



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Languages International Limited

Date of report: 3 October 2023

About Languages International Limited

Languages International is a specialist private language school providing English language courses for fee-paying adults, along with language teacher training. Courses offered are General English, Cambridge exam preparation, English for University and the Certificate and Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults.

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| Type of organisation: | Private training establishment |
| Location: | 27 Princes Street, Auckland |
| Eligible to enrol international students: | Yes. Since the New Zealand borders re-opened in July 2022, Languages International has grown from about 40 students to 140 students in August 2023. |
| Number of students: | Domestic: nil International: 140 from a wide range of countries, including Japan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia and Switzerland. Five students are under 18 years of age. |
| Number of staff: | 18 full-time, six part-time |
| TEO profile: | See: Languages International Limited Languages International has 45 years experience as New Zealand's first government-accredited private language school. In 2017, the founding owners sold the school to the senior management team, who have 20-30 years experience with the company. Languages International introduced the Cambridge Teacher Training scheme to New Zealand in 1988, to build a supply of qualified teachers. The school introduced the Cambridge Diploma in 1993. Languages International was a founding member of English New Zealand (http://www.englishnewzealand.co.nz) in 1986. They are invited members of the International Association of Language Centres (www.ialc.org) and Quality English (www.quality-english.com/). |

These are associations of leading international language schools.

The phases of the pandemic recovery for Languages International were: survive (2020-June 2022); restart (July-December 2022); take stock and consolidate (January-April 2023); and build (from April 2023).

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| Last EER outcome: | At the last external evaluation and review in 2017, Languages International was found to be Highly Confident in both educational performance and capability in self-assessment. NZQA recognises the TESOL ¹ -specific English New Zealand standards and audit process as an important input to the external evaluation and review. |
| Scope of evaluation: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• General English (Training Scheme) (levels 1-5) ID: 100235• English for University (APA) English New Zealand programme, approved 2020 |
| MoE number: | 8544 |
| NZQA reference: | C45350 |
| Dates of virtual EER visit: | 8 and 9 August 2023 |

¹ Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Summary of results

Students consistently achieve their goal of English language acquisition. Languages International supports individual students well. The emphasis on employing highly qualified and experienced staff is key to the organisation's historical success and instrumental in its ongoing high standing in the English language sector in New Zealand and internationally.

- Student achievement is high. The school measures achievement by student satisfaction with the programmes, teachers, pastoral support and progress with the English language.
- Highly Confident in educational performance**
- Academic staff are well-qualified, experienced and respected leaders in their field. Teaching resources are excellent. Programme documentation enables staff to align teaching, learning and assessment to outcomes.
- Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment**
- Student support is comprehensive and effective. Students are highly engaged and involved in their learning experience.
 - The mix of student nationalities, facilities, social environment and support for the students provides an exceptional learning experience. Languages International highly values and supports its staff.
 - Languages International manages its NZQA compliance and sector-specific English language accountabilities well. Languages International has been recognised as a high-performing English language school for some time. It is the only New Zealand school that is an invited member of both International Association of Language Centres (IALC) and Quality English.
 - Governance and management operate a sustainable business model. The ability to respond and innovate to ensure continuity of business, particularly over the Covid years, has been strategic and well executed.

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- Self-assessment is data-driven and comprehensive. The school uses the results to make changes and improvements that benefit all stakeholders.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Excellent |
| Findings and supporting evidence: | <p>Students gain useful skills and knowledge and develop their cognitive abilities. General English has rolling enrolments; most students enrol for up to 12 weeks. Rolling start dates and varying programme lengths mean that it is not possible to report student achievement data. Languages International's key measure of achievement in General English programmes is the learners' perception and satisfaction with their own progress. Student satisfaction levels have been consistently high over time, and this trend continues. Data analysis of student responses to their learning experiences and confidence with English language acquisition demonstrates the importance of these factors to students.</p> <p>Moderation for General English is robust and includes double marking, which validates consistency of assessment. Students receive a certificate showing their approximate level at the end of their study. In 2020, courses and results were severely disrupted by Covid-19. Borders were closed, numbers were low, and learning opportunities were lost. Placement of students became more complicated.</p> <p>While they have now recovered, when the border re-opened in 2022, student satisfaction levels initially dropped, for two main reasons. First, fewer students and teachers meant less ability to place students in grade levels. Second, Languages International employed three newly trained, less experienced teachers in July 2022. Targeted professional development has supported these teachers to grow in their practice.</p> <p>The non-NZQA course English for University (APA) has had 27 enrolments since it was approved in 2020. The overall pass rate for this programme is 85 per cent.</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.

