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# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Seafield School of English Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 21 August 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:	Seafield School of English Limited
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1 February 1991
Location:	Level 3, 131 Queen Street, Auckland
Delivery sites:	As above
Courses currently delivered:	English Language Tuition
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	International students only: 180 equivalent full-time students from South Korea, China, Brazil, Philippines, Japan, Argentina, Venezuela, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Mexico.
Number of staff:	Nine full-time teaching staff; three contract staff
Scope of active accreditation:	See: <a href="http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=855217001">http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=855217001</a>
Distinctive characteristics:	Seafield provides English language courses to international students. The organisation currently offers English language courses for Elementary, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Upper Intermediate and Preparation for IELTS (International English Language Testing System) exams, as well as Practical English and Academic English afternoon classes.

Recent significant changes: In 2015, the school was purchased by New Zealand Skills and Education Group (NZSEG). NZSEG is an education group comprising three PTEs:

- NZSE (New Zealand School of Education)
- ATC (Advance Training Centre)
- Seafield (Seafield School of English)

All three PTEs are governed and managed by the same executive team (the managing director and five directors each responsible for their own portfolios: recruitment and marketing, operations, group finance, human resources, academic. The three organisations share similar goals. However, each PTE offers its own portfolio of programmes and each possesses its own unique character. Seafield shares its campus with NZSE.

Previous quality assurance history: At the previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2012, NZQA was Highly Confident in the educational performance and Highly Confident in the capability in self-assessment of the Seafield School of English.

Other: Seafield was approved to deliver the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic) (Level 4) in May 2017.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The EER included the following focus areas selected in discussion with the organisation:

- English Language Tuition – all current students are enrolled in the English Language Tuition programme. Some of these students are also enrolled in Preparation for IELTS, Practical English and Academic English programmes.
- International students: support and wellbeing – this is a mandatory focus area for a PTE enrolling international students.

### 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 evaluation team comprised two evaluators who worked on site for two days. During the EER visit, the evaluation team interviewed the executive team consisting of the managing director and four directors. The director of studies was also interviewed along with a representative of the advisory group and representatives of the teaching staff (seven), students (nine) and graduates (two). The team also interviewed the international students support team.

Along with the self-assessment summary received prior the visit, additional organisational documentation was also tabled for review. The evaluation team reviewed relevant samples including management, academic, administrative reports and minutes, student records, self-assessment documentation, teaching and learning resources, teacher performance and professional development plans, learner outcomes data, and evaluation feedback.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Seafield School of English Limited**.

- Seafield is meeting the needs of its students by providing varied and well-constructed learning opportunities to acquire language skills that are immediately applicable in their daily lives.
- The students' individual goals are identified on entry and responded to through the programme delivery.
- These classroom opportunities are supplemented with well-organised events outside of class, providing further opportunities to practise and apply their language skills in real-life situations.
- Seafield has collated destination data which shows that just under a half of the graduates progressed to study at tertiary level and a quarter of the graduates secured employment. The remaining graduates are recorded as returning to their home country, to work or study in their home country, or destination unknown.
- Students are highly satisfied with their learning experiences and the quality of programmes as reported in the i-Graduate survey (English Language Barometer November 2016). This reports that the level of learning satisfaction of students overall was 91 per cent compared with 87.5 per cent in New Zealand as a whole and 87.5 per cent globally. Areas that scored particularly high were teaching staff, assessments and performance feedback. In addition to this annual survey, feedback is sought through first impression surveys, end-of-course surveys and tutor evaluations.
- The delivery of the programmes is flexible to facilitate students moving between daytime and evening classes to meet their personal circumstances and individual language and life goals. Students appreciate this ongoing flexibility.
- The teaching staff are well qualified and highly experienced, ably led by a director of studies who has put into place strong processes to underpin delivery and assessment. The director of studies observes staff at least three-monthly, providing ongoing feedback and coaching on their practice. Staff in turn are encouraged to observe the director of studies. The observations, coaching and modelling have provided opportunities to identify areas for improvement and to grow good practice.
- Seafield has strong leadership and a clear direction. The executive team has a hands-on approach through each of the five directors having an identified

portfolio. The organisation's strategy is clearly defined and communicated. Seafield has managed a slow but steady growth, enabling the implementation and consolidation of strong policies and procedures to underpin its operations. Teaching staff recruitment has also been carefully managed to ensure everyone is committed to the organisation mission: 'to provide excellence in English language teaching'.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Seafield School of English Limited**.

