

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Alphacrucis International College

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 3 September 2015

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	6
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	6
Summary of Results	7
Findings	9
Recommendations	16
Appendix	17

MoE Number: 8573
NZQA Reference: C18199
Date of EER visit: 13-17 February 2015

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:	Alphacrucis International College (AIC)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	1 April 1991
Location:	60 Rockfield Road, Penrose, Auckland
Delivery sites:	As above
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bachelor of Contemporary Ministry (Level 7)• Diploma in Christian Leadership (Level 6)• Diploma in Christian Ministries (Level 5)• Certificate in Christian Ministries (Level 4)• New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Level 3 and Level 4)• Intensive Literacy and Numeracy
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes. Including for under 18-year-olds, although all current international students are 18 years of age or over.
Number of students:	Domestic: 124 equivalent full-time students (of whom 77 full-time students are TEC funded) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 per cent Māori and 18 per cent Pasifika• International: 16 equivalent full-time students

Number of staff:	Nineteen full-time equivalents – all staff are employed by Alphacrucis in NZ and work seamlessly between AIC and its sister entity, Alphacrucis Ltd.
Scope of active accreditation:	In addition to the courses currently delivered, AIC holds accreditation and approval for a range of courses and unit standards in the fields of religion, business and other related areas, up to level 6.
Distinctive characteristics:	AIC is a Christian faith-based private training establishment located in Penrose, Auckland. The college is jointly owned by the Assemblies of God in New Zealand Inc and Alphacrucis Australia.
Recent significant changes:	AIC had its first degree approved in 2012. This resulted in a significant culture shift for the organisation.
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>The previous external evaluation and review (EER) of AIC was conducted in October 2011. NZQA was Confident in both AIC's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.</p> <p>The Bachelor of Contemporary Ministry monitoring report, May 2014, indicated that AIC is fulfilling its commitment to deliver the degree under the terms specified through NZQA's Approval and Accreditation Process (2011).</p> <p>AIC participated in a consistency review for the New Zealand Certificate in English Language, held during the same week as this EER. AIC's evidence was found to be 'sufficient' to demonstrate consistency with the graduate profile.</p>
Other:	<p>This report should be read in conjunction with the EER report for Alphacrucis Ltd, March 2015.</p> <p>The council and management of Alphacrucis in NZ run two educational entities called:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Alphacrucis International College (AIC)</u>, which was purchased by Alphacrucis in NZ in 2009 as Phlair International College and renamed Alphacrucis International College • <u>Alphacrucis Ltd</u> which it has owned and operated since the early 1990s.

The retention of both entities rather than full merger has been continued to allow for Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)-funded courses (through AIC) and unfunded courses (through Alphacrucis Ltd) to be offered.

Alphacrucis in NZ runs single governance and management bodies for both entities; staff and premises are shared. Some of the courses are identical, but AIC also has some unique courses. The management preserves a distinction between the entities as follows:

- Each entity has its own Ministry of Education identification number
- Each has its own student management system and hence student records
- Each processes an individual single data return
- Each is a signatory in its own right to the international Code of Practice
- There are separate graduation certificates and records (common graduation ceremony)
- Students are made aware of which entity they are studying under (although in reality most simply regard themselves as Alphacrucis students).

NZQA agreed to conduct two EERs in parallel, with:

- One field visit where the evaluators examined both organisations simultaneously
- Joint and separate delivery focus areas
- Two separate reports which contain some common sections
- Independent ratings – there was no guarantee that the Statements of Confidence or ratings would be the same for both entities.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of this EER included the following mandatory focus areas:

- Governance, management and strategy
- International students

The other focus areas selected were:

- Bachelor of Contemporary Ministry (Level 7) – selected because it is the highest-level programme offered by AIC and includes the bulk of AIC's enrolments.
- New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Level 3 and Level 4) – selected because it is a new qualification registered on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.

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 EER was conducted in mid-February 2015. Prior to the EER, the lead evaluator visited the AIC site and met with the principal to discuss and agree on the scope and format of the EER visit. A self-assessment summary and a range of other documents were made available prior to the visit.