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| Conclusion: | Student achievement in General English meets individual student needs and goals for progress with English language. Most English for University students meet pathway requirements for entry to university programmes. |
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Excellent |
| Findings and supporting evidence: | <p>Students improve their wellbeing and enhance their language ability and other attributes. Languages International provides an exceptional student experience. Students enrol in General English to improve their social, cultural, travel and work experience and aspirations. Students are highly satisfied with the teaching and the usefulness of course content. In every term, at least 70 per cent of all enrolled students have rated the quality of teacher planning as 5 out of 5, and the average ratings are also very high. Comments such as, 'My teacher planned lessons well', 'My teacher explained things clearly' indicate effective teaching.</p> <p>In 2019, Languages International changed its survey method to net promoter score to obtain more actionable information (as previous results were consistently high). The survey results for 2019-22 showed that Languages International results continue to be high and only slipped slightly from 62 to 58 pre- and post-pandemic.</p> <p>Some students engage successfully with further study. English for University (APA) has had very high achievement on modest student numbers since it began operating with APA status (a recognised language pathway for New Zealand universities) in mid-2020.</p> <p>Graduate surveys from 10 students who have begun mainstream tertiary studies since the border re-opened all report success in their tertiary studies. This indicates that the course is achieving its key goal of preparing students for the demands of English-medium tertiary study. Students were also very positive about the design of the course and their learning experience.</p> |

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| Conclusion: | Students improve their English language skills to participate more fully in work, travel and social situations. Most English for University students succeed at university. |
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1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Excellent |
| Findings and supporting evidence: | <p>Learning environments are planned and structured for the benefit and needs of students. Activities and resources are effective at engaging students. At the most recent English New Zealand audit in May 2023, Languages International met all English New Zealand standards and received several commendations. As a result, NZQA is assured that the school has appropriately qualified academic managers and teaching staff and a coherent professional development programme that effectively meets organisational, teacher and learner need.</p> <p>The school uses placement tests to assess English language ability and place students in the appropriate class. The student or teacher can ask for a review of their student placement. Formative assessment of student progress is ongoing. Syllabus-based progress tests occur at week six of each term. End-of-term tests include a version of the entry placement proficiency assessment and are used to validate assessment gains. There is ongoing moderation of the speaking and writing assessments.</p> <p>The school maintains records of student progress, and each student receives a formal progress report every three months. This includes a written report, a conversation between teacher and student, and a discussion of goals, which may be reset. At the end of a course, students are given a report detailing dates, the duration of the course, summative assessment of the student's achievement and a record of their attendance. Languages International has policies and procedures for the systematic review and refinement of its student assessment and reporting practices. Assessment is consistent and appropriate and provides students with useful feedback on their progress, including English language strengths and skills that require further development.</p> |

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| | <p>Teachers appreciate the opportunities to teach across programmes. A collegial, collaborative culture ensures effective sharing of teaching ideas and resources. A high level of professionalism contributes to formal and informal improvements to teaching and learning.</p> <p>The English language environment of the school is beneficial for students. Activities that take place within timetabled hours, including out-of-class independent learning, have a clear educational objective. Academic standards and integrity are maintained. Learning activities and assessment tasks are purposely aligned with learning outcomes. Languages International was commended by the 2023 English New Zealand audit team for employing exceptionally well-qualified and experienced academic staff. As a CELTA³ and DELTA⁴ Training Centre, Languages International has internationally recognised teacher trainers on staff and ongoing observation, professional development and moderation by University of Cambridge accredited assessors. This contributes to the professional standing of the school.</p> <p>Exemplary curriculum documentation enables staff to align teaching, learning and assessment to outcomes and contributes to exceptionally high-quality teaching delivery. Programmes meet the needs and expectations of a range of students across different programmes, including General English, English for Business, English for University and examination preparation for Cambridge.</p> <p>Since the English for University course was approved for APA in 2020, Languages International has run six courses with about six to 10 enrolments per course. Not all students progress to assessment as they do not need to pass to pathway to their chosen education programme. English for University graduates who do pass succeed in mainstream programmes, indicating that assessment decisions made by Languages International are accurate. Detailed records of student destinations also support this. When asked how useful the English for University course was, the majority said they found it to be very useful.</p> |
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³ Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

⁴ Diploma in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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| Conclusion: | Languages International's programme design, delivery and assessment is rigorously reviewed and updated to maintain relevance to stakeholders. |
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1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Excellent |
| Findings and supporting evidence: | <p>The learning environment is inclusive and the school responds appropriately to the wellbeing needs of the students. Languages International has appropriately skilled and trained admissions and support staff. Students are warmly welcomed and orientation is comprehensive. The school is sensitive to cultural and individual differences and fosters a positive learning atmosphere. Examples of the inclusive learning environment include providing a prayer space for Muslim students and support for students with a range of disabilities.</p> <p>The school's maximum class size is published in course and enrolment material, and classes do not exceed this maximum. Students describe staff as very kind, gentle and supportive, as well as encouraging and passionate about teaching English. Highly professional teachers explain and clarify the teaching.</p> <p>Student learning goals are well understood. For example, a student commented: 'The course English for Business is perfect to develop my skills for my career in the future. Furthermore, spending time with friends from different countries has been a memorable part for me, we are asked to give feedback, which is taken seriously by teachers.'</p> <p>Students have opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts. The Learning Centre (LC) provides guided individual learning, well integrated into the school timetable and overall learning and teaching design. The LC was commended in the English New Zealand 2023 report as reflecting best practice in the sector. This was endorsed by student feedback.</p> <p>After the borders re-opened in July 2022, Languages International rehired the previous accommodation and welfare manager, who had long service and experience with the school. She successfully manages the Languages International</p> |

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| | homestay programme and pastoral care for students by offering an efficient and personalised approach. |
| Conclusion: | Students are effectively supported and involved in their learning. Highly professional support staff contribute to an inclusive learning environment that meets students' cultural and individual needs well. |

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

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Excellent |
| Findings and supporting evidence: | <p>The school operates a sustainable business model aligned to its educational purpose. Data analysis is used effectively to inform changes and improvements for all stakeholders. Languages International is run by a management team of four. The board has four directors, an external accountant and an independent chair who is highly experienced in the sector. During the pandemic, joint meetings of shareholders with the external board advisors and chair were held. In 2023, board meetings with external advisors have been reinstated. Languages International never closed during the pandemic and continued teaching on site. By June 2021, only one of three buildings could be maintained. This left a potential ceiling on recovery but Languages International has eased this restriction by regaining another building in 2023.</p> <p>Organisational purpose and direction is clear. Staff are well trained, professional and learner-centred. The school has an international mix of learners and is located in central Auckland. Languages International historically diversified risk and diversity of students by expanding markets into Europe and Latin America. There has been stable ownership and management over time. The founding owners sold the school to the senior management team in 2017. The management team all have 20-30 years experience with the company, leading to a consistent vision.</p> <p>Organisational academic leadership and recruitment and development of staff is effective. Languages International employs highly qualified teachers with either a Masters in Language Teaching or Cambridge DELTA or both. Staff have produced texts that are used internationally. Languages</p> |

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| | International has been recognised as a high-performing English language school for some time. It is the only New Zealand school that is an invited member of both International Association of Language Centres and Quality English. |
| Conclusion: | Governance and management have worked constructively over a time of unprecedented challenges to support educational achievement and continue to operate a sustainable business. |

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Excellent |
| Findings and supporting evidence: | <p>Languages International’s policies and practices are legal and ethical. Languages International meets English New Zealand standards and has done so for many years. To ensure English New Zealand members continue to meet the English New Zealand standards, a full audit is conducted every four years, and up to 20 per cent of the membership is spot-audited annually. Each member must complete a self-audit against the standards each year as part of the annual attestation.</p> <p>The English New Zealand audit showed that Languages International is compliant with relevant New Zealand employment legislation. This includes the Resource Management Act, New Zealand Building Code, Health and Safety at Work Act, and The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.</p> <p>Languages International has provided NZQA with their Code self-review which self-identified several areas to strengthen, which have been actioned. Languages International meets immigration direction that student visa holders must meet the minimum attendance requirement of 80 per cent. If this is not achieved, the percentage attendance and non-compliance statement is clearly shown on the student’s final leaving document.</p> <p>Languages International is an approved site for delivery of courses and assessment under the English/Universities New Zealand Accredited Pathways Assessment (APA). This was approved in March 2020 by an independent approvals committee. A spot-check visit in May 2023 concluded that the</p> |

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| | high standards of assessment and course details in the approval application have been and continue to be fully implemented. Ongoing development is resulting in improvements and changes in the validity, reliability and authenticity of assessments and course design and delivery. |
| Conclusion: | Languages International has effective compliance management processes. The school complies with relevant legislation, rules and regulations. |

Focus areas

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

2.1 General English (Training Scheme) (levels 1-5) ID: 100235

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| Performance: | Excellent |
| Self-assessment: | Excellent |

2.2 English for University (APA) non-NZQA course

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| 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 Languages International Limited consider ways to increase the range of out-of-class activities available for students. This is to enable them to establish more effective social networks and increase opportunities for engagement with first language English speakers.

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 fraud⁵*
- *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.*

⁵ 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 2022, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

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 but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining micro-credential approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022, the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022 and the Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2022 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, micro-credentials 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 2022. 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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