



Report of External Evaluation and Review

Crown Institute of Studies

Confident in educational performance

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 31 December 2011

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	6
Findings	8
Recommendations	16
Appendix	17

MoE Number: 8644
NZQA Reference: C06125
Date of EER visit: 13-15 September 2011

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:	Crown Institute of Studies (Crown)
Location:	10-14 Lorne Street, Auckland CBD
Type:	Private training establishment
First registered:	1991 with NZQA (has operated since 1972)
Number of students:	Domestic (TEC-funded): 169 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) International: 315 (average)
Number of staff:	71 (full-time and part-time)
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• English (six levels plus TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages))• New Zealand Diploma in Business (Levels 5 and 6)• Diploma in Tourism (Level 5)• Certificate in Travel and Tourism (Core Skills)• National Certificate in Travel (Level 3 and Level 4)• IATA/UFTAA Foundation Diploma• Certificate in Hospitality (Food and Beverage) (Level 3)• National Diploma in Hospitality (Management) (Level 5)
Sites:	Head office and training centre as above.

Recent significant changes: Crown underwent a change of ownership in 2010. The company is now owned by the original owner and founder.

Historically, Crown has operated as two businesses, Crown English and Crown Institute, which operated independently in separate premises. The two entities were combined in the Crown Institute premises in Lorne Street at the beginning of 2011.

Previous quality assurance history: Crown underwent an initial EER in May 2010 at which it was rated: Not Yet Confident in educational performance and Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment.

Crown is a signatory to the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.

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
- Student support including international students.

In addition, the following focus areas were selected:

- New Zealand Diploma in Business (NZDipBus)
- Certificate in English
- Certificate in Hospitality (Food and Beverage) and National Diploma in Hospitality Management

The focus areas above were selected to provide a reasonable representation of Crown's activities. The Certificate in English includes the suite of English programmes and is Crown's biggest programme. NZDipBus is a core programme for Crown and includes both domestic and international students. Hospitality programmes presented an opportunity to observe how well the students achieved when they progressed from certificate to diploma.

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 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 external evaluation and review (EER) was conducted in mid-September 2011. Prior to the EER visit, the EER team visited the site and met with the owner, the academic director, the director of studies (Crown English), the general manager (Crown English), the head of department for travel, tourism and hospitality, the business studies programme leader, and the campus manager. Also in attendance at this meeting was Crown's legal counsel.

A three-day EER visit was made to the Crown site in Auckland, where the evaluation team, consisting of the lead evaluator and two other evaluators, accompanied by the NZQA principal evaluation advisor, met with the owner, management staff, teaching staff, administration staff, students, and external representatives. Crown's legal counsel was on campus for the three days of the EER and attended all sessions apart from those designated for the EER team only.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Crown Institute of Studies**

There has been notable improvement in course completion and achievement for domestic students over the past few years. Course completion at Crown, according to TEC Educational Performance Indicators (EPI) has improved from 39 per cent in 2009 to 65 per cent in 2010. The increase is attributed by Crown to monitoring attendance, improved pastoral care, and improved enrolment processes.

While these results are positive, the analysis undertaken by Crown of its educational achievement is inconsistent at the programme and organisational levels. Crown could not comprehensively demonstrate the long-term benefits of its programmes. There was some evidence of value in the qualitative data presented, but feedback from employers and graduates was generally sketchy.

The organisation has a student support structure that is appropriate to the needs of its students, and the students interviewed at this evaluation were mostly positive about their experience at Crown. Feedback from students indicates that programmes are delivered in a manner that enables them to understand the material being presented, and that teachers and students relate well to each other.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Not Yet Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Crown Institute of Studies**.

There is inconsistent evidence that Crown recognises the value of self-assessment and methodically uses it as a tool to improve its educational performance. To date, improvement in student outcomes has tended to be reactive and piecemeal rather than as a result of systematic long-term planning and strategy. While activities such as monitoring attendance, improved pastoral care, and improved enrolment processes can be plausibly connected to an improvement in student outcomes, these activities have been reactive rather than as a result of a long-term approach. There were a few worthwhile improvements in the months prior to the EER, and the promise of further improvements in the near future, but these were insufficient for the EER team to be fully confident in Crown's self-assessment capability.

Crown has systems for gathering learner and some stakeholder feedback, but there was no evidence that this information was being systematically used to make improvements to the programmes. With the notable exception of the Hospitality and Tourism programmes, graduate and employer input was missing from much of the self-assessment activity.

The challenge for Crown is to ensure that the good practice evident in some programmes is expanded to the wider organisation's systems for quality

improvement. Crown should direct its self-assessment efforts into developing a systematic approach to gain a greater level of understanding of educational performance and use this understanding to bring about improvements linked to valid and reliable achievement data and valued outcomes for learners.

TEO response

Crown has had an opportunity to comment on draft versions of this report, and all comments received have been carefully considered by NZQA before the finalisation of the report.

