

Report of External Evaluation and Review

International Education Group Ltd
trading as Waikato Institute of
Education

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 22 August 2012

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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:	International Education Group Ltd trading as Waikato Institute of Education (WIE)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	48 Ward Street, Hamilton
First registered:	10 February 2003
Courses currently delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General English (Level 4)• IELTS Preparation (Level 3)• English Study for Nursing Registration
Code of Practice signatory?	Yes. Approved for students aged 14-17 years and for those aged 18 years and older.
Number of students:	Domestic: 35 students of whom 95 per cent are Asian International: 42 students
Number of staff:	12 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General English• IELTS Preparation
Distinctive characteristics:	WIE is one of the few organisations in New Zealand to receive Student Achievement Component (SAC) funding for General English programmes.
Recent significant changes:	The organisation has recently moved premises.
Previous quality assurance	At the previous external evaluation and review

history: (EER) the organisation was given a judgement of Confident in educational performance and a judgement of Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment. Particular issues highlighted were the processes in place to analyse the achievements and outcomes of the students and the communication processes to ensure that feedback was being collected effectively.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope for the EER consisted of the mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management, and strategy

In addition, the following focus areas were selected:

- IELTS (International English Language Testing System) Preparation
- General English

Evaluating these two streams of English is important for understanding the range of programmes offered at WIE. It was expected that the IELTS preparation focus area would have mechanisms for measuring achievement and valued outcomes that are different to those for the General English programme.

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.

Prior to the EER visit, the EER team was supplied with a summary of self-activity, a post-EER improvement plan, and the organisation's business plan.

The evaluation team of two, plus an observer, visited the Hamilton site over two days. While on site the team met with the managing director, marketing manager, office manager, and director of studies. A large number of documents was also reviewed as part of the enquiry, including the Tertiary Education Commission Investment Plan, graduate, agent, and homestay surveys, teacher evaluations, student files, database records, achievement data, and minutes of staff meetings.

Interviews were also conducted with teachers and students, student support staff, and some external stakeholders.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Waikato Institute of Education**.

There is strong evidence to demonstrate that students are improving their English language skills while studying with WIE. In exit interviews conducted with departing students, they testify to being satisfied with their achievements during their time with WIE. Students are confident that their new understanding of English will support them to achieve their future goals.

The organisation has good quality academic processes, including an effective placement test, regular formative and summative assessments, moderation of assessments, and ongoing professional development for a team of well-qualified teachers.

Guidance and support for learners is available and learners noted that any issues they may have are dealt with promptly and effectively. The organisation manages its own homestays and there is regular communication between the homestay coordinator and families to ensure placements are successful.

Communication across the institute has improved and it is clear that there is improved coordination between the academic and administration teams. It is expected that with the new structure and recent appointments, positive developments will continue to ensure a focus on student achievement and positive outcomes.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Waikato Institute of Education**.

The institute uses a number of mechanisms to chart the progress of learners, including an entry assessment and placement test and formative and summative assessments at six-weekly intervals along with an exit test. The six-weekly assessments, benchmarked against an outcomes framework, are useful for monitoring achievement.

Recent initiatives include ensuring there are systems in place to communicate with external stakeholders, including homestay families, agents, and other local education providers. Improvements have also been made to the way feedback is collected from staff and students. These new systems have ensured useful feedback has been gathered, resulting in new developments and improvements to the institute. For example, currently the computer technology available to students is being upgraded. This follows an increase in the number of computers available for teachers.

A new self-assessment strategy is being embedded into the policy frameworks that govern the organisation and continuous reflection is being demanded of all staff. A flatter structure has improved lines of communication and ensured that important knowledge is shared. The evaluation team saw good evidence that better data is being collected and analysed and efforts are being made to use the information to improve organisational performance.

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**.

Students arrive at WIE with a wide range of abilities and goals, and courses are structured to suit their achievement goals. Despite the range of abilities and motivations, a high number of learners are satisfied with their achievement at WIE, as indicated by the exit interviews. Another indicator of good achievement is the fact that in 2011, 90 per cent of those who provided their results to WIE increased their IELTS score in one or more of the bands. Achievement is also indicated by progress monitored through summative assessments at week six and week 12 of the programme, and the evaluation team saw evidence that learners are making steady progress.

Achievement, attendance, and homework completion data is being collected, although the analysis of this data is not yet well developed. The use of placement and exit tests to analyse achievement across the organisation is showing some learner gain, although the current tests must be treated with caution as they only capture a narrow range of skills at one fixed point in time. A more holistic assessment at the end of the programme would give management a more accurate reflection of learner gain.

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 **Adequate**

Exit surveys, agents' surveys, and surveys conducted with graduates testify that students feel they are getting good value and the English skills they are gaining will be of great value to them in their future pursuits. Destination data being collected demonstrates that a significant number of students are moving successfully to further education.

