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Report of External Evaluation and Review

Languages International Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 19 September 2017

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Final Report

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:	Languages International Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	1 April 1991
Location:	27 Princes Street, Auckland
Delivery sites:	As above
Courses currently delivered:	Languages International currently offers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General English• Cambridge Exam Preparation• English for University• English for Business• IELTS (International English Language Testing System) Preparation• Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA)• Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA)• Workplace Literacy• Occupational English Preparation
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes

Number of students:	<p>Domestic: Tertiary Education Commission-funded Workplace Literacy, 43 places in 2016; 50 per cent of these learners were Pasifika and 6 per cent were Māori.</p> <p>International: 850 individuals in 2016; 41 per cent from North Asia; 31 per cent Western Europe; 12 per cent Latin America; 6 per cent South East Asia; 3 per cent Eastern Europe.</p>
Number of staff:	26 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	Programmes approved for delivery can be found at: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/course-accreditations.do?providerId=854458001&delSiteInd=0
Distinctive characteristics:	Languages International delivers programmes on English Language instruction and language teaching instruction. The organisation is a member of English New Zealand, the International Association of Language Centres (IALC), and Quality English.
Recent significant changes:	In March 2015, Languages International closed its Christchurch campus.
Previous quality assurance history:	At the previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2013, NZQA was Highly Confident in Languages International's educational performance and Highly Confident in the PTE's capability in self-assessment. In October 2015, an audit by English New Zealand found that Languages International met all quality standards with no recommendations being given.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The EER examined the following focus areas:

- International Students: Support and Wellbeing – this is a standard focus area for providers with international students.
- Cambridge Certificates in English – at the time of the EER, Languages International had four classes operating. Languages International has been running this programme over a number of years, and therefore it provides good insight into the PTE's quality assurance systems.

- General English – 80 per cent of Languages International students enrol in General English, and therefore a focus on this ensures good coverage of Languages International's activity.

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.

Languages International supplied the evaluation team with a self-assessment document and other relevant documents in the lead-up to the EER. For the on-site phase of the EER, the evaluation team of two spent two days at Languages International campus in Princes Street, Auckland. The evaluation team met with the key staff, including the chief executive, the finance manager, the director of studies and assistant director of studies, the marketing and operations manager and the director of teacher training. In addition, interviews were conducted with teachers, student support staff and two groups of students. The evaluation team also viewed a range of documentation, including feedback from learners, internal self-assessment and audit documents, syllabus documents, achievement data and student files.

Summary of Results

Statements of confidence on educational performance and capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance and **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Languages International Limited**.

Students at Languages International achieve well, and there is good evidence of valued outcomes. Achievement is carefully tracked through formative and summative assessment, and evidence demonstrates good progress in language skills for students. Achievement is analysed and benchmarked and used to inform course improvements. Benchmarking data for the Cambridge exams (reported below) shows consistently strong achievement, above national averages.

Internal surveys over a number of years show the vast majority of students would recommend Languages International as a place to study. This aligns with external I-Graduate survey results and the responses of those interviewed by the evaluation team, and indicates a high level of satisfaction and that students valued the investment they made to study English with Languages International. Further evidence of value exists in qualitative data which shows that English for University graduates are successfully using the knowledge and skills they gained to study in higher education in New Zealand and overseas.

The organisation is committed to quality teaching. This is reflected in the systematic targeted professional development and ongoing programme and curriculum development. There is a high level of knowledge and understanding of English language teaching which is shared across the school. Ongoing action research – carried out during the course of study – and other self-assessment activity is used for quality improvements. Programmes, courses, assessments and teaching resources are reviewed regularly and adapted and developed to match the needs of students. The evaluation team saw a number of examples of changes being made to respond to needs, including the integration of technology, the timing of assessments, and developing teaching resources. The Learning Centre, a unique feature of Languages International, provides access to a wide range of resources and qualified staff, and enables students to self-direct their learning, with support, in their timetabled Learning Centre hours and at other times they choose. To support these findings, the vast majority of students respond as being very satisfied with their courses and the teaching.

