



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Eastwest College of Intercultural Studies

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 28 June 2011

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	4
Summary of Results	5
Findings	7
Recommendations	13
Further Actions.....	13
Appendix	14

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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

Location:	Gordonton, Waikato
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1996
Number of students:	Domestic: 18 International: 22
Number of staff:	18 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	Course accreditations: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate in Foundations for Intercultural Studies (ESOL) (Level 4)• Certificate of Intercultural Studies (Level 5)• Diploma of Intercultural Studies (Level 5)
Sites:	As above
Distinctive characteristics:	Offers missionary training to enable people to find work on overseas ministry teams.
Recent significant changes:	New academic manager and dean appointed end of 2010.
Previous quality assurance history:	The organisation met all but two requirements at the previous quality assurance review conducted by NZQA in 2007, which was an educational audit. The requirements not met related to the areas of personnel and learner information.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope for the external evaluation and review included the mandatory focus areas of:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- International student support.

The following training programme was also included:

- Intercultural studies (includes the level 5 certificate and diploma).

This scope represents the majority of the training that the organisation currently delivers.

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 external evaluation and review team, consisting of two evaluators, conducted a two-day evaluation of the training programme selected for the scope. The visit was conducted at the college's site in Gordonton, Waikato.

The team spoke with the senior management team consisting of the principal, vice-principal, academic dean, and director, as well as employers and students from the certificate and diploma programmes.

The evaluation team also viewed a range of documents, including the organisation's summary of self-assessment activities, graduate outcomes, and feedback from employers and students.

ECIS has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Eastwest College of Intercultural Studies (ECIS)**.

ECIS courses provide great value to the students and the employers of their graduates. The training provides students with the practical and theoretical skills that enable graduates to work in cross-cultural environments while carrying out missionary work overseas and in New Zealand. Graduate outcomes show that 69 per cent of graduates are working in cross-cultural missions overseas and 16.5 per cent work in cross-cultural environments in New Zealand. Around 7.5 per cent of graduates are engaged in further study.

ECIS has a high rate of course completions within the allocated timeframe of 97 per cent for 2010. However, this figure is higher when learners' results are included for those who undertake the ESOL course first in order to improve their English language skills and then complete the certificate.

Learners not only achieve academically but also improve their own confidence and skills, such as interpersonal communications and working in a cross-cultural environment, to assist them in their missionary work.

ECIS's governance and management structure is effective in ensuring that the training is relevant to stakeholder needs and is achieving the organisation's goals. The senior management team reviews learner feedback and results at weekly meetings. In addition, programme decisions and other course information is reviewed by an advisory council, consisting of chief executives from non-government organisations (NGOs) and other organisation that employ missionaries to work overseas.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Eastwest College of Intercultural Studies (ECIS)**.

ECIS has a long history of evaluating its performance to meet the needs of learners and Christian missionary organisations. A leadership team consisting of other Christian organisations that employ ECIS graduates was established in 2009 to provide independent direction and advice on training needs for the sector. The organisation also has an advisory group to gather input from external stakeholders, including other training providers, about programme content. Previous review activities have led to the introduction of the ESOL certificate and changes to the curriculum content.

ECIS is focussed on ensuring that its programmes are achieving the organisation's goals and confirms this through using ongoing reviews of the feedback from students and missionary organisations as well as external reviews conducted by the parent organisation, WEC International. However, a better system of feedback from students could enhance the qualitative data from students. Regular staff meetings and reviews of student progress is

comprehensive and ensures that students receive the appropriate learning support and are achieving their goals.

TEO response

Eastwest College of Intercultural Studies has confirmed the factual accuracy of this report.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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**.

ECIS has consistently produced high learner achievement rates for a number of years. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) results for 2010 show that 92 per cent of ECIS learners achieved a qualification and 97 per cent completed it within the required timeframe. A further 1-2 per cent completed the diploma or certificate course following the completion of the ESOL programme. The organisation recommends the ESOL course to international students whom they have identified as requiring further English language skills before they enrol in an intercultural studies certificate or diploma, because results show that this increases their chances of success.