Another indicator of value is that WIE was one of only two providers in the Waikato region to qualify for a Saudi Arabian government scholarship scheme. WIE has

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

networks within Hamilton which indicate that the organisation is valuable for supporting local residents who need to improve their English language skills.

Regular engagement with stakeholders has occurred over a number of years, and the organisation is moving to make these relationships more formal. While some destination data has been collected for a number of years, gathering useful information from graduates and agents and other stakeholders is a recent initiative. With the new self-assessment framework, it is expected that this information will be used for programme planning and development.

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

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

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

WIE works hard to meet the needs of the wide range of learners who come to study with the organisation. These needs can range from students who have very little English who require English to begin to engage in the community, to those with intermediate-level skills who are aiming to study at degree-level where English is the medium of instruction. The courses on offer cater to this range of needs. For example, the organisation includes IELTS preparation, one-to-one instruction, extra intensive tuition, and English conversation classes among its offerings. Feedback from students indicates that they are satisfied with the range and quality of programmes on offer.

The placement test and interview work well and ensure that students arriving at the institute are placed in a class that suits their needs. The teaching programme is guided by an outcomes framework which is used to assess progress. A wide range of resources is available to staff and students to support the learning and teachers use a range of strategies to engage. These varied resources and range of activities ensure that learners are being given every opportunity to improve their English language skills.

WIE supports the Waikato education community by providing English language instruction to those who require extra support while in school, or who need to improve their English before moving to tertiary study or to better integrate into the community. Communication with external stakeholders has been ongoing, both formal and informal. Currently relationships are being formalised and strengthened and communication is becoming more systematic.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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**.

WIE has a small group of well-qualified and experienced staff. The evaluation team saw a range of evidence demonstrating that the students are very enthusiastic about their teachers. With high quality teaching, learners are enabled to achieve their learning goals and make good gains in English.

The director of studies supports the development of new staff and has been instrumental in ensuring a variety of teaching methods and materials are used. Professional development, including peer observation, is ongoing and staff regularly reflect on their work. A number of staff currently studying at postgraduate level are encouraged to share their learning both formally and informally. This ongoing development enhances the high quality teaching.

Formative and summative assessments are used to monitor student learning, and progress is benchmarked against an outcomes framework. Although moderation is occurring, the policies and templates do not fully align with practice. However, the evaluation team was convinced that the moderation practices ensured consistency across the different classes and assessments.

The academic team is capturing important achievement data which it uses to assess students' progress over their course of study. However, this tracking of achievement, attendance, and homework is not integrated with the administration processes for tracking achievement, which makes it more difficult to link achievement with teaching practice.

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**.

The organisation's website has information about the institute's programmes and courses translated into a wide range of languages. New agents are provided with comprehensive information packs and prospective students are mailed information in advance. These processes ensure that students arrive at the institute knowing what to expect.

On arrival, international students are welcomed and given an orientation, which includes information about WIE, banking, and public transport, and also includes a city tour. Student survey responses show that this induction process was very helpful in settling them into their new environment. The institute manages its own homestay arrangements, and most students avail themselves of this accommodation option. The student support team works hard to meet the individual needs of students and to ensure that the students settle with their

homestay families. A survey of homestay families showed that over 90 per cent rated WIE highly on its communication and services.

The organisation has been proactive in responding to matters of welfare and support for students and new initiatives include a table tennis table, institute-wide assemblies, and the upgrading of computers. Students are very clear about what to do if they have a complaint. Communication between the administration and academic staff has improved considerably, and this facilitates effective student guidance and support.

The student support staff take seriously their responsibilities for complying with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students, as demonstrated by ongoing professional development for staff and regular reviews of policies and procedures.

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

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

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

WIE has a new management structure which has allowed greater communication between the administration and marketing team and the academic staff. The managing director is now more accessible to academic staff. This has resulted in improved staff satisfaction and improvements in processes that support student achievement. The shift to new premises which locates everyone on the same floor has supported this change.

The managing director has a strong focus on ensuring that students have a valuable learning experience while they are studying with WIE. There is a business plan, with strong academic goals, which guides developments across the organisation, although staff are still becoming familiar with these goals.

The new self-assessment framework builds on course surveys and the outcome data being collected. The new tools ensure that sufficient information is being collected to make evidence-based decisions. There is still some work to do on refining the data collection tools and analysis, although the evaluation team is confident that this will occur.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management, and strategy

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

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

2.2 Focus area: IELTS preparation

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

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

2.3 Focus area: General English

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, other than those expressed or implied within the report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of programme approval and accreditation (under sections 249 and 250 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Programmes established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act and published in the Gazette of 28 July 2011 at page 3207. These policies and criteria are deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under the new section 253.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual programmes they own or provide. These criteria and policies are also deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under section 253. Section 233B(1) of the Act requires registered PTEs to comply with these rules.

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 EER process approved by the NZQA Board.

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).

Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>

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