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External Evaluation and Review Report

ALI Education Limited

Date of report: 15 December 2020

About ALI Education Limited

ALI Education Limited is an English language training school. It caters for international and domestic students who seek to gain sufficient language skills to either undertake higher-level study or participate more in their New Zealand communities.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Level 3, 85 Airedale Street, Auckland CBD ¹
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	As of 22 September 2020: Domestic: two equivalent full-time students International: 48 equivalent full-time students
Number of staff:	16 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	See: ALI Education Limited on the NZQA website
Last EER outcome:	NZQA was Confident in the educational performance and Confident in the capability in self-assessment of ALI Education Limited at the previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2017.
Scope of this evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intensive English (Training Scheme)• International students: Support and Wellbeing
MoE number:	8524
NZQA reference:	C40463
Dates of EER visit:	22 and 23 September 2020

¹ This is a temporary delivery site used as the head office and delivery site following the first Covid lockdown.

Summary of results

Effective programme delivery and self-review ensures students' goals and needs are met. Students achieve and have a highly satisfactory experience. Staff regularly undertake professional development, ensuring all staff are aware of how they each support the organisation in managing compliance accountabilities.

Confident in educational performance

For all ALI Education programmes, students gain relevant skills and knowledge.

ALI Education understands how it is providing value to the stakeholders, including the students. This understanding is regularly tested and validated. Documentation of the graduate application of learnt skills and knowledge would strengthen this understanding.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

ALI Education employs effective processes to ensure programme design, delivery and review continues to meet stakeholder and student needs. Internal and external moderation supports these processes.

The PTE has begun addressing the recommendations from the NZQA monitoring report for the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Level 4). However, the effectiveness of any improvements to this programme cannot be gauged until it is delivered again.

The comprehensive support structure results in high levels of surveyed satisfaction by the students.

All staff regularly update their knowledge and are involved in the monitoring and management of compliance accountabilities.

A regular cycle of review and updates for organisational documentation such as handbooks, the quality management system and websites would strengthen the management of accountabilities.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>ALI Education delivers English language training. During 2019, 80 per cent of the enrolled students graduated with the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Level 4) (Academic) (NZCEL L4) as they prepared for university study. However, with the certificate expiring in December 2019 and a NZQA monitoring report being released in January 2020, a new programme of study has been designed.³ Whether or not the new programme addresses the monitoring report's recommendations around assessment and achievement is yet to be demonstrated.</p> <p>The PTE says IELTS⁴ preparation students on average move up one band after completing their course of study, although this depends on the length of stay. Compared with other English language providers, this would indicate a slightly higher success rate than average. However, the PTE has not provided evidence of this benchmarking.</p> <p>The Intensive English training scheme is currently the only programme being delivered. Each student's reason for undertaking study is determined at enrolment alongside their capability with the English language. Weekly and six-weekly progression tests give academic staff the ability to adjust delivery to ensure the students acquire language and achieve their goals, irrespective of their length of stay. The development of soft skills, such as growing confidence and increased independence for living in New Zealand, are also seen and measured.</p>

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

³ Initially, submission of a new programme was delayed as a result of external moderation and monitoring. The NZCEL L4 version 2 programme was approved 9 October 2020.

⁴ International English Language Testing System

Conclusion:	Students achieve at a high rate, developing the English language skills that allow them to undertake study at a higher level or achieve their personal goals. Changes made as a result of the recent NZQA monitoring report are yet to be demonstrated.
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>ALI Education understands why and how it is providing value to its stakeholders, including the students. ALI Education students fall into three categories⁵, which determine the value of the outcomes wanted. In turn, these are determined at enrolment for each student and monitored each six weeks when adjustments, if needed, can be made. Student feedback shows a high level of satisfaction with the programme.</p> <p>ALI Education surveys and records the destinations of the graduates after each completes their respective programmes. In 2018 and 2019, around 50 per cent of graduates entered higher-level study or employment. Migrant students said they were able to undertake more activity in their communities. This knowledge enables ALI Education to align the student's intended destination against the enrolment goals, allowing for value per graduate to be understood.</p> <p>Further feedback from graduates outlining the use of learned skills and knowledge is gathered anecdotally but not documented. Employers and/or further study tutors are not contacted about the value of the outcomes to them. This feedback would highlight what skills and knowledge are of use, which in turn would assist programme review.</p> <p>Surveying agents and maintaining a positive, ongoing relationship with the homestay provider allows ALI Education to understand and continue to provide value for these</p>