- Seafield has a comprehensive self-assessment practice that systematically reviews all aspects of its operations and programmes. Quarterly and annual programme reviews are clear and succinct and provide useful information to inform the organisation of ongoing strengths and improvements where required. The areas for improvement are identified and the actions monitored until their resolution.
- The organisation effectively gathers and uses data, achievement progress and several surveys to understand its performance against indicators such as pass and distinction rates, withdrawals, movement between levels, graduate outcomes, feedback from students and stakeholders, and moderation.
- Students' progress is monitored weekly through formative testing, with a summative test every fourth week. Comprehensive feedback by teachers each week prepares the students well for the summative tests. A 60 per cent success rate signals a pass, and the students remains at that level and receives additional tuition. Achieving 80 per cent is a pass with distinction which enables progress to the next level. Seafield created this system and has found it useful in determining which students are ready to progress. The results committee verifies all results.
- The organisation is responsive to stakeholder feedback for ongoing improvements as demonstrated by feedback from the local advisory group. External PTE representatives within this group identified a weakness of many speakers of English as a second language who have progressed to tertiary studies: their lack of soft skills such as teamwork, presentation skills and communication. Seafield directly addresses these concerns through the use of Practical English afternoon classes where teachers aim to simulate real-world contexts to challenge students to use their recently learned language.
- Seafield has taken a measured approach to growth, and the strong systems and processes in place are testament to that.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 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**.

Students value the outcomes they are achieving. They are acquiring language skills that are immediately applicable in their daily lives and are aligned to their individual goals as identified on entry. These goals include employment, progression to studying in other learning institutes, IELTS preparation, and self-improvement. Seafield has collated destination data which confirms graduates are achieving these goals.

Seafield's strategy for identifying the students' starting level (elementary, pre-intermediate, intermediate, upper intermediate) is the placement test supplemented by a speaking placement test performed discreetly in class rather than as an interview. This appears to be effective in correct placement, and initial level decisions are settled within the first week.

Seafield tracks student progress with a weekly formative test with a short report and then a summative test held at week four. Sixty per cent is a pass mark and students stay at that level and receive further tuition. Those who achieve an 80 per cent pass mark do so with distinction and progress to the next level. Following a review, the teaching team decided to administer summative tests monthly rather than six-weekly to give more frequent formal feedback on student progress, which students appreciate. It also means a student achieving distinction passes more often can progress more quickly through the levels. In addition, because new students may have just started class during the four-week block, Seafield finds it more useful to use data from the second summative test onwards to realistically gauge progress. Seafield is collating data and tracking performance to inform trends, especially where they can use the information to support students to achieve. An example are the patterns that are emerging for different ethnicities. Some students are not as motivated to push to higher levels as that is not the main purpose for coming to New Zealand – they want sufficient English language to travel within New Zealand. Others are motivated to move through the levels as quickly as possible as their goal is access to other higher learning institutions.

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

Seafield identified that assessment and moderation was an area that needed strengthening. There is strong evidence of the validity of assessment judgement and progress through the levels through strengthened internal moderation, the use of the results committee, and external moderation processes.

Seafield plans to video the first student speech on entry to compare with the speech on graduation, which will also demonstrate growth of language skills and improved confidence. One student interviewed by the evaluation team commented: 'I can talk to others, I'm not so nervous, I can understand movies'. The students agreed that they initially felt very nervous participating in the presentation activity on Friday afternoons, but that their confidence had grown.

Following stakeholder feedback, which asked Seafield to include real-world language use for students in areas such as teamwork, presentation skills and communication, Seafield introduced Practical English classes to simulate real-world contexts such as ordering food at a café. Students enjoy these classes which usually culminate in going out as a class to apply their newly acquired skills in a café.

Seafield attributes their achievement successes to well-qualified staff, high student engagement, small classes, strong academic and pastoral support, regular assessment, and responsiveness to student feedback. All assessments encourage the teaching of the full range of skills and language.