The EER visit took place over three days, where the evaluation team, consisting of two evaluators, reviewed a range of documentation and met with the principal; the academic director; other members of the executive leadership team; two groups of lecturers; the library manager; Māori liaison officer; student support staff; three groups of students plus several individual students; and external stakeholders. Phone and Skype conversations were held with four board members in Australia and New Zealand, as well as with a number of graduates and external stakeholders.

As discussed, this EER was unique in that the field work component of the evaluation covered two organisations in parallel.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

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

The reasons for this include:

- Learners at AIC are achieving good results. TEC educational performance data supplemented by the PTE's own data for 2014 indicates that course completion at the college was on average 88 per cent in 2014. Learners acquire relevant knowledge and skills for ministry work, gain maturity, and continue to be motivated throughout their studies. Most of the learners complete courses and gain qualification(s); (see Findings 1.1). The achievement rates for face-to-face and distance learning students are similar.
- The organisation is strongly outcomes-focused and recognises that students must receive good value from their experience and their qualification. This is borne out by, for instance, the fact that all of the graduates from the Bachelor of Contemporary Ministry are now employed in fields related to their study (see Findings 1.2).
- Feedback from graduates and industry indicates that the courses have an appropriate mix of theory and practice, and are delivered in a manner that enables learners to understand and achieve. The quality of the training provided at AIC is affirmed by a range of stakeholders who describe the graduates as work-ready, well presented and with well-developed skills and knowledge. Employers and graduates report that the skills and knowledge gained are immediately applicable to the workplace and are valued by both the graduate and employer.
- The EER team found consistent evidence of excellent teaching throughout the organisation. AIC has student support structures that are appropriate to the needs of the students and minimise barriers to them achieving their goals. Students are very well supported both pastorally and academically.
- The organisation is well governed and managed, engages well with its communities and industries, is providing quality training, and is valued for the positive contribution it makes to those industries and communities.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

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

The reasons for this include:

- Records and discussions indicate that self-assessment at AIC is well embedded and has been practised for several years. Processes to critically analyse contributing factors to student outcomes and other quality improvements are mostly well developed and effective.
- AIC has established a highly reflective organisational culture which encourages staff, students, graduates and other stakeholders to put forward ideas for improvement. This information is then systematically used to make organisational improvements as well as inform course structure, content and delivery, which ultimately results in improved outcomes for students.
- All staff are involved in reviewing the purpose and direction of the organisation and how well it is meeting stakeholders' needs. Staff members are well supported by management and have plenty of opportunities for reflection on their role, which ultimately benefits students through improved teaching techniques and student support.
- AIC identifies the learning needs of its industries and communities, and addresses those needs well through responsive customer service, effective teaching techniques and appropriate student support.
- Student achievement on every course is scrutinised for each individual's performance; AIC has a strong focus on individual student achievement. For instance, AIC is able to identify the characteristics of students who are not achieving the qualifications, while identifying ways to bring about improvement to achievement rates for these students in this demographic in the future.
- However, college staff had difficulty in providing timely and succinct numerical and trend data for student achievement across the organisation and/or qualifications overall, and seem to rely predominantly on the TEC's educational performance indicator data as the means of measuring their own success. A greater emphasis on wider organisational achievement data will help the organisation to recognise and act on overall organisational 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 AIC are achieving good results as demonstrated by the table below.

Educational performance indicator	2011	2012	2013	2014
Course completion – all learners	73%	91%	72%	88%
Qualification completion – all learners	60%	68%	59%	-
Course completion – Māori learners	-	-	79%	100%
Course completion – Pasifika learners	-	-	58%	53%
Course completion – learners < 25 years	-	-	72%	75%

Data for 2011-2013 from the TEC; 2014 data provided by the PTE.
Table designed by NZQA for illustration purposes.

Both the organisation and its staff have a strong focus on learner achievement, but do not set targets or compare benchmarks for student success. Instead they expect that every learner who attends an AIC course can succeed, and staff work hard to keep all students focused on completion. However, the lack of numerical analysis, for instance, was evident in the fact that no-one had an explanation for the spike in student success in 2012 or why it has not continued in subsequent years.

The strategy for raising Pasifika achievement is still emerging and yet to be fully implemented or result in improvements. Given that Pasifika make up 18 per cent of AIC's students, it is important that this gap is addressed with urgency.