⁵ The three categories of students who study on the Intensive English programme are: Academic, where students want to increase their English language proficiency in order to undertake higher-level study; a Working Holiday focus to gain English language exposure to help with traveling and working in New Zealand; and migrant students who are looking to gain life skills and integrate into their New Zealand communities.

	stakeholders.
Conclusion:	ALI Education actively seeks feedback to validate valued outcomes and also to understand why and how they are providing those valued outcomes to stakeholders. Understanding the value of outcomes for employers, community and further-study providers would strengthen ALI Education's self-assessment.

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>ALI Education is currently only delivering the Intensive English training scheme. The NZCEL L4 programme is being redeveloped.⁶ In the absence of incoming international students, the requirement for IELTS preparation has decreased.</p> <p>The Intensive English training scheme uses four internationally developed, task-based learning and assessment units. Regular review ensures each unit is updated as needed to provide relevant material for the students to engage with. Ongoing review has also led to an additional four units being purchased to provide alternative material for repeating students. A 'Zero to Hero' course has been developed⁷ as an elementary-level substitute, providing practical activities rather than theory for new migrant students.</p> <p>The daily classes and nightly homework are appropriately monitored for visa-related attendance purposes and to ensure the approved hours are met. The emerging needs of each student are monitored through weekly and six-weekly progress tests. Feedback is provided weekly to the class as a whole and through regular one-to-one meetings between tutors and student, with adjustments to classes and goals made where appropriate. Additionally, free weekly electives are offered to</p>

⁶ The NZCEL L4 redevelopment is in response to a NZQA programme monitoring report and the expiry of version 1 of the qualification.

⁷ Though being delivered to students, this unit is still being developed by ALI Education academic staff. It is unclear whether any pre-moderation of the unit's assessments has been completed.

	<p>ensure all the needs of students are met.</p> <p>The six-weekly training scheme assessments are moderated annually. Feedback from senior academic staff recognises that increasing the frequency of internal moderation would provide beneficial professional development and more rigorous assessment practices. When the NZCEL was delivered, assessor judgements for assignments were checked internally and externally. External moderation is completed with NZQA. Recommendations were given during the 2018 external moderation and the 2019 programme monitoring report relating to assessment preparation and assessor judgements.⁸ ALI Education outlined the improvements they have made in response; however, these are still to be demonstrated.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Programme design and review meets the needs of all students and stakeholders. Regular testing and feedback ensures the emerging needs of each student are met. Academic and assessment standards are monitored; however, resulting improvements are yet to be demonstrated.</p>

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>ALI Education meets the needs of prospective students and supports the students from enrolment on. All applicants are provided with the documentation and information needed to make an informed decision. Marketing staff, who speak multiple languages and were international students themselves, are available whenever needed.</p> <p>On arrival at ALI Education, Intensive English students complete a placement test and questionnaire identifying their capability, goals and needs. An orientation presents, in English, the relevant policies and procedures and provides students with all needed contact details. This is then repeated in the student's parent language to ensure full understanding. The PTE's First Impressions survey indicates a high degree of satisfaction with</p>

⁸ NZQA monitoring found overgenerous and incorrect marking, too much scaffolding and support before assessment, multiple resits and incorrect assessment conditions. External moderation did not verify a third of the assessor decisions within the provided sample.

