



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Phlair International Limited
trading as Phlair International College

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 27 October 2011

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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

TEO Name	Phlair International Limited, trading as Phlair International College (Phlair)
Location:	60 Rockfield Road, Penrose, Auckland
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1991
Number of students:	Domestic: 100 International: 14
Number of staff:	19 (all employed by Alphacrucis – see below)
Scope of active accreditation:	Phlair has six NZQA-approved courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate in Extended Intermediate English (level 3)• Certificate in Intermediate English (level 3)• Certificate in Upper-Intermediate English (level 4)• Certificate in Spoken English• NZIM Diploma in Management/NZ Diploma in Business (levels 5 and 6)• Certificate and Diploma in Christian Ministries
Sites:	The main campus, as above, with an additional training site at Te Awamutu in association with the Intercultural Institute of NZ. The Te Awamutu site

is currently not active.

Distinctive characteristics: Phlair is an interdenominational Christian tertiary provider and Christian principles underlie its philosophy and practice.

In 2009, Phlair International College was purchased outright by another PTE, Alphacrucis Ltd. The two PTEs share the same governance; vision and strategy; management; staff; and policies and processes but are funded separately by the Tertiary Education Commission (Student Achievement Component funding) for their domestic learners. Since 2009, both PTEs have operated from what was previously the Phlair training site. All staff in both organisations are employed under the umbrella of Alphacrucis. Alphacrucis underwent EER in November 2010, resulting in a Confident/Confident rating.

Phlair is funded by the TEC for 80 places under the Intensive Literacy and Numeracy programme.

Recent significant changes: N/A

Previous quality assurance history: Phlair underwent an initial EER in November 2009 at which it was rated: Confident for educational performance and Not Yet Confident for capability in self-assessment. The concern at that EER was that Phlair's self-assessment, although valid, was not systematic enough to inform strategic and business planning.

Phlair is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students (Code of Practice) including 14-18-year-olds.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope for the external evaluation and review consisted of the mandatory focus areas:

- Governance, management, and strategy
- International student support.

In addition, the following focus areas were selected:

- NZIM Diploma in Management/NZ Diploma in Business (levels 5 and 6)

- Certificate in English and other ESOL courses.

As these are the only programmes offered by Phlair, at their suggestion both were included in the scope.

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 EER team comprised an external lead evaluator, who led the evaluation, and an NZQA lead evaluator. Prior to the EER visit, the external lead evaluator visited the site and met with the principal and key staff to agree the EER scope.

A one and a half-day EER visit was made to the Phlair site in Penrose, Auckland, where the evaluation team met with the principal, head of language studies, academic dean, business manager, one ESOL advisory committee member, teaching staff, support staff, and students. A member of the business advisory committee was interviewed by telephone.

Key documents were reviewed, including strategic planning documents, TEC performance data, self-assessment plans and reports, meeting minutes, and course planning and teaching material.

Phlair International College has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Phlair International College**.

Students at Phlair are achieving good results. Formal data indicates that Phlair has a 76 per cent course completion rate against a national average of 75 per cent for courses at a comparable level. Systems for the continuous and ongoing review of student achievement are expected to continue to produce good outcomes.

A performance criteria for the Intensive Literacy and Numeracy (ILN) funding is that 80 per cent of students make measured improvements. ILN students' needs are formally assessed at the time of enrolment and reassessed on a weekly basis throughout the course. This information is then used to address ongoing individual needs and contribute to the subsequent achievements of the students.

Phlair has begun the process of monitoring graduate outcomes and is making good use of the information gained as part of self-assessment to improve student outcomes. The early results from graduate monitoring indicate that the organisation is adequately preparing students for further study or employment.

Phlair and its staff engage well with their community and are valued for the positive contribution they make. As part of their studies, students have organised, or participated in, worthwhile events and services in the community.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Phlair International College**.

Phlair has a reflective organisational culture. Governance, management, staff, and external stakeholders are involved in reviewing the purpose and direction of the training and how well it is meeting its stakeholders' needs. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their role, which benefits students through improved teaching techniques and constructive student support.

Phlair analyses and reflects on information about students' progress and achievement on an ongoing basis. This information is then used to inform course content and delivery which ultimately results in improved outcomes for students.