Staff at AIC demonstrated a sound understanding of the factors that lead to student achievement, for instance pastoral support, and regularly analyse and discuss ideas for improving achievement. The staff have a formal minuted meeting once per month. At these meetings, ideas for improving course delivery and learner achievement are discussed and agreed.

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

The New Zealand Certificate in English Language is a new programme within the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. The first cohort of students completed the qualification in semester 2, 2014. Of the three students in the cohort, two successfully completed the qualification. Although the numbers are not enough to be statistically significant, the two students who completed both achieved a positive outcome in that they were accepted for enrolment on higher-level programmes at other learning institutions.

More effective use of the college's student management system to provide student performance data that is readily accessible to staff and used continuously would help to systematically inform improvements, for instance to teaching practice and course delivery.

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**.

AIC delivers outcomes of exceptional value to learners and its industry and community. Learners gain worthwhile skills in the programmes that AIC delivers which make them employable in a range of situations. Graduates and employers report that the skills and knowledge gained were immediately applicable to the workplace and are valued by both the graduate and employer. Graduates also report that the programmes are 'transformational' and a life-changing experience. Several graduates spoken to, who were in voluntary or paid employment while studying, commented on the value of the leadership and governance course and how completing it led to immediate and positive changes in their work.

Staff conduct exit interviews with all graduates and know their immediate destination. Engagement with graduates is immediate upon graduation, at three months after graduation, and ongoing thereafter. AIC also receives extensive feedback from employers about graduates' skills and uses this feedback to make improvements to programmes. For instance, AIC has developed a chaplaincy strand within the degree in response to stakeholder feedback.

Learners contribute to the local community during their studies. An internship component in the degree programme involves learners putting theory into practice through paid and/or voluntary chaplaincy work in the communities in which they live. Internships usually involve working in schools, prisons, workplaces, sports teams, the armed services, hospitals, etc.

There have only been two graduates so far from the New Zealand Certificate in English Language programme. Both graduates achieved their goals in being able to enrol in further, higher-level study with other providers. AIC will stay in contact

with these graduates to confirm that the certificate adequately prepared them for this further study.

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 **Good**.

Significant and meaningful contact with employers and stakeholders contributes to the positive outcomes that AIC is achieving. The college intentionally seeks feedback and has multiple processes for gathering feedback from stakeholders and assimilating the information into improvements. In order to enhance relationships with stakeholders, the college offers stakeholders and alumni the opportunity to attend special events and teaching days at the college and to participate in intensive courses.

The linkages with the Australian parent organisation and the guidance and support offered by the organisation are valuable. Staff have gained value from participation (via Skype) in events with their Australian colleagues.

Programmes are relevant and reflect changes in subject content, delivery, teaching practice and technologies. Members of the wider church community are regularly used as guest speakers and to critique student work. The college has worked hard over time to ensure that the teaching is closely related to the needs of the students. The pathway from certificate to diploma to degree and on to postgraduate study in Australia is a logical progression, and the flexible mix of face-to-face and distance learning suits the needs of the learners.

AIC seeks feedback from learners through a variety of mechanisms. As well as the formal student feedback process, staff members have an open-door policy, and it is clear that students approach them with problems and issues. The online feedback process for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students is available in English, Arabic or Mandarin, which has enabled students with little English to still provide comprehensive feedback. The class representative system also provides a good mechanism for student feedback. Staff members were able to cite examples of how course content and delivery methodology had been changed as a result of feedback from learners or external stakeholders. Examples are the emphasis on chaplaincy cited earlier in this report and the identification of pastoral and academic support needs for distance learning students.

During the week of the EER visit, AIC staff participated in the New Zealand Certificate in English Language consistency review facilitated by NZQA. The results of the review were not available in time for this report, but participation in the review, even though the PTE had only two graduates at the time, indicates that AIC is intent on ensuring that its programmes are consistent with stakeholder expectations.

Final Report

The formal advisory committee structure is still emerging for the English language sector. AIC does not have a functioning local advisory committee and no other formal stakeholder engagement for ESOL. This is a gap that needs addressing as many of the ESOL students are new migrants and the college needs to have an effective mechanism for understanding and meeting their needs.