It is very important to ECIS that graduates gain work as missionaries because it confirms that the training is meeting the organisation's objective, which is to provide graduates with the skills and biblical knowledge to work in cross-cultural missions internationally. Data collected by ECIS over the past five years shows that 69 per cent of graduates are working in cross-cultural missions overseas and 16.5 per cent work in cross-cultural environments in New Zealand. Around 7.5 per cent of graduates are engaged in further study.

ECIS has focussed on monitoring outcomes that matter to its stakeholders, such as graduate outcomes and course completions. However, comparing individual courses more systematically to identify trends could be useful in gaining a more comprehensive overview of outcomes for international and domestic learners across time and for different tutors.

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 **Excellent**.

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

ECIS courses are highly valued by the organisation's financial supporters and members of the advisory council, because they provide practical, cross-cultural training in Biblical studies to enable people to work effectively as missionaries around the world. The applied focus is what makes ECIS believe it is significantly different from other Biblical studies providers, and learners value the practical focus because it gives them more confidence to work in mission groups.

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

ECIS helps students to learn to live and work alongside people from different cultures. The organisation enrolls students from diverse countries, including Korea, Brazil, and Japan as well as New Zealand. ECIS also has a mix of cultures on its staff. English is the only language used to communicate on campus, which helps improve English language skills for speakers of English as a second language. This is an advantage for these students when applying for positions with employing organisations because many of these administer their operations in English.

The organisation emphasises the value of students developing their practical, interpersonal skills, which are important for working in mission groups, rather than just having the theoretical knowledge. Analysis of graduate outcomes, and the feedback from previous graduates and the many organisations that only use ECIS to train their people, indicates to ECIS the value of the training.

In addition, the extensive library is open to people from other church groups and tutors from other training providers to use, which demonstrates the contribution that ECIS makes to its community.

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 ECIS learning environment and activities provide relevant training to the students as well as to the employing agencies that need people to work effectively in cross-cultural missions. The course content is developed to provide an emphasis on communication skills, teamwork, Biblical knowledge, and the application of the theory through “Ministry Groups”. These groups provide opportunities for students to conduct volunteer work in the community to gain practical ministry experience.

ECIS ensures that content is relevant, using input from its own community networks, regular advisory group meetings (consisting of people who employ missionaries), and graduate feedback on what is required to be a successful mission group worker. This has led to the development of ESOL courses and the inclusion of a wider range of information on other religions, and a focus on interpersonal skills.

Students enrol in ECIS for the practical application of Biblical studies. Guest speakers from various missionary agencies are incorporated into the programme to provide lectures from their own missionary experiences. Guest lecturers also provide students with information about various missions they may work in once they graduate. Feedback from guest lecturers is gathered informally and, where applicable, changes are made to the course content. However, more formal feedback could be provided to guest lecturers to ensure they are meeting students’ needs.

The intercultural studies certificate programme is more suitable for people who already have a theological qualification from elsewhere and need training in using their skills in a

Christian mission and cross-cultural environment. In contrast, the diploma is mostly undertaken by people who enter the college with no previous training in Christian ministry and who are preparing for Christian cross-cultural work or further studies. Each syllabus uses a consistent format for outlining the course objectives, learning schedule, assessment due dates, and a bibliography, which students find helpful.

ECIS is open to informal suggestions from students, including from student forums held with staff at the end of each semester. Overall, stakeholders confirmed that the programme and the learning environment are meeting their needs for people to be trained in cross-cultural, practical Biblical study skills in order to be effective on missions.

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 **Excellent**.

ECIS confirms that learning is occurring through tutors' own feedback and from graduates' experiences in the field. The graduate outcomes also demonstrate that the training is achieving the organisation's aim to prepare its students for missionary work.

ECIS attributes this achievement to the employment of tutors and staff with practical ministry experience as well as subject knowledge and teaching qualifications. Refresher training is also provided if required. Ongoing performance reviews and classroom peer observations help to inform tutor practices to ensure that the teaching is engaging for students and helps them to learn. Although staff turnover is low, recent vacancies have highlighted a need for a more formal succession plan to ensure staff vacancies are filled appropriately and in a more timely manner.