Languages International understands and responds to students' learning and pastoral care needs. For example, orientation is effective in providing introductory information, and all students are interviewed in their second week to see how well their classes and living arrangements are working. Issues identified are responded to promptly. Teachers respond to students' needs identified through four-weekly

formative assessments and mid-course surveys. Students attested to receiving useful feedback on their assessments, supporting them to know the skills and knowledge they needed to focus on next.

Languages International leadership is focused on maintaining a high quality organisation. To support this, the PTE has taken multiple approaches to self-assessment to ensure standards are being maintained. This includes ongoing, systematic student surveys and interviews to ensure satisfaction with the programme, teaching and support. There is good evidence that this information is analysed, benchmarked and responded to effectively. Membership of English New Zealand, Quality English and IALC also provides opportunities for internal and external review. Action research projects and ongoing research by management and staff contribute to maintaining the currency and quality of courses and teaching and evidence-based decision-making. Languages International has a low staff turnover with staff reporting that management takes a high-trust consultative approach.

The senior leadership team at Languages International has a strong understanding of the relevant and important compliance requirements that inform their processes. The team engages proactively with English New Zealand, NZQA, the Tertiary Education Commission and other relevant regulatory authorities. There is good evidence that regular internal reviews occur and items identified are responded to. The quality management system in place governs quality assurance processes and is reviewed periodically. The management of compliance is largely effective. Staff having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, supported by management oversight, although at the time of the EER some routine checks had not been done as scheduled. While this may have presented some risk, the EER team is confident that the review processes at Languages International will ensure an effective response and system improvement.

In summary, Languages International has strong processes and practices in place to ensure the delivery of quality English language programmes and effective support to students. This results in students who are highly satisfied with their learning experience and show a high likelihood of recommending the school to others. With comprehensive and effective self-assessment, issues are readily identified and addressed. Therefore, NZQA is highly confident in Languages International's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do students 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 **Excellent**.

There is strong evidence that learners are improving their English language skills and achieving their language learning goals. Achievement is monitored continuously through four-weekly assessments and placement tests at the beginning and end of every term. To support understanding of achievement, students' skills are benchmarked against the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Since 2013, survey results show 91 per cent of students have responded as being very or extremely satisfied with their course, which is a strong indicator for such courses that the students have achieved their learning goals. Students are asked to self-assess their language ability at the beginning of their study and, more recently, at the end as part of their exit interview. Early results show that the majority of learners feel they have made improvements across the language skills areas.

Languages International monitors student achievement closely through regular assessments, analysis and benchmarking. For example, the English for University test results were benchmarked against IELTS results over a period of two years, showing that the levels aligned well with IELTS university entry requirements. This provided reassurance that students were well prepared for further study. An analysis of results showed a cohort of students from one country not achieving as well as others. In response, academic counselling and a grammar for writing course were added.

For the Cambridge English examinations, Languages International students have consistently achieved well, with most results above New Zealand averages, indicating strong placement processes and effective teaching (Table 1).

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

Table 1. Language International Cambridge English examination results, 2013-2016

Year	Exam	Languages International	New Zealand
2013	FCE ²	87	73.1
	CAE	85	74.2
	CPE	81	76.6
2014	FCE	68	68
	CAE	70	83.1
	CPE	72	57.8
2015	FCE	81	70.2
	CAE	85	77.5
	CPE	93	66
2016	FCE	77.8	71.1
	CAE	77.8	79.7
	CPE	90	88.6

Achievement for students on the Workplace Literacy programme, half of whom are Pasifika, is monitored through use of the literacy and numeracy for adults assessment tool. Results are analysed, and as a result of 2015 data the decision was made to use a more detailed reading assessment. Results for 2016 show significant gains in reading, writing and numeracy.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

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**.

Languages International has a range of approaches to understanding the value of outcomes. Key to this understanding is ongoing end-of-course surveys and participation in the I-Graduate international student survey. These surveys show high levels of satisfaction. As noted above, since 2013, 91 per cent of students have been either very or extremely satisfied with their programme. The data also shows that a consistent 95-96 per cent of students would recommend Languages International, with 3-4 per cent unsure and only 1 per cent saying they would not. For the most recent I-Graduate survey, conducted in 2016, 94.5 per cent of

² These results refer to the Cambridge English exams, First (FCE), Advanced (CAE) and Proficiency (CPE).

Languages International students said they would recommend the organisation. This compares with a New Zealand average of 78.8 per cent. This result is consistent with previous I-Graduate surveys and indicates a consistently high level of value.

In addition to survey data, Languages International has followed up with students who participated in their English for University preparation programme. These qualitative responses indicate that many found the knowledge and skills they learned valuable for further study. Students noted the research skills, academic writing and referencing and presentation skills as being particularly useful.

There is value for the students in the programmes available to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners. Students' goals are discussed at the beginning of their time with Languages International and reviewed regularly. Most students want to improve their English for travel, friendship and cultural exchange purposes, and the General English programme meets their needs well. The Cambridge English programmes are particularly valuable for Western European students who value gaining the certificates as it improves their chances of gaining entry into employment, promotion opportunities or programmes of study. There is also a demand for IELTS preparation and English for University preparation programmes for students wanting to pathway to higher-level study in New Zealand.

The Learning Centre adds value to the student experience, through access to a wide range of resources and qualified staff available to support students to access the right materials. Feedback indicates a high level of satisfaction with this service.

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

Programmes are designed to match the needs of students. As noted above, the Cambridge programmes are particularly sought after by Western European students, and Languages International guarantees delivery of all the levels, including the highest proficiency level programme. With an increasing demand for IELTS preparation, more staff have received professional development in supporting students to prepare for this test. A new handbook and syllabus documents, developed by a staff member, have been introduced to ensure greater consistency and support for this. Another adaption, in response to student feedback, includes the revision of a higher-level options class to focus more specifically on grammar and vocabulary. These examples reflect an organisation that is responsive to the changing cohorts and needs of students.

Teaching is effective, with qualified teachers and ongoing professional development. Less experienced teachers are paired with more experienced for support with delivery, reports and level changes. Professional development includes regular seminars, peer observations and coaching sessions – twice per term – which focus on action research projects. These projects contribute to the development of learning and teaching at Languages International. Research into good practice is encouraged, with some members of staff engaged in publishing. Other team members are English New Zealand auditors, and this supports the currency, quality and relevance of teaching and delivery at Languages International. Consistency of assessment decisions is assured through systematic moderation of samples of writing. Some external moderation with another English New Zealand organisation has begun. For the CELTA programme, external moderation reports reflect consistency in judgements and teaching.

Student feedback is consistently positive about the quality of teaching. Using a five-point scale, 98 per cent of students rated the teaching a 4 or 5 (good or excellent) in 2016. This result is consistent with previous years' and aligns with the results of the I-Graduate survey. Students spoken to by the evaluation team noted the value of having a mix of nationalities at the school. This encouraged everyone to speak English. In addition, they noted the quality of teaching and the usefulness of the Learning Centre.

A priority for Languages International has been to upgrade technology and support the integration of technology in the classroom. Developments include the upgrade of computers in the Learning Centre and improved access to technology for some classrooms. Edmodo, an online platform, is being used increasingly by teachers and students to share knowledge and resources.

A syllabus plan guides overall learning outcomes, and this is supported by key texts. Supplementary material is also used, particularly for the New Zealand content. Ongoing work continues to create more explicit links between the syllabus plan and learning goals and individual lesson plans. Assessments are reviewed and adapted to ensure they are effective. For example, in the Cambridge programme testing was shifted from week 10 to week five or six to ensure there was enough time to address the learning gaps identified. To evaluate effectiveness, Languages International has systematic processes for gaining feedback from students, as well as internal and external reviews. All students are interviewed in their second week to ensure their pastoral and learning needs are being met, and there are regular mid-course and leaving surveys. There was good evidence that student feedback is analysed and responded to. Internal annual self-reviews against English New Zealand standards are conducted, with four-yearly audits by external inspectors. Inspections are also conducted by IALC and Quality English. Languages International consistently meets these external quality standards. These quality review processes occur systematically and ensure that Languages International's programmes, assessments and activities match the needs of the learners.

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

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**.

Learners are supported well. Languages International proactively seeks to understand students' learning and pastoral care needs. All students are interviewed in their second week to see how well their classes and living arrangements are working. Any issues identified are responded to promptly. Four-weekly tests and mid-course surveys provide teachers with useful information to inform their planning and delivery. Students attested to receiving useful feedback on their assessments, supporting them to know what skills and knowledge they needed to focus on. Teachers use assessment information to reflect on their delivery and classes. Student attested to learning activities matching their learning needs, and this is supported by ongoing surveys.

All students are encouraged to use the Learning Centre on campus to strengthen their skills, with three of the 23 scheduled learning hours being timetabled for the centre. Teachers provide students with suggestions about how resources could support their learning, and there are always training staff available in the Learning Centre to support students to find appropriate learning resources. Feedback from learners about the Learning Centre, in survey data and from those spoken to by the evaluation team, was very positive. In response to feedback in 2014, the centre was reconfigured to encourage less talking, and computers were upgraded.

The pastoral care needs of students are responded to well. Homestays are organised by Languages International and the vast majority of students are positive about their experience. Host families are also well supported through quarterly newsletters keeping them up to date with Languages International and any changes they need to be aware of. Mid-course and second-day interviews with first language counsellors provide an opportunity for students to identify when things are not going well. Students are surveyed about their homestays, and this also provides useful feedback about the different homestay families.

There are clear processes in place for ensuring students have the correct information. An orientation is provided for all students on their first day which includes a tour of the campus and an introduction to the Learning Centre and social programme. A booklet contains useful information and links. A number of students told the evaluation team that they enjoyed the social programme provided and that a strength of Languages International was the multi-cultural nature of the school and the opportunities created to meet people from across the world.

1.5 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**.

Languages International has a strong commitment to maintaining its high quality English language training model. To ensure this, the organisation invests in high quality staff, professional development and engagement with external quality-setting organisations. The organisation has shown resilience and the ability to manage change, for example through the closing of the Christchurch campus, the shift to Workplace Literacy, and the shifts in student cultural demographics.

A notable feature of Languages International is the high number of staff who have worked in the organisation for a long time. Staff reported feeling valued and supported to develop as teachers and contribute to the school's goals for teaching and learning. Systematically collected student feedback, peer observations and self-assessments all inform annual performance reviews where staff have the opportunity to review and set goals. Staff noted an open, collegial style of management with a high-trust consultative approach. Performance management for administration staff could be strengthened.

Languages International is a reflective organisation and ensures there are multiple approaches to understanding quality. Processes and systems are guided by a quality management system that is reviewed and updated as needed. Internal reviews of programmes and courses, homestays and the Learning Centre provide useful information to guide improvements. Recent upgrades to technology have been measured and staged to ensure staff engagement and learner impact. Membership of English New Zealand, Quality English and IALC provides mechanisms for internal and external review and therefore quality improvements. Action research projects and ongoing research by management and staff contribute to maintaining currency and quality and evidence-based decision-making.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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 senior leadership team at Languages International has a strong understanding of the relevant and important compliance requirements that inform their processes. Engagement with English New Zealand, NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission is ongoing, with policy and legislative changes monitored and responded to. The quality management system governs quality assurance

processes and this system is reviewed periodically. The evaluation team saw evidence that Code of Practice reviews and robust internal audits against English New Zealand standards are occurring regularly. A recommendation from an internal audit – to put in place a formal agreement ensuring liability, health and safety, and risk assessment documentation with the company delivering social activities – was still to be done. A regular audit of policies and processes could strengthen management’s assurance that compliance requirements are being routinely met.

The management of compliance is largely effective, with relevant staff having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities supported by management oversight. A 2016 Immigration New Zealand audit found that systems and processes were being well managed, with only a minor issue identified. In response, new systems have been put in place to ensure validity and evidence of students having sufficient funds available. Administration staff spoken to by the evaluation team were aware of the requirements and obligations with respect to visas, insurance, homestays and under-18s. It was identified that some routine checks on visa and insurance expiry dates had not been done in a timely way, and this process requires re-design.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: International Students: Support and Wellbeing

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: Cambridge English Certificates

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: General English

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

NZQA recommends that Languages International:

- Strengthen professional development and performance management processes for administration and student support staff
- Monitor systems for regulatory compliance.

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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