-assessment is being well led by management and is comprehensively understood and adopted throughout the organisation.</p>
Conclusion:	AEA has strong leadership and a clear vision and understanding of its business. Monitoring of performance within AEA is regular, transparent and robust, resulting in highly effective support for educational achievement.

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance is overseen by the ICL Group chief executive who ensures all managers and their staff are aware of their compliance obligations and that there are policies and procedures that comply with the requirements of NZQA, Immigration New Zealand and English New Zealand, as well as relevant legislation such as that relating to visas, employment and health and safety. This is also monitored at board level and by the (ICL Group) academic board, which oversees academic quality.</p> <p>Indications of effective compliance management include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NZQA attestations and returns have been submitted within required timeframes. There is no recent 'risk' history with NZQA.</li> <li>• Policies are in place to manage requirements for fees protection (e.g. Public Trust, withdrawal and refund policies, etc) and visas (e.g. attendance requirements).</li> <li>• The courses at AEA are being delivered consistent with their NZQA-approved training schemes.</li> <li>• AEA was deemed to be fully compliant in the 2022 English New Zealand audit.</li> <li>• AEA is meeting its obligations with respect to the Code of Practice.</li> </ul>
Conclusion:	AEA has a clear understanding of its compliance accountabilities and manages these proactively and effectively to ensure obligations are met.

# Focus areas

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

## 2.1 Focus area: English for Speakers of Other Languages

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>

## 2.2 Focus area: International Students: Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The goals of the international students are well understood, and they are well supported by management, teachers and international student support staff to achieve their goals. Staff clearly understand their responsibility for the progress and welfare of the international students.</p> <p>Students interviewed described the range of pastoral care services and interventions, confirming how they have been supported.</p> <p>AEA leadership is effective in managing areas of compliance, including Code of Practice obligations and immigration requirements.</p>
Conclusion:	International students are well supported to achieve their goals, both academic and personal, and for studying and living in New Zealand.

## 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.*

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

## Requirements

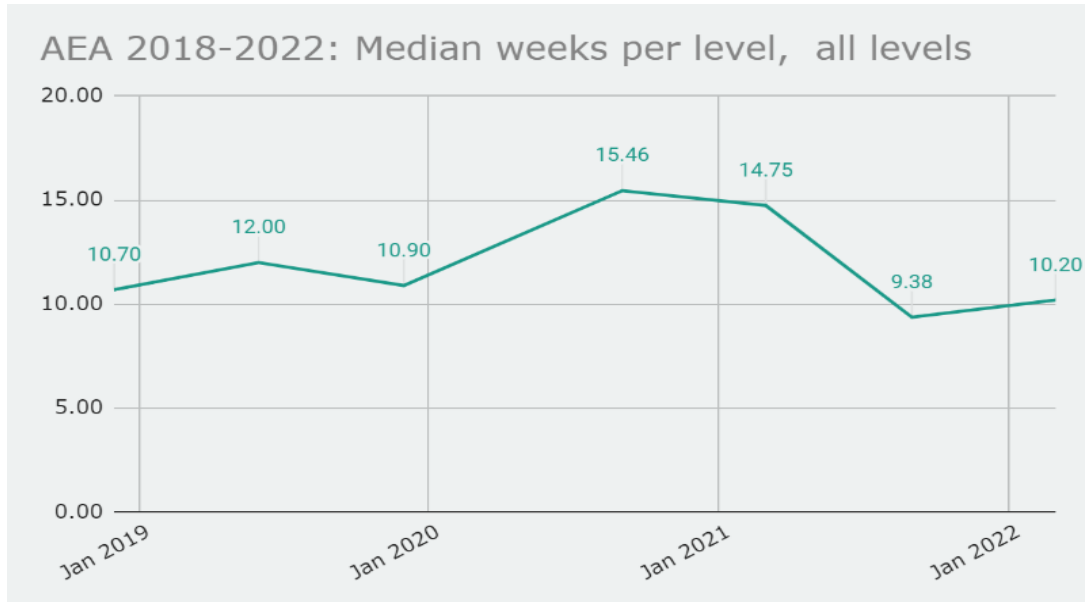
*Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.*

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

# Appendix 1

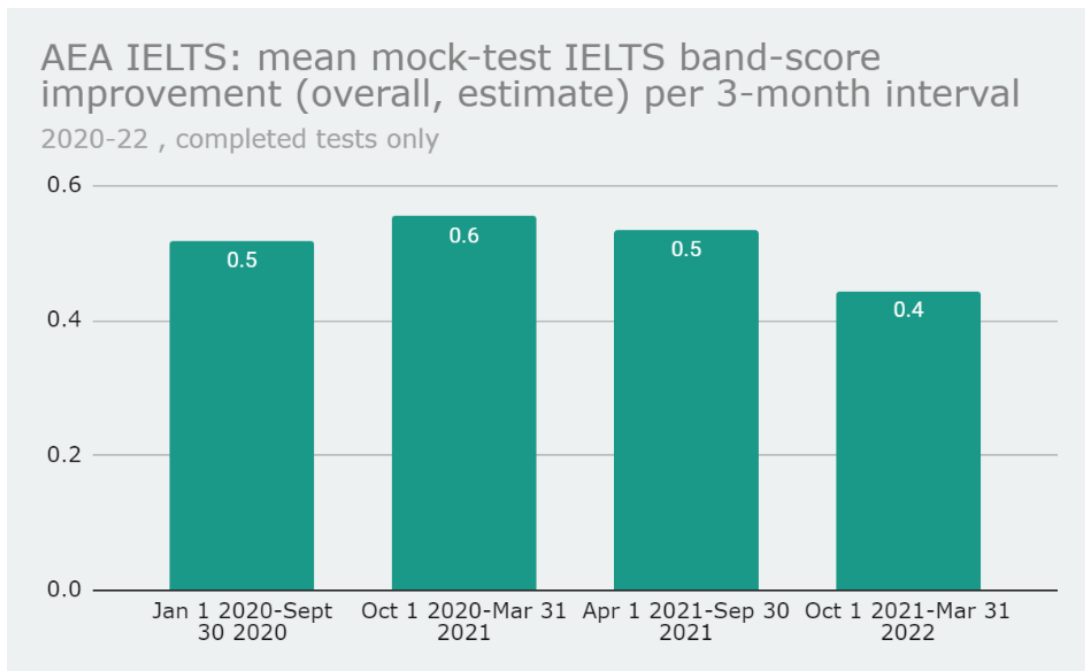
**Table 1. Median weeks per level**

Source: Auckland English Academy



**Table 2. IELTS band score improvement**

Source: Auckland English Academy



# 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 fraud<sup>5</sup>
- 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.

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<sup>5</sup> 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](http://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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