Students reported that the learning environment and the practical activities assisted them to learn more about themselves to help them to undertake mission work. Students are encouraged to be reflective in their studies and challenged in their thinking. This helps to prepare them for when they are working in mission groups.

The organisation has a comprehensive self-review system to ensure that the training is robust. This system includes a number of activities, such as review of all courses by tutors to confirm that the training is aligned to the curriculum. Tutors also meet regularly to check that assessments are valid and consistent, and feedback is sought from external tutors to ensure that the training is meeting the standards required by the sector. The focus on assessment training for 2010 was identified because of inconsistencies in assessment marking between tutors. As a result, changes were made to the course marking guidelines. This provides evidence that the organisation uses the results of its reviews to make improvements.

Staff meet regularly to discuss any issues and students' progress, and share information to help with student learning. However, student evaluations could be improved to gain a better understanding of the students' feedback in order to evaluate and review courses.

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**.

ECIS has a comprehensive support system for its students. The support system includes an orientation programme, individual tutor sessions twice a week to help with academic studies, and care groups led by a staff member to provide more personal support. Students supported the opportunity to talk to staff and other students in their care groups as it leads to a better understanding of each others' different cultural backgrounds.

Staff and students speak English-only within the campus which promotes cross-cultural communication and mixing, as well as helping to improve international students' English language abilities. An indicator of the supportive environment created at ECIS is the "buddy" system, organised by the student council, between students with English as a first language and those learning English as a second language, to help international students' adjust to learning in a New Zealand culture. The student council also arranges volunteer grammar checkers to help international students with their assignments.

ECIS meets with each student at the end of the first semester to see whether the course they have chosen is suitable for them. This is where students who feel they require additional English language skills may choose to put their intercultural studies on hold while they complete the ESOL course.

Each student has an individual learning plan, which is a journal the student completes throughout their studies to guide and support them. The plan is reviewed regularly with their tutor to monitor whether they are achieving their personal and academic goals. Students valued this highly as it helped them to manage their progress towards achieving their individual goals.

ECIS is able to maintain its high level of support for students, including international students, because staff and students live on site which promotes a caring community feel. Any issues that are identified with individuals are discussed at staff meetings and the appropriate level of support is provided.

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 **Excellent**.

The ECIS governance and management structure is effective in ensuring that the training is relevant to stakeholder needs and that it is achieving the organisation's goals. ECIS is part of WEC Aotearoa New Zealand, a division of WEC International. As a member, it undergoes external reviews from the international director of training and maintains links to international missions through the WEC regional director.

A new chief executive was appointed in 2010. The organisation established its leadership group to provide independent external advice, which has improved planning programme direction. The leadership team meets bimonthly to review key staff appointments, outcomes, budgets, policy, capital works, funding, and fee changes. This enhances the role of the advisory group which reviews training outcomes and provides input into the development and delivery of programme content.

The organisation encourages good communication between its staff at faculty meetings and at weekly tutor meetings to gain feedback on performance and to ensure there are sufficient resources and support to assist students in their goals. Examples of the organisation's openness to feedback include the introduction of ESOL courses, wireless internet access on campus, and providing a refresher course in adult education for tutors to ensure that their teaching practices are appropriate.

ECIS has developed a strong partnership with Columbia International University (CIU), which contributes to the organisation through teaching observation and staff training seminars. The ECIS intercultural studies diploma is recognised by CIU, so ECIS graduates are able to enrol directly into the third year of a bachelor degree at CIU.

Overall, ECIS demonstrated that it has strong engagement with all of its stakeholders which ensures students are learning what they need to gain missionary work and be effective in cross-cultural missions.

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 **Excellent**.

2.2 Focus area: International student support

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

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

2.3 Focus area: Intercultural studies

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

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

Recommendations

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

Further actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with NZQA's policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

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 courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance by the polytechnic sector, and 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 policies and criteria 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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