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 AIC. Staff members are enthusiastic and passionate about their curriculum and teaching and are well supported by management. Every staff member at AIC 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 and students speak highly of the college's teaching staff. Students enjoy the open, friendly style and have good access to the teaching staff outside of class hours. Students noted that staff members are responsive to the concerns or issues they raised. The strong rapport between students and staff is confirmed from discussions and evaluation survey outcomes.

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

There was evidence of the whole organisation purposefully engaging in meaningful discussion about teaching practice and student progress. Teaching staff spoke about how they share ideas, experiences and knowledge through their daily interactions, staff meetings, peer observations and professional development activities. Staff participate via Skype in a monthly colloquium with their Australian counterparts.

All staff members are performance-reviewed formally on an annual basis, but this does not preclude regular and ongoing feedback of a formative nature. The organisation has a formal peer observation procedure in which all the teaching staff participate. In fact, the staff members informally engage in peer observation on an ongoing basis, including being able to remotely observe online teaching by their colleagues. Teaching staff commented on the value of the peer observation process and were able to cite examples of how they had improved teaching delivery as a result. AIC management encourages staff to engage in professional development activities and supports them to do so. Professional development for staff is strategically driven, based on the needs of the organisation identified through feedback and planning. For instance, the lead-up to degree teaching was preceded by an emphasis on staff gaining higher qualifications and a significant lift in their research focus. Teaching staff on the degree are active in research.

Moderation is seen not only as a necessary compliance but also as a tool to enhance quality delivery and assessment. All assessment material is pre-moderated before use. Students reported receiving clear information about assessment tasks and receiving detailed, timely feedback about their learning progress. Students have opportunities for reassessment/resubmission if required.

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**.

AIC staff and management are highly student-centred and committed to the success and well-being of their students. The support systems at the college are student-centred and well resourced.

AIC monitors progress and achievement in order to profile students to anticipate which students will need support, what support they will need, and when they will likely need it. This has enabled the PTE to identify potentially at-risk students and to proactively plan and provide support on an individual basis and ensure that it directly contributes to student achievement.

A number of initiatives have been taken to include Tikanga Māori in programmes and more generally in the life of the college. These include a marae visit as part of the student orientation programme, introduction of elements of Tikanga Māori through Moodle online learning, inclusion of a powhiri in the college's graduation ceremony, incorporation of elements of Tikanga Māori in specific papers, and the planning of a conference titled Gospel, Māori and Pentecost, which took place in December 2014.

AIC is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. The international student strategy has been well thought through, ensuring a measured and carefully managed approach to international education. AIC has regularly reviewed its practices to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Code of Practice, and has met compliance requirements with NZQA.

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**.

AIC has strong leadership and a clear vision and understanding of its business. The organisational strategy is formally documented, and management and staff members have a common understanding of the organisation's vision and direction. Recent self-assessment documents provide evidence of effective analysis of information from a variety of sources, and additional direction for future actions. As previously discussed, better accessibility and analysis of student achievement data would improve self-assessment capability.

AIC is very well resourced. The college is financially sustainable and operates from an expansive, well-maintained campus which provides a good environment for learning. A library is situated on-campus and houses a valuable collection of resources to support teaching and research.

AIC is responsive to changes in the operating environment. For instance, the college is actively involved in the NZQA-led Targeted Review of Qualifications and was one of the early adopters in the transition to the New Zealand Certificate in English Language.

The college, in partnership with Alphacrucis Ltd, has over time employed, developed and retained a very competent, well-qualified and dedicated group of staff. Staff said they enjoyed the environment and that they worked hard and felt highly valued. A number have been there for a decade or more. Management was open in their appreciation of the efforts, loyalty and dedication of staff.

The organisation enthusiastically encourages opportunities for reflection on its role and how to better meet stakeholder needs. This has led to a highly reflective environment and culture throughout. Evidence indicates that Alphacrucis management and governance actively seeks feedback from many sources and systematically uses this information as a learning and improvement tool.

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 students

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: Bachelor of Contemporary Ministry (Level 7)

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

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

2.4 Focus area: New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Level 3 and Level 4)

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Alphacrucis International College:

- Improve the accessibility and analysis of achievement data.
- Develop and make use of targets and benchmarks for student achievement.
- Develop and implement strategies to improve the achievement rate of Pasifika students.
- Establish a formal process for stakeholder engagement in relation to English language courses and students.

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/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz