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Report of External Evaluation and Review

New Zealand Academic and Learning
Institute

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 20 July 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:	New Zealand Academic and Learning Institute (NZALI)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	24 December 2014
Location:	12 Huron Street, Takapuna, Auckland
Delivery sites:	As above
Courses currently delivered:	Diploma in Business Management with Specialisations in Health Services and Financial Planning (Level 7)
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	International: 25 (22 Indian and three Filipino)
Number of staff:	Four full-time equivalents (full-time academic manager; two lecturers and four part-time tutors)
Scope of active accreditation:	Diploma in Business Management with Specialisations in Health Services and Financial Planning (Level 7) Unit standards: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=802189001
Distinctive characteristics:	The diploma is offered to international students with an interest in learning business management in a health setting or financial planning, and who want to work in New Zealand. Students have backgrounds ranging from business experience to

nursing or pharmaceutical degrees.

Recent significant changes: NZALI began delivering the diploma in November 2015.

Previous quality assurance history: This is NZALI's first external evaluation and review (EER).

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas selected for the scope of the EER and agreed to by NZALI were:

- Governance, management and strategy (mandatory)
- Diploma in Business Management with Specialisations in Health Services and Financial Planning (Level 7)

The above programme covers all the students enrolled currently.

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.

The lead evaluator met with the two directors prior to the EER visit to identify the focus areas and discuss the EER process.

The on-site visit took place over two days at the head office in Takapuna in Auckland. The EER team of two evaluators interviewed both directors who share the management roles. One director is responsible for managing the finances, including agent contracts and international students' fees, while the other director is the general manager and academic manager. The EER team also held conversations with one of the two lecturers, all three tutors, the student counsellor, a careers counsellor and all students currently enrolled. Following the visit, the lead evaluator spoke with a member of the advisory board.

The EER team also reviewed relevant documentation to support evaluative conversations, including the organisation's self-assessment summary and review plan, the NZALI strategic plan, staff meeting minutes, teaching professional development plans, moderation policies and procedures, students' programme handbook, and students' feedback on the teaching.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **New Zealand Academic and Learning Institute (NZALI)**.

The first cohort of students were only enrolled in the year-long diploma programme in November 2015, so will not graduate until the end of 2016. However, the value of the programme is evident by the strong endorsement from health practitioners for a qualification that helps health sector managers to gain a strategic understanding of business, which has been identified as a need by the sector. The national qualification for authorised financial advisors is embedded in the financial specialisation, and students enrolled in that option will be able to apply for registration as an authorised financial advisor after graduation.

Assessment is the key indicator of student success, and improvements to students' learning are closely monitored by staff. Teaching and support is tailored to each student. Initial results show that students' performance has already improved (for the programme's second paper) as a result of aligning lectures with tutorials and more one-to-one tuition.

International student support is holistic, and NZALI ensures that students receive the best support with a thorough assessment of their needs and suitability to study prior to enrolment. NZALI provides individual career guidance to help learners gain a resident visa through free student counselling sessions, weekly meetings with the academic manager, and close supervision of homestay arrangements throughout their study to follow progress towards their career goals. NZALI has been set up with very clear academic goals and policies and procedures to guide staff. There is a clear distinction between management of the business and the academic operations to ensure that all aspects of the organisation are well managed. Staff meet regularly to review progress. These activities provide assurance that the organisation is capable of meeting its goal of providing quality training to meet the needs of industry.

Although early indicators show NZALI has had success with improvements to students learning as a result of self-assessment activities, there have been no graduates since NZALI began delivering the year-long programme at the end of 2015 to demonstrate the overall achievement and value of outcomes for students. This means that evidence of outcomes is not sufficient to justify a rating of highly confident. The institute has an opportunity to request a subsequent EER to demonstrate that self-assessment activities are fit for purpose and contributing to valued outcomes.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **New Zealand Academic and Learning Institute**.

NZALI has a good understanding of the academic process for qualification development. The PTE ascertained the need for managers working in the health sector to have better skills and understanding of business. NZALI established an advisory group consisting of a district health board manager, a residential care provider, a Pasifika health worker, an authorised financial advisor, and an educational expert to develop the niche qualification. The organisation has a memorandum of understanding with The Skills Organisation, which is the industry training organisation responsible for training in the financial advisor sector, to embed the financial planning qualification into the programme and assessment arrangements.

The organisation has good processes to review the effectiveness of teaching and to determine whether the programme meets the needs of students. Academic staff have reviewed the programme and made appropriate changes as a result of feedback from the students, as well as advice from the advisory board. Already within the first five months of delivery, the organisation has made changes to how it structures tutorials to better align teaching and learning activities, which has led to an improvement in student assessment submissions.