	<p>this process and the start of study.</p> <p>Weekly testing enables tutors to gauge how students have understood or acquired the skills and knowledge taught. Identified patterns define the lesson planning for the following week. The six-weekly progress tests enable tutors to have one-to-one sessions with each student to address their goals and needs and undertake planning for the next six weeks of learning.</p> <p>ALI Education has an English-only policy for when students are on campus, giving the students regular opportunity to practise conversational English. Weekly free⁹ activities and electives provide students with additional opportunities to practise their learnt skills and knowledge. The available options are based on common needs as understood through surveying students and monitoring their progress during class.</p> <p>Student feedback to the PTE and to the NZQA evaluators showed that students feel very supported during their time at ALI Education. This is assisted by staff who go above and beyond to look after the academic and pastoral wellbeing of the students. The choice of the PTE to employ persons who are not only highly qualified English language trainers but who were once also international students themselves ensures an understanding of student needs.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Regular interaction between staff and students ensures all students understand and feel involved in their learning journeys. Feedback from students provides self-assessment opportunities that ALI Education has a proven history of responding to.</p>

⁹ Feedback from students indicated they did not want to pay for further activities. ALI Education has investigated free options and has also developed a relationship with a travel agency where students can undertake weekend experiences at a discounted rate.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>ALI Education is currently a small organisation which understands what it does well and builds on existing strengths. Weekly departmental staff meetings and monthly management meetings ensure the organisation remains responsive to change and is aware of how it can add value and support educational achievement.</p> <p>Decisions to deliver to domestic students (via pre-purchased English language tuition (PELT)) during 2018, and the increased technology usage are examples of ALI Education's effective strategic planning and resourcing. Preparations for online language delivery prior to Covid-19 ensured all students were able to continue their study. The success of the online delivery and the co-location of the city campus with another provider¹⁰ indicates that this PTE can effectively respond to sector challenges.</p> <p>Most of ALI Education's staff have been with the organisation for a long time. All staff have appropriate experience and qualifications for their role at ALI Education. Additionally, they have lived in New Zealand for a number of years and have been international students themselves. This enables the staff to have a unique perspective and motivation when supporting the educational goals and experiences of the students.</p> <p>Regular internal and external professional development ensures that staff strengthen their teaching and learning practice and understand how they contribute to and support the organisation in meeting its compliance requirements. Annual observations and appraisals ensure staff needs are recognised and are met in the following year. Feedback from staff acknowledges that they feel valued by the organisation.</p>
Conclusion:	ALI Education's purpose and direction informs its strategic planning and response to sector challenges. Sufficient resources

¹⁰ With the reduction in international students, ALI Education could only half-fill classrooms at its city campus. Its move in July 2020 to co-locate with ATMC at their Airedale Street campus was made for financial and educational reasons. A decision about staying at this site will be made in November 2020.

	and professional development support the teaching and learning, and provide a highly supportive environment for students and staff alike.
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1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Long-term stakeholder relationships established self-review practices and regular monitoring enable ALI Education to effectively manage its important compliance responsibilities.</p> <p>Monitoring of the New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 5) during 2018 resulted in NZQA interventions. ALI Education completed voluntary withdrawal of accreditation for the level 5 programme in June 2018, and accreditation for the New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 6) was removed on 13 August 2018.</p> <p>A comprehensive quality management system ensures that the organisation's operation and monitoring of homestay and agent relationships remains legal and ethical.</p> <p>Additional to the annual review of the organisation's documentation, policies and procedures, the PTE undertakes further review when changes occur, or relevant feedback is given.</p> <p>The evaluation team found that the ALI Education website still offered NZCEL L4 intakes for 2020. This oversight was rectified before the end of the EER with the removal of all 2020 and 2021 intake dates. A rigorous regular review of posted or distributed information would assist in ensuring future oversights do not occur.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Established self-review practices enable ALI Education to monitor and manage important compliance responsibilities. Rigorous review of all distributed material and information would strengthen this self-review process and ensure practices remain legal and ethical.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: English Language Training Scheme

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Good

2.2 Focus area: International Students: Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that ALI Education Limited:

- Document all benchmarking activity related to student achievement. This will strengthen self-assessment.
- Collect regularly and document the feedback received from graduates about the value of the skills and knowledge learnt. This will provide feedback for programme review.
- Collect employer and/or higher-level study tutors' feedback about the use of learnt skills and knowledge by ALI Education graduates to determine the value of the training to these stakeholders.
- Increase the frequency of Intensive English internal moderation. This can provide professional development for academic staff in the use of marking rubrics.

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

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 fraud¹¹*
- *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.*

¹¹ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, training schemes and consents to assess and registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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