## 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**.

Students studying at Seafield report a growth in confidence and wellbeing following the acquisition of language skills. They further commented that Seafield is a safe place to study, which is important for students arriving in a new country.

Destination data shows that students are using language skills to find employment, progression to studying in other learning institutes, IELTS preparation, and self-improvement. Of the students enrolled under the new ownership, 35 per cent are learning English for further study, 22 per cent are learning English for work in New Zealand, and 24 per cent had a stated goal of achieving a higher level of English for general reasons and the remainder for socialising purposes. Of the 176 graduates to date since 2015, 28 per cent progressed to tertiary study, 22 per cent gained work in New Zealand, and the remaining group achieved their goal of competence in everyday English. These are very good outcomes.

Student satisfaction feedback is sought through the i-Graduate survey and compared with the global and New Zealand average and notes areas where Seafield rated higher such as assessment, good teachers and performance feedback. Slightly below were language practice and multicultural activities. Seafield has already put in place activities to address these areas, including the implementation of Practical English afternoons and Friday presentations. Multicultural engagement has included interaction between Seafield and its sister school (Advance Training Ltd), which has a majority of Māori students. Students enjoyed this experience, taking part in pōwhiri and haka and attendance at a Māori kapa haka event. Teachers attended an in-house training on embedding Māori culture and looking to see what their respective cultures shared with Māori culture to foster cultural respect. The PTE has experimented with discussing life paths (student origins and aspirations) which they compare with how Māori introduce themselves on the marae.

The availability of technological equipment scored significantly lower in the surveys. Seafield has responded by purchasing more laptops.

Students achieve their goals and the surveys report high satisfaction with their experience at Seafield, with overall 90 per cent satisfaction with tutor delivery, assessment and feedback.

### 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**.

The programmes are well designed and delivered and meet the needs of students. There is a syllabus for each level. Morning classes are based on published texts such as the Face to Face' series of English workbooks, using teachers' own resources to enhance teaching, and incorporating New Zealand content. The afternoon options include Practical English to provide real-world practice and application, academic English classes and IELTS preparation. Evening classes are provided for those in employment and follow the same curriculum as morning classes. Students go off site to further apply their skills in such places as cafes, libraries and the zoo.

A well-qualified director of studies is leading a team of skilled and experienced staff. They all have English language teaching qualifications and some are being supported to further upgrade their qualifications, teaching and assessment practice. A structured performance management process includes individualised professional development plans, and staff can also attend conferences such as the National Conference for Community Languages, and seminars for teaching ESOL

(English for Speakers of Other Languages). All staff are observed quarterly for developmental purposes and more frequently if any matters are raised in student feedback. Staff have also observed the director of studies teaching. Staff members found these observations valuable because the coaching and modelling that followed provided opportunities to identify areas for improvement and to grow good practice.

Following self-review, Seafield has implemented a strengthened assessment and moderation system to check assessment tools and to validate assessment judgements. Assessments have been developed based on five language sections (reading, writing, listening, speaking and grammar/vocabulary) sourced from specific texts and aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and its level descriptors. Teachers take part in pre- and post-moderation of assessments, and all results and level progressions are submitted to the results committee for validation. Assessment samples from each teacher are then externally moderated. The external moderator reports have been very useful in improving practice such as the standardisation of assessment forms. These collective activities provide management with assurance that assessments are fair, valid and consistent.

Leaving reports are provided to all graduating students to give a clear indication of both personal development and English language achievement while at Seafield.

#### 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**.

Seafield effectively supports students to be involved in their own learning. They do this by encouraging the students to choose the appropriate afternoon classes to suit their goals, such as Practical English for students who would like to improve speaking for daily life, and academic support classes for those wanting to pursue higher tertiary studies. Students are also supported by after-class tutorials to overcome any study issues.

Students are encouraged to lead the Friday afternoon activities. These include presentations which students said are fun and have raised their confidence to interact with their peers. Feedback from students has led to the replacement of movie afternoons with a pronunciation club and the establishment of a weekly conversation club, both to increase practice time. As these latter activities have been proposed by students, the interest and motivation is high. The provision of an academic support class has been popular and directly supports the students who are

mainstreaming to the New Zealand School of Education and other education organisations.

Students can access a dedicated pastoral care staff member at all times. In addition, the students said they can talk to anyone on staff, therefore pastoral care is shared by all (management, teachers, administrators, support staff, marketing staff). There is a strong orientation process to familiarise students with programme regulations. The student support team can also support learners in their own language to enhance the monitoring of goals, mitigate any concerns and offer pastoral care.

Seafield uses a contractor to source homestay accommodation, but the PTE still carries out inspections and provides guidance to students seeking their own accommodation. Student attendance is monitored and they are contacted if they are absent. Guardians of under-18 students are invited to join the students at orientation. The student journey is underpinned by Seafield's adherence to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 and includes the time before arrival at Seafield and beyond.

First impression surveys, end-of-course surveys and tutor evaluations show that Seafield students are satisfied or very satisfied with the support received.

## 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**.

The executive team is effective in supporting educational achievement. This governance and management team manages two other PTEs and shares its collective expertise across the organisations. This enables Seafield to benefit from the breadth of experience, resources, collaborations, processes and systems that would not normally be available to an organisation of this size. The academic director plays a valuable role as she brings a different perspective. The school has benefited from the processes tried and consolidated in the other PTEs, such as the local advisory group, the results committee, the quarterly and annual programme review processes and data collation, analysis and usage.

There was evidence of a planned start-up and managed growth under the new ownership, beginning with the director of studies, a teacher and a small group of students. This meant that the curriculum, teaching materials, assessments and underpinning processes were in place before the PTE recruited more teachers and enrolled more students. This managed start also enabled the director of studies to recruit additional teachers who could fit in with the delivery, assessment and student support ethos of the organisation. The director of studies is well respected by the

teaching team who value his leadership, mentorship and guidance. He has implemented and consolidated a comprehensive self-assessment system to drive continuous improvement. There was ample evidence to show the improvements made in response to stakeholder and student feedback and programme reviews.

There is a genuine effort to engage with Māori tikanga and expose the students to this through interaction with the Māori students at Advance Training Centre, karakia to begin and end the executive meetings, embedding Māori practices into the curriculum, and using teaching resources relating to New Zealand culture and experiences.

Governance purchased Seafield only in 2015, but processes are well imbedded and practised. The executive team has reshaped this PTE with their own policies and procedures and developed and strengthened the curriculum and assessment.

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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**.

Seafield has effective compliance management processes in place to manage, monitor and review compliance. Seafield's executive team, through the PTE's sister organisation NZSE, is a member of Quality Tertiary Institutes which represents 12 large PTEs and is recognised as a peak body by key government agencies including the Ministry of Education, NZQA, the Tertiary Education Commission, Immigration New Zealand and Education New Zealand. Through Quality Tertiary Institutes, Seafield has access to all newsletter updates to keep abreast of any changes by these agencies. In addition, the director of recruitment and marketing is responsible for ensuring that all compliance requirements are met and policies and procedures remain legal and ethical.

Effective systems and processes are in place to maintain compliance with the Code of Practice. Seafield reviewed practices against the outcomes focus of the revised code which resulted in updated documentation, improved agent selection, monitoring and mentoring processes and strengthened enrolment processes. Management also organised training by an external education consultancy to give workshops and familiarise staff with the revised code.

A random sample of student files showed files were compliant, as all contained the required information including visa and relevant dates, passport, insurance and dates, programme start and finish dates and academic records. Attendance expectations as they relate to programme success and visa rules are actively managed, with staff contacting students if they have not arrived within the first 30

minutes of the morning, after-lunch and evening classes. Warnings and sanctions are applied when student attendance falls below 90 per cent.

Management has ensured that the delivery hours and programme outcomes align with the English Language Tuition programme requirements as approved by NZQA, and with the information provided to the students.

## Focus Areas

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

### 2.1 Focus area: English Language Tuition

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

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

### 2.2 Focus area: International 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**.

# Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Seafield monitor the sustainability of the new processes implemented as part of the start-up process as the organisation continues to grow.

# 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](http://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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