The merging of Phlair and Alphacrucis required significant structural change. Phlair has since initiated a purposeful and comprehensive self-assessment process which engages all levels of the organisation, from governance to support staff. The evaluation team is satisfied that the changes that have been put in place will continue to lead to significant and meaningful, ongoing improvements as the new processes continue to be embedded in a planned and coordinated approach to evaluative self-assessment across both organisations. Because of the progress

already made with self-assessment and the clear commitment to its continuation, NZQA is confident that Phlair will at least maintain its current levels of performance.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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**.

Students at Phlair are achieving good results. All English Language students are tested on entry and their progress measured regularly by way of formative testing, which is benchmarked against the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) practice test every six weeks. Phlair is in the process of benchmarking its practice tests against those of another provider.

Since Phlair has only been delivering the NZIM Diploma in Management since November 2009, there has only been one small cohort who have completed to date. Of the five students who began the programme in November 2009, four completed and graduated. Phlair staff reported that the fifth student withdrew because of urgent and unforeseen family commitments in China.

Phlair has been rigorously applying entry criteria to the NZ Diploma in Business (NZDipBus), which they are aware has contributed to low enrolment numbers, but they are confident that the initiative will result in good retention and achievement rates and worthwhile graduates.

Phlair has recognised the positive correlation between student attendance and achievement and has processes to monitor student attendance. Students who are not in attendance and have not made contact are followed up by Phlair support staff on a daily basis. Students reported that they understood this procedure and thought it was fair.

The good results being achieved by students at Phlair have come about through sound teaching, effective support, and the will of the organisation to ensure that students benefit and achieve. Students reported that they received timely, accurate, and supportive feedback on their progress from Phlair staff.

Students on the Spoken English course reported on the hugely positive influence the course has made on their lives by improving their ability to engage with the wider community and find employment. In keeping with the requirements of Intensive Literacy and Numeracy funding, all Spoken English students are assessed using the TEC national assessment tool at the beginning and end of the programme. Phlair is meeting the TEC requirement that 8 per cent of students show improvement.

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

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 **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Adequate**.

Valued outcomes are achieved by most of Phlair's students, particularly those on the Spoken English courses.

Phlair staff members determine the goals of every Spoken English student and strive to ensure that the students achieve them. Feedback from Spoken English students indicates that the majority of them improve their participation in their communities and increase their employment potential.

Business students indicated that they were seeking to gain a work permit on graduation, leading ultimately to permanent residence. Phlair has introduced interview and job search techniques to assist students with these goals. To date, there has been no formal feedback as to the success of this initiative.

The organisation has anecdotal information about the business studies graduates and the way in which the programme has contributed to their lives, but it does not have a definitive list of graduate outcomes or a formal analysis of graduate feedback which can be used to make improvements. As Phlair's self-assessment systems mature, it is expected that engagement with graduates will inform programme improvements in a more systematic way.

Phlair regularly participates in national or international fora in Christian teaching. More recently, it has contributed to the NZQA Targeted Review of (Religious Studies, ESOL and Business) Qualifications.

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 **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Phlair engages well with relevant sectors of the community and is valued for the contribution that it makes.

The evaluation team saw lots of evidence of regular feedback being gathered about each course and every teacher. There were examples given of how this feedback has influenced the curriculum and delivery of courses.

The business and English departments have both formed local advisory committees which meet once or twice per year. The English advisory committee is dominated by Phlair staff and has only one external member. The reason for this

was cited as the competitive nature of the English language industry. Fortunately, Phlair staff have good professional links with community organisations such as the Auckland Regional Migrant Services and Citizens Advice Bureau. These organisations refer students to Phlair and offer feedback on the outcomes of the courses for the referred students.

Phlair's business department has good external relationships which enhance the quality of the business programmes being delivered. The department regularly utilises industry speakers, practicums, and field trips in the delivery of the NZDipBus. Students are all members of the Penrose Business Association and are encouraged to fully participate in it.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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 was clear evidence of excellent teaching practice taking place at Phlair. All staff are enthusiastic and passionate about their curriculum and teaching and they are well supported by management. Every staff member at Phlair has a role in student learning and they take a collegial, whole-of-organisation approach to ensuring that all students achieve.

Teachers and students relate well to each other. Students spoke highly of Phlair's staff. They liked the open, friendly style and find their learning activities interesting and challenging. Small classes mean that students have constant access to the teaching staff and can make continuous suggestions about improvements. Students noted that staff were responsive to concerns or issues raised. The strong rapport between students and staff was evident from discussions and evaluation survey outcomes.

Concern was raised at the previous EER that the NZDipBus courses were being delivered and assessed in a ten-week term. The programme is now structured as 15-week terms and staff agree that this has enabled the course material to be covered more comprehensively.

Moderation is systematic and comprehensive. Phlair staff have taken a lead role in the Auckland Moderation Cluster Group (NZDipBus) which has led to improved assessment design and moderation outcomes.

Phlair has a thorough system for students to evaluate and provide feedback on teaching and other aspects of their programme. This feedback is then analysed, discussed, acted upon as appropriate, and reported back to students in a timely manner. The formal feedback from students, as well as the wealth of informal comments received, provides teaching and management staff with valuable information which is used effectively to identify new or alternative learning

strategies. Management has organised a “colloquium” at least once per term, where staff are encouraged to share good teaching practice and ideas.

Phlair teaching staff are well qualified in their respective disciplines and all teaching staff hold an appropriate teaching qualification.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Phlair has robust and client-friendly systems for the pastoral care of its students. The organisation is providing a safe and supportive learning environment for its students and is in close contact outside of the normal hours of tuition. Although Phlair rightly believes that there is likely to be a positive correlation between student support and achievement, to date it has not formally analysed the link between student support and student achievement. A more analytical and systematic approach to student support may lead to increased completion rates.

There is a designated support staff member with 24-hour phone contact if the students require assistance when away from the site. Homestay accommodation for international students is managed through a homestay agent.

The admissions coordinator has overall responsibility for student support and pastoral care and ensures that Code of Practice requirements are met. The admissions coordinator and other staff regularly attend professional development offered by the Ministry of Education’s Code of Practice office.

All current international students enrolled with Phlair are over 18 years of age. Phlair occasionally accepts international students under the age of 18 and staff are fully aware of their Code of Practice obligations for these students and ensure that they are meeting them.

Phlair arranges a number of “after-class” activities such as sport and cultural events, and students have access to a fully equipped gymnasium and fitness centre. The Christian fellowship sessions, every Thursday morning, are highly regarded by staff and students as an opportunity for management, staff, students, and community to converse with each other.

Most of the international students are recruited in New Zealand through an on-shore agent based in Manurewa or through word of mouth from past students. Students and staff confirmed that the information and guidance provided to students at the time of enrolment is accurate and appropriate.

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

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**.

Phlair is a charitable organisation with a clear set of goals and objectives driven by its vision document. The organisation has developed and is embedding effective systems for monitoring student achievement and actively supporting staff to improve educational outcomes.

The Phlair Council (joint with Alphacrucis) is actively engaged in the governance of the organisation and has a healthy and appropriate understanding of the respective roles of governance and management. Evidence was presented which outlined management's approach to securing organisation-wide commitment to self-assessment. The council and staff engaged in in-depth discussions on the philosophy and practice of self-assessment before a formal commitment was made to a whole-of-organisation approach.

Phlair has employed very highly qualified and experienced staff and is investing in their ongoing development. Professional development is informed by the results of teaching observations and performance.

The campus is well supplied with physical and learning resources for the number of students that it currently has.

Although the students are achieving well in terms of their language development, for most of these students it is not literacy, and certainly not numeracy, that they lack. Restricting entry to the programme to those who have reasonable English but require literacy and/or numeracy development would be a better reflection of the intent of the Intensive Literacy and Numeracy guidelines.

Management monitors organisational and individual performance at all levels of the organisation in a regular, transparent, and open manner. The evaluation team observed coherence across all staff in their focus on giving students the best experience possible to equip them to perform and achieve. The organisation encourages opportunities for reflection on its role and how to continue to make ongoing and continuous improvements to how it meets the needs of students and other stakeholders.

Although the self-assessment cycle is in its second year, as evidenced by the actions in the organisation's meta-plan, the PTE's purposeful approach to this process has already led to several improvements in its quality management system, processes and policies, as well as benefits to students. Given its robust design and organisation-wide commitment, Phlair can expect its self-assessment process to continue to deliver ongoing benefits.

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 **Good**.

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

2.2 Focus area: Student support including international students

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

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

The evaluation did not identify any areas of concern regarding Phlair's compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.

2.3 Focus area: NZIM Diploma in Management/NZ Diploma in Business

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

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

2.4 Focus area: Certificate in English and other ESOL courses

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

There are no recommendations arising from this external evaluation and review.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring all non-university TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board.

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).

*Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication *Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review*, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eeer/introduction/>*

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