While internal moderation processes check that the assessments are fair and valid, the organisation will have a better understanding of the quality of assessment once external moderation starts when the first cohort of students have completed their qualification. To date, only two papers have been assessed and both have been internally moderated by staff with the relevant skills.

NZALI has good systems in place, such as professional development plans, a formal programme review process, documented and informal meetings to review students' needs and progress, and regular director meetings. These systems help to identify issues early on and demonstrate a continuous improvement approach to ensuring the PTE delivers a quality programme.

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**.

The first cohort of students are performing well. At the time of the EER, the students had been assessed on only two papers. Initial assessment results for the first paper were low, with only four of the 18 students passing on their first attempt. This provided a positive experience for the organisation as it enabled them to identify areas for improvement and led to the improvement of teaching of academic writing skills such as APA referencing, writing bibliographies, and avoiding plagiarism. The additional academic tutorials have been effective. All the students who had not yet achieved on their first attempt achieved on their second attempt. The subsequent paper had 25 students enrolled and only five were not yet competent on their first attempt. All but one subsequently achieved on resubmission, and the student who did not yet achieve is receiving one-to-one, multi-faceted support from the academic counsellor.

Tutors said the biggest change they have observed is the improvement in the students' confidence to write academically at level 7. Overall, the organisation has systems in place to identify issues, understand what needs to change, and to respond appropriately.

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**.

Students enrol with NZALI to achieve a qualification and work in New Zealand with the goal of gaining residency. The value of the qualification is yet to be translated into employment outcomes or work visas, but there is evidence that the health sector values the students' knowledge, with all health management students currently working part-time at health care providers. Feedback from this sector showed high demand for NZALI students for work experience. NZALI would like to see domestic students enrol in its programme if it can gain approved funding from the Tertiary Education Commission. While the financial planning specialisation work experience is

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

yet to be implemented, some students have found part-time jobs in banking call centres.

NZALI places great importance on finding relevant work experience that is aligned with the level of study and to the students' career goals. This focus is the result of a good understanding of the sector's needs through close working relationships with health sector employers. This helps to identify job opportunities and match these to students' aims. The careers counsellor works with students following enrolment to develop an individual plan towards study and career goals, including mapping of how to obtain part-time work in their chosen sector and steps to becoming registered in their industry of choice.

NZALI demonstrated that it has good systems of ongoing analysis to understand the value of the outcomes. This is supported by the feedback from students who said that, so far, the course had met their expectations and was aligned with their career aims.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

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

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

The organisation undertook extensive consultation and engaged with the primary stakeholders to develop a programme that matches well the needs of stakeholders. Ongoing sector consultation and the use of both formal and informal review processes to assess student needs are effective in determining whether the programme activities are meeting the needs of all stakeholders.

The business qualification with two separate specialised strands was developed at level 7 to cater to the needs of students at nursing manager level to gain applied understanding of strategic business management practices in the health sector, or for people to become authorised financial advisors. The academic manager developed a comprehensive understanding of health sector skills needs from consultation with health sector employers. The academic manager also developed a memorandum of understanding with The Skills Organisation to embed the financial planning unit standards in its financial specialisation strand of the qualification. The memorandum enables NZALI to deliver the training for these unit standards, and the students sit exams for the standards. The exams are managed by The Skills Organisation.

An advisory board was established consisting of representatives from the community, a district health board, a large residential care provider, the finance sector, and an educational expert to provide input into the programme content and to ensure activities were developed to meet the needs of the sector and were at the appropriate level. This group meets annually to review student feedback and identify changes required. Examples of changes in response to feedback are the reorganising of the

assessment timetables and providing clear subject outcomes at the beginning of lectures.

The programme is divided into modules, with five core competencies and specialist strands. Learning activities are specifically planned to cater to the students' learning needs, with group activities and individual assignments to gain applied knowledge. Lecturers and tutors ensure that the content of each paper is supported by appropriate tutorial activities, and key learning concepts are mapped for the students to reinforce the learning

The organisation has written to the Nursing Council of New Zealand for information on how their students can apply for registration as a nurse, and will review the course to ensure that the students' individual career plans include all actions necessary to assist them to set themselves up to achieve registration post-graduation. Currently, some students studying the health care specialisation strand are being supported to achieve an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) score of 7.0 in all bands, to assist them towards this goal. The aim is to ensure that all students taking the health sector or the financial advisor strand will be able to apply for registration in their field once they have graduated from the diploma.

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**.

Students are highly satisfied with the teaching at NZALI, with 100 per cent of students rating the teaching highly. Lecturers have the experience and qualifications in business management to teach the subjects. The lectures are delivered by two lecturers with the relevant qualifications and expertise. The lecturers are supported by well-qualified tutors who help facilitate the learning with relevant case studies and academic writing support. NZALI demonstrated its commitment to providing quality teaching with a documented professional development plan for staff to attend conferences, upskill their teaching credentials, and carry out research.

A strength of the organisation is the lecturer and tutor relationship which enables clear alignment of the tutorial topics to the lectures. Students who need additional support schedule one-to-one time with a tutor to help understand the topics. The organisation is still in the early stages of its programme delivery and is continuously reviewing how it can improve the teaching, using student feedback from tutorials as well as lectures. There have been improvements in the way programme objectives are aligned, and better support is provided for students in academic writing. The changes have led to improved academic writing skills by students, demonstrated by fewer resubmissions and better assessment results.

Students have an opportunity to prepare for assessments with ongoing formative assessments and a mock test. The final assessment is carried out at the end of the module, and students have two resubmission opportunities, with most students

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achieving on their first assessment as a result of the changes made and the teaching support provided.

The moderation schedule is used to plan moderation activities and includes provision for complying with external moderation requirements. Staff are qualified and carry out moderation of all assessment materials, including assessment tasks, assessment guides and model answers. Ten per cent of assessed work is moderated, or 100 per cent for new lecturers, to ensure that the outcomes are fair and consistent. The moderation feedback is useful, with lecturers adapting their materials to enhance students' understanding. However, external moderation has yet to be conducted to confirm that assessment is at the national standard.

Overall, NZALI has systems to review the range of teaching activities, and course reviews are conducted regularly to help build teaching capability and ensure teaching effectiveness. The evidence shows a reflective culture in teaching where feedback is used to adapt teaching practices, and information on what works well is shared. The teaching effectiveness will be further verified once external moderation has been carried out and changes made to the teaching activities, such as when the alignment of lectures and tutorials has been embedded, leading to greater consistency in results.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Learner support begins from the first enquiry and continues throughout the programme. Students' IELTS and academic records are checked to ensure they are valid and at the appropriate level. Students must also have a qualification at degree level or relevant experience to be able to enrol in the level 7 diploma.

The organisation is providing comprehensive support with career planning, counselling, tutorials and appropriately managed homestay activities.

Homestays are tightly monitored by NZALI, even though students must be over 18 years of age to enrol. NZALI does not use backpacker accommodation but has a contract with a homestay company which deals with families that accommodate international students in their homes. The students are met at the airport and taken to their homestay. All students stay with their homestay for about two weeks before they move into independent accommodation, often sharing with their fellow classmates.

Students are provided with a career counselling session early in their enrolment. The career planning consultant documents the individual goals for each student then develops an individualised plan according to individual goals, with a complete pathway to gain residency in New Zealand. This covers learning needs at enrolment, finding part-time work, gaining the qualification, and meeting authorised financial advisor or nursing registration requirements to attain a work visa. This is a good way

to help students acclimatise, with many finding work in the sector soon after they arrive.

Attendance is monitored daily by lecturers and the tutor, with absences followed up immediately. If the student's attendance falls below 95 per cent, the academic manager meets with the student to determine how they can improve.

NZALI has comprehensive wraparound support for students, with a free student counsellor on call to help with any issues, along with staff who students can talk to in their own language, as well as one-to-one tutoring. This enables any concerns to be addressed. Evidence from staff conversations as well as meeting minutes shows the level of care and support is suitable to enable students to achieve their goals.

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

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

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

The organisation has a clear strategy and processes to achieve its goals. Staff work together to provide the students with the support they require to achieve their goals. This is aligned with the organisation's mission to provide quality programmes to meet industry needs.

The PTE has a flat structure, with the directors undertaking operational management roles as well as making decisions about the organisation's direction. This enables staff to network and communicate easily with one another. One director is an authorised financial advisor and applies this knowledge to the strategic planning of the organisation and managing the finances. The chief executive manages the international agent contracts and monitors their performance to identify agents that comply with their requirements to provide accurate course information, recruit suitable students, and manage student fees in accordance with the student fee protection rules. The other director has extensive experience in international student support and programme management within the university, polytechnic and PTE sectors, which she applies in her role as academic manager. The academic manager meets weekly with students to discuss their academic progress and identify any needs. The academic manager also holds a weekly assembly to host guest speakers and provide updates to staff and students on academic matters.

Documents provided by the organisation show that processes are clearly stated and staff are following them, providing evidence that confirms the activities are relevant and meaningful for staff to perform their roles. The advisory board minutes also demonstrate that good educational processes are in place and feedback is responded to.

Overall, NZALI has established a solid foundation on which to build the organisation's educational programme, with clear communication and open, transparent processes.

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Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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

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

2.2 Focus area: Diploma in Business Management with Specialisations in Health Services and Financial Planning (Level 7)

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

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

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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