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 **Adequate**.

Students at Crown are achieving good results. Crown has recognised the positive correlation between student attendance and achievement and has put in place processes to monitor and improve student attendance. Students who are not in attendance and have not made contact are followed up by Crown support staff. Crown has a system of warnings and, if necessary, “expulsion” for continued poor attendance. Students themselves reported that they understood this procedure and thought that it compelled them to attend class.

The achievement levels of international students are generally higher than domestic students, which Crown has interpreted as meaning that the teaching must be satisfactory and that the lower achievement for domestic students must be related to entry criteria. Hence, in 2011 Crown has been rigorously applying entry criteria to its programmes, which it is aware has contributed to lower enrolment numbers but is confident that the initiative will result in good retention and achievement rates and more skilled graduates. Although NZDipBus students had a course completion rate of 70 per cent in 2010 and were expected to increase to the high 70s per cent in 2011, no effort has been made to benchmark this against national results publicly accessible through the NZQA website.

All English language students are tested on entry and their progress measured regularly by way of formative testing every six weeks using International English Language Testing System (IELTS) as a reference point. Although students are expected to progress one level in English language every 12 weeks, the organisation was not able to provide, and does not itself use, an analysis of student progression and achievement through the different levels of English language competency.

Although there are some good efforts at increasing student achievement, the organisation as a whole does not take a systematic approach to increasing student achievement and there is no mention of student achievement targets or strategies in the Crown Institute Strategy Paper presented at the EER. Although it was evident that the achievement rates for Māori students fall below the average for non-Māori, there had been no analysis and little effort to analyse or address this issue.

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

Since 2010, Crown has been using its student management system more effectively to monitor student achievement and identify opportunities to make improvements. However, the EER team was concerned that, to date, the data had not been widely shared by senior management.

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**.

Crown could not comprehensively demonstrate the long-term benefits of all its programmes. The organisation has anecdotal information about some of the graduates and the positive way in which the programmes have contributed to their lives, but it does not have a definitive list of graduate outcomes or a formal analysis of graduate feedback that can be used to make improvements. As Crown's self-assessment systems mature, the EER team expects that engagement with graduates will inform programme improvements in a more systematic way.

Crown has an agreement with one of the universities to enable students to progress from the NZDipBus to a Bachelor of Business Studies degree. A representative from the university commented to the EER team that Crown graduates generally achieve well in their study and for this reason this was the only such agreement the university has with a private training provider. It was evident that Crown had not requested data on how well its graduates performed.

Crown has a private company working out of its travel, tourism and hospitality area that supplies hospitality staff for events in Auckland. This arrangement enables students to gain part-time work while they study and to learn valuable skills such as better communication, personal responsibility, and hospitality skills which provide them with the opportunity to gain employment. Travel, tourism and hospitality staff were able to cite several instances where feedback from employers of students had led to improvements in programme delivery.

Some Crown staff have participated in national or international fora in their disciplines to enable them to keep abreast of developments in their respective professions. The English team has, for the past three years, organised a conference for English language teachers in Auckland and this year had 150 delegates in attendance. More recently, the academic director and travel, tourism and hospitality staff have contributed to the NZQA Targeted Review of Qualifications. However, English department management and staff were unaware of the targeted review.

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 **Adequate**.

Crown's approach to ensuring stakeholder needs are being identified and met is not systematic. It is unclear how external relationships enhance the quality of the programmes being delivered. The main source of external input appears to be through Crown's international agents and, although examples were seen of very positive feedback from these agents, there was little evidence of improvements to outcomes for students as a result of this feedback.

The business studies advisory group was not functional from early 2010 through to August 2011, although a new committee had its first meeting immediately prior to the EER visit. There is no use of industry speakers or field trips, and no practicums included in the NZDipBus at Crown. More effective stakeholder engagement in this programme area would likely improve educational outcomes for students.

The tourism, travel and hospitality team have ongoing interaction with graduates, contact with two industry training organisations, and regular follow-up with some of the employers of Crown graduates. Staff referred to examples of how this interaction had informed their teaching and led to more employable graduates.

Crown has made efforts to identify the needs of learners. As well as the formal student feedback process, the academic director and other management staff have an open-door policy, and it is clear that staff and students approach them with problems, issues, or suggestions for improvement. Staff 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. However, apart from one staff member recently completing the National Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education, there has been little attempt to match the needs of learners with low literacy and numeracy levels.

Crown has been improving its links with Auckland secondary schools and has found that its "student for a day" programme, whereby secondary students are able to spend a day at Crown, has enabled students to make more informed study choices.

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 **Adequate**.

There was clear evidence of good teaching practice taking place at Crown. Staff are enthusiastic and passionate about their curriculum and teaching and they are

well supported by management. Teachers and students relate well to each other. Students spoke highly of Crown's teaching staff. They liked the open, friendly style and have reasonable access to the teaching staff outside of class hours. The low staff-student ratio allows for personal attention when appropriate.

Crown teaching staff are well qualified in their respective disciplines. Some staff are engaged in ongoing professional development which is supported by Crown management. Professional development activities tend to be based on individual preference rather than organisational strategy.

Moderation is systematic and comprehensive and Crown is compliant with the external moderation requirements of NZQA, the Hospitality Standards Institute, and the Aviation, Travel and Tourism Training Organisation. Crown has contracted the services of an external monitor for the NZDipBus which has led to improved assessment design and moderation outcomes. Two of Crown's NZDipBus assessments have been used by the NZDipBus national advisory committee as examples of good practice.

Course evaluations completed by the learners contain lots of feedback. However, the process stops at the collection and collation of data and there was no evidence that the information collected is systematically informing improvements to teaching practice. A more systematic approach following the gathering of feedback, which could include reporting back to students on actions taken, is essential and will likely contribute to improved educational outcomes for students.

NZDipBus and hospitality teachers meet with individual students monthly to review their progress. Staff and students interviewed at this evaluation confirmed that this was valued and contributed well to their overall progress.

There was evidence of Crown consciously providing opportunities for staff to participate in meaningful discussion about teaching practice and student progress. Staff in each of the focus areas commented on the value of the course review meetings held at the end of each semester and were able to cite examples of how they had improved teaching delivery as a result. For instance, feedback from the travel industry was that students needed better knowledge of world geography, so at the course review staff discussed and devised methods of increasing and improving the teaching of geography in the travel programme.

Crown has initiated a peer observation procedure in which most teaching staff have participated. As this procedure matures, the more regular and ongoing feedback provided should assist with improving teaching practice.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Crown 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 Crown believes that there is likely to be a positive correlation between student support and achievement, to date the organisation has not formally analysed the link between the two. 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 should the students require assistance when away from the site. Homestay accommodation for international students is managed in-house by the homestay coordinator. The director of studies (Crown English) has overall responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students are met, and she and other staff regularly attend professional development offered by the Ministry of Education's Code Office. Crown has furnished the required annual attestation to the Code Office confirming its compliance with the Code of Practice.

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

Crown has introduced a process for monitoring attendance in the belief that students who attend classes have a greater chance of success. There is a system of warnings and, if necessary, "expulsion" for continued poor attendance. Thirty-two students were "expelled" in 2010. This procedure has resulted in an increase in the percentage of course completions and, while the EER team gives credit to Crown for this initiative, it was of concern that despite "expelling" 32 students, there was no mention at the EER of strategies to improve teaching so that students were more likely to want to come to classes.

Students reported that they received adequate pre-enrolment guidance and that an orientation programme was available to them. Crown also offers careers guidance and coaching for students seeking employment or further study in New Zealand. However, Crown staff were unable to provide any analysis of how either of these services had improved outcomes for students.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Adequate**.

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

Clearly, there has been movement towards improved self-assessment in the months prior to this EER visit, and Crown has made an effort to understand and improve the educational performance of its programmes. Self-assessment prior to the last three months has generally been based around TEC compliance or the marketing and fiscal needs of the organisation rather than deriving from a focus on educational achievement.

At Crown's last EER there were challenges identified and undertakings made to address them. For instance, the EER identified that greater efforts were needed to collect outcomes data to improve Crown's understanding of how it was identifying and meeting stakeholder needs. However, these issues have only begun to be addressed in recent months, and there appeared to be a hiatus in some of the good self-assessment work that Crown had commenced at the time of the last EER.

Crown has employed and retained well qualified and experienced staff and is investing in their ongoing development. However, professional development is largely determined by the interests of the individual staff rather than informed by the results of performance review or by an organisational strategy for professional development.

The evaluation team was concerned that staff at Crown had limited knowledge of changes to the national context in their respective disciplines. As previously mentioned, English department management and staff had not heard of NZQA's Targeted Review of Qualifications. Staff teaching lower-level programmes were not conscious of current policy and practices relating to the embedding of literacy and numeracy. Better awareness of external context could improve the value of outcomes for students.

The campus is well supplied with physical and learning resources for the number of students that it currently has. The merging of the two campuses appears to have been well managed.

Performance management systems are now in place, including an incentive system to encourage further improvement in staff performance.

The better use of Crown's student management system has already resulted in good quality data becoming increasingly available to management to enable them to monitor and improve student achievement. This information now needs to be rolled out across the organisation so that it is readily accessible to teaching staff and students.

The challenge for Crown is to direct its efforts towards developing a greater level of understanding of educational performance and bringing about consequent

improvement by a more systematic, whole-of-organisation analysis and consequent action from self-assessment activities.

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 **Adequate**.

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

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 **Adequate**.

2.3 Focus Area: New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 5)

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

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

2.4 Focus Area: Certificate in English

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

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

2.5 Focus Area: Certificate and Diploma in Hospitality

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

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those implied or expressed within the report.

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 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/>*

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E eeradmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz