

Report of External Evaluation and Review

New Horizon College of English

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 1 August 2014

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	New Horizon College of English
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	43 Station Street, Napier
Delivery sites:	As above
First registered:	14 January 1991
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General English (beginner to advanced levels)• English and Activities programmes (including a 40+ programme and under 18 programme)• High School Preparation and Working Holiday programmes• Cambridge English: First Certificate in English (FCE), Cambridge English Advanced (CAE) and Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE) exam preparation• International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam preparation• Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) exam preparation
Code of Practice signatory?:	Yes, for students aged 11-13 who are not living with a parent, students aged 14-17, and students aged 18 upwards
Number of students:	International only: approximately 47 equivalent full-time students (204 students enrolled in 2013).

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	Learners are from a variety of countries, including Japan, Switzerland and Saudi Arabia.
Number of staff:	7.4 equivalent full-time staff (five teaching and 2.4 administration and management)
Scope of active accreditation:	Experiencing English
Distinctive characteristics:	New Horizon College of English (NHCE) is a small provider, primarily meeting the needs of learners seeking a New Zealand cultural and learning experience, although examination courses are also available. In addition, short-term work opportunities may be brokered on local farms or in fruit packing sheds. Formal relationships with other schools provide opportunities for learners to transfer and experience other cities or towns.
Recent significant changes:	<p>Ownership of NHCE changed in December 2012 when it became part of the ICL Education Group, which also includes ICL Business School, Auckland English Academy and Bridge International College of English.</p> <p>In December 2012 the principal retired. A director of studies and administration director were appointed. Additional support for NCHE is provided by the ICL owner/director and ICL director, group strategic development.</p>
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>The previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2010 recorded the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NZQA is Highly Confident in the educational performance of NHCE • NZQA is Confident in the capability in self-assessment of NHCE <p>NHCE met all required standards in the 2013 audit conducted by English New Zealand, and received a commendation on their management of student absences.</p>

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the EER consisted of the following focus areas:

- Governance, management and strategy
- International students
- Experiencing English

The first two focus areas are mandatory. All students at NHCE are enrolled for English language tuition.

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.

The organisation submitted comprehensive self-assessment material to inform the EER, including the 2013 audit from English New Zealand.

The evaluation team of two visited NHCE over two days. Interviews were conducted with the ICL director/owner, ICL director of group strategic development, director of studies, administration director, four teaching and two administration staff, eight students, two homestay parents and one education agent. Phone interviews were also conducted with one ex-student, one education agent and one high school international student officer.

A variety of academic, planning and review documents and a selection of learner records were sighted.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **New Horizon College of English**.

The reasons for this judgement are as follows:

- Learners at NHCE are making excellent progress in improving their English language skills and there is strong evidence that their study goals are mostly met. Internal moderation procedures and the use of standard progress tests and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) as a framework for mapping language levels provide assurance of the validity of learner outcomes reported.
- Language acquisition is closely monitored at an individual level. Evidence of achievement includes individual learning plans, test results and progress reports, learner diaries, records of individual tuition sessions and external examination results. NHCE also has good evidence that learners are gaining increased confidence and cross-cultural knowledge.
- A small number of students complete IELTS and Cambridge exams. The overall pass rate for NHCE students attempting Cambridge exams is consistently higher than the New Zealand-wide and international pass rates.
- Many of the students enrol at NHCE for personal interest, work or travel purposes. The consistently very high levels of satisfaction with their New Zealand learning experience and achievement of their study goals are important indicators of the valued outcomes for learners (97 per cent of learners in 2013 reported that they were satisfied with and would recommend NHCE to others).
- The quality of student support at NHCE is very high. All staff share responsibility for ensuring learner needs are met, and this is a key factor in learners achieving their study goals.
- NHCE systematically assesses and reviews learner strengths and weaknesses in language acquisition and their progress towards their study goals. This information, together with data gathered through learner evaluations, and regular and purposeful communication with other key stakeholders (such as education agents and homestay hosts), is used effectively to focus attention on meeting learner needs and to identify improvements.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **New Horizon College of English**.

The reasons for this judgement are as follows:

- Self-assessment at NHCE is well established and comprises a mix of formal and informal evaluative activities that are fit-for-purpose and effective, given the small size of the school. Good records are maintained which demonstrate a purposeful and systematic approach to assessing and meeting learner needs.
- Staff are actively engaged in seeking regular feedback from learners and using it to maintain high standards of education and service delivery. Key sources of information include written evaluations, regular assessments, one-to-one tutorials, fortnightly reviews of individual learning plans, and informal observations and conversations. Evaluation feedback is reviewed and analysed to identify trends over time and areas of activity requiring review. Agreed actions are recorded in meeting notes and summary documents. There is some evidence of the impact of this self-assessment activity on learner achievement, satisfaction and well-being, but this aspect could be further strengthened. Recent changes to encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning have not yet been fully assessed for their effectiveness.
- The teaching team are collegial and share information regularly. However, a more systematic approach to reflecting on their teaching practice, both individually and as a group, would enhance their effectiveness.
- The change of ownership has provided opportunities for NHCE to access new management and academic processes. Strategic and business planning is underway to establish objectives for NHCE, which should provide management with a useful framework for monitoring and improving educational performance. NHCE's self-assessment capability will be further enhanced by the current focus on professional development of teachers and management.

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**.

Learners enrol at NHCE to improve their English for a variety of reasons (personal interest or travel, improved employment prospects, or access to further study). Individual learner records indicate that most learners complete their courses and make very good progress in English language acquisition. As many of the learners are enrolled for short periods only, NHCE's approach of focusing on their achievement against individual study goals is appropriate and there is good evidence that these study goals are mostly met. Learner progress is monitored through individual learning plans and fortnightly reviews of progress by each learner and tutor. Teaching and learning records (such as monthly progress reports, diaries and student files) include evidence of learners gaining in confidence. Achievement in weekly and fortnightly tests, and six-weekly formal assessments (based on the textbook and mapped against the CEFR), provides evidence of high standards achieved.

A small number of students complete IELTS and Cambridge exams, and results have been collated and compared since 2003. The PTE provided comparable data for FCE (First Certificate in English) and CAE (Cambridge English Advanced), which indicates that NHCE students perform well when benchmarked within New Zealand and internationally (Table 1).

Examination results	FCE	CAE
NHCE pass rate	83%	100%
New Zealand pass rate	73%	76%
World pass rate	73%	74%

Student evaluations are regularly collated and analysed and consistently provide evidence of very high levels of satisfaction with the learning experience and rate of progress. NHCE has recently made several changes to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning and to enhance their achievement, including the introduction of individual learning plans and structured goal-setting. The effectiveness of these changes has not yet been fully evaluated. NHCE uses

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

information on the achievement of learners who transfer to and from partner providers to check the validity of their assessment of language levels. More regular exchanges of information with the directors of study at those providers may add further value for understanding learner achievement.

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**

NHCE's success in delivering valued outcomes is reflected in the consistently high levels of learner satisfaction (97 per cent in 2013). In addition to the progress made in English language, students value the opportunity to learn about New Zealand culture and way of life in a small provincial city. The evaluators sighted feedback from previous learners on social media and in emails, which confirms that learners value their improved ability to communicate in English and the friendships they have made. Other valued outcomes include access to short-term employment (on local farms or in fruit-packing operations) and/or transfers to NHCE's English language partners in other locations, which provide additional opportunities for learners to meet local people and to experience New Zealand. In some instances, learners have improved their employment prospects in their home countries and/or gained access to further study.

Several local education agents confirmed their confidence in NHCE's knowledge of the expectations of learners and key markets. NHCE has longstanding relationships with several international colleges who regularly send groups of high school students for short programmes. NHCE also reports that more than 13 per cent of enrollees are returning students, which the PTE believes and the evaluators accept is further evidence of the college's ability to deliver valued outcomes.

NHCE is very effective in maintaining relationships with stakeholders, including education agents, homestay families, high schools and local employers, and using these networks to gather feedback and enhance opportunities for the students. This is reflected in the range of programmes offered during each calendar year, which are for groups with different interests and needs (such as high school students or students aged 40 and upwards). While many staff stay in touch with former learners through social media, there may be opportunities for further development of this tool to gather information on which to base improvements.

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**.

Learners at NHCE enjoy the small classes and receive a very high level of individual attention. Although it is not always possible – due to low student numbers – NHCE endeavours to provide all six language learning levels, which means there can be a wide range of language abilities in each class. The needs of learners and their particular interests are accommodated by experienced teachers who adjust teaching materials and activities to encourage participation and enhance learning. Classroom teaching is supplemented by additional opportunities for one-to-one tuition or conversation. These include the student-led coffee club, which is a good forum for airing issues, and whole-of-school activities, such as the weekly ‘find someone who...’ activity.

NHCE delivers a range of programmes to meet learner needs. These are mainly based on the English and Activities model, although exam preparation classes are also available. NHCE ensures an appropriate mix of activities and topics, depending on the interests and ages of the learners. One such example is the development of a unit on the language likely to be used in a farming context, and the preparation of additional information on what to expect when going on a farmstay. The job club provides an opportunity for those learners wanting work to develop curriculum vitae and to prepare for interviews.

NHCE uses standard international English language texts, which are regularly reviewed and updated. Teachers develop and share additional resources as needed, including those with a New Zealand focus, which reflect current points of local and national interest. NHCE has identified an opportunity to integrate digital technologies into teaching and learning, to better meet learner expectations and to increase access to resources. This initiative has begun with the acquisition of some new equipment, and professional development is planned.

NHCE listens to students and is responsive to their feedback, which is discussed regularly among staff. Meeting minutes and summary action sheets provide evidence of changes made to better meet learner needs. Recent examples include adding information on cyber bullying into the student handbook, and a plan to improve staff members’ ability to assist students with personal problems. End-of-course feedback is shared promptly with each teacher. Collated data from both the six-weekly and end-of-course surveys is analysed to identify trends and opportunities for further improvement. The consistently high rates of student satisfaction confirm NHCE’s effectiveness in meeting learner needs.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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**.

NHCE has a team of experienced and well-qualified teachers (including two Cambridge assessors) who provide an effective learning environment for a small but diverse learner cohort. Their collegial approach includes some team teaching, shared teaching resources and regular meetings to discuss learner progress and to share ideas. Learners benefit from a mix of activities, including guest speakers and learning outside the classroom, and report good relationships with their teachers and high levels of satisfaction with their learning experience.

Weekly class files provide a record of goals and teaching plans, summary comments on the week, and individual test scores. Regular assessment is based on the progress tests associated with the textbooks, which are subject to internal moderation and reflect the CEFR. Moderation practices could be strengthened by, for example, exchanging scripts with partner providers or blind marking. Internal moderation examples, which ensure consistency across and within the levels, and a shared understanding of what constitutes a close pass, could be further developed as part of professional development. Further assurance of the validity of learner outcomes is gained from comparing final examination results with practice examination results.

Teachers are responsive to learner feedback which is gathered regularly. The director of studies conducts annual observations and formal performance appraisals which include the formulation of personal teaching objectives. However, the evaluators found limited evidence of more frequent, systematic individual or group reflections on their teaching practice. The small size of the school means that teachers need to manage a wide range of ages, abilities and study goals within each class. Although learner feedback suggests that they are doing this well, a professional development programme has been planned to provide further support in this area. Other opportunities for professional development include access to a wider pool of teaching colleagues within the ICL group.

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**.

Excellent guidance and support is available to learners to ensure they have a positive learning experience, and this is a key factor in the achievement of their study goals. Students at NHCE benefit from an organisational culture where all staff share the responsibility for ensuring learner needs are met. Additional training

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is planned to provide additional assistance for tutors in supporting learners. There are well-established procedures for gathering and sharing information about learner well-being. The effectiveness of this approach is reflected in the consistently positive feedback from learners and other stakeholders.

New learners receive a comprehensive orientation, and their class placement is reviewed after the first week. They are welcomed to NHCE at the Monday coffee clubs where they have the opportunity to meet staff and students. Study goals are established during the enrolment process, and they are reviewed fortnightly at one-to-one meetings. These meetings, together with the after-school additional tutorial sessions, serve academic and pastoral care purposes, providing opportunities for learners to ask questions or seek advice. Although first-language counsellors are not available locally, NHCE advises that they can access assistance from the Auckland partner schools.

NHCE provides a varied activity programme, which is customised to the needs and interests of current students. The PTE provides opportunities for learners to learn about New Zealand and practise their English with other students and local people.

NHCE has a very well organised homestay service, with an established group of homestay families. In addition to the usual visits and day-to-day communication, NHCE provides regular events for homestay families, where they can meet other families, share their experiences and learn about other cultures. Families and students value highly the support provided by key staff, and their input is regularly sought via surveys and informal contact to identify improvements. Homestay information and processes were fully reviewed in 2012 and are comprehensive and effective.

NHCE has thorough processes which ensure compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students, including those under 18 years of age. Regular reviews of key processes and information for students, education agents and homestay families ensure high standards of service for all stakeholders.

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 **Good**.

The ownership change in late 2012 prompted a review of NHCE's strategic and business planning, resulting in improvements in facilities and clarification of staff accountabilities. The transition has been very well managed, and effective governance and management support arrangements have been established. These involve regular visits, meetings and reporting, and ensure practical advice and support is available for improving educational performance. While NHCE has retained its special character, staff have also gained access to additional resources

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and opportunities to share information with partner organisations. Some useful activities have taken place (such as a teacher secondment), but others have not progressed as yet (such as an action research project aimed at enhancing reflective teaching practice). Professional development (both academic and management) has been identified as a priority for supporting educational performance. This includes increasing capability in digital technologies, self-assessment, and leadership.

NHCE has effective academic and administrative processes which are contributing to learner outcomes and meeting learner needs, and which reflect the organisation's size and collegial culture. In particular, NHCE is responsive to learner feedback, which it uses to identify improvements in its education and service delivery. NHCE has recently adopted new evaluation forms which the PTE says are providing more useful information for analysis and benchmarking with partner providers. Analysis is now undertaken on a quarterly basis to better determine achievement against satisfaction targets.

Day-to-day self-assessment activities at NHCE are purposeful and effective, and reflect a shared commitment to ensuring high academic standards and excellent levels of pastoral care. A more structured approach to reflecting on teaching practice would better inform an understanding of teacher effectiveness. Periodic reviews of priority areas or activities, and evaluation of performance against partner organisations, could also contribute to a more in-depth understanding of educational performance and the better identification of wide-ranging, worthwhile improvements.

As NHCE becomes more integrated with the wider organisation, and planning and objective-setting is completed, it is anticipated that the organisational framework will help draw together some of the tools currently used, and embed them in a more coherent approach to self-assessment.

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 **Good**.

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: Experiencing English

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that New Horizon College of English Limited:

- Complete the strategic and business planning progress that is currently underway, to determine objectives and targets for sustaining high standards of educational performance and service delivery.
- Continue to build staff capability through a targeted professional development programme.
- Consider extending the range of evaluative activities to include periodic reviews of priority programmes or key activities to build a more in-depth understanding of learner needs and outcomes.

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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