

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Crown Institute of Studies Limited

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 5 December 2012

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Purpose of this Report

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

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Crown Institute of Studies Limited
Type:	Private training establishment
Location:	10-14 Lorne St, CBD, Auckland
Delivery sites:	As above
First registered:	17 June 1991
Courses currently delivered:	<p>Crown Institute's programmes are divided into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crown Institute Vocational• Crown English <p>Programmes included in the vocational pathway include:</p> <p>Tourism/travel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Travel and Tourism (Core Skills) (Level 3)• National Certificate in Travel (Level 3) with strands in Retail Travel• National Certificate in Travel (Level 4)• National Diploma in Tourism (Management) (Level 5)• IATA/UFTAA Foundation Diploma <p>Hospitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Certificate in Hospitality (Food and

Beverage Service) (Level 3)

- National Certificate in Hospitality (Front Office) (Level 3)
- National Diploma in Hospitality (Management) (Level 5)

Business

- New Zealand Diploma in Business
- Crown Certificate in Business Skills (Level 3)

Crown English programmes include:

- General English
- TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages)

Code of Practice signatory? Yes

Number of students: Domestic: 238

In 2011:

- 15 per cent of domestic students were Māori
- 30 per cent of domestic students were Pasifika
- 92 per cent of Crown Institute's domestic students were under 25 years of age.

International: 250 students including 90 studying vocational pathways and 160 in Crown English programmes.

Number of staff: 46 full-time equivalents

Eight part-time staff

Distinctive characteristics: A high percentage of Crown Institute's domestic students are aged under 25 years. The number of Pasifika students clustered in the travel and hospitality programmes is high for 2012, although slightly down on 2011.

Recent significant changes: There has been a significant drop in English language student numbers from 225 in 2011 to 160 in 2012.

Previous quality assurance history: Crown Institute underwent its second external evaluation and review (EER) in September 2011 and was rated Confident in educational performance and Not Yet Confident in self-assessment. The rating in self-assessment was related to an unsystematic approach to collecting and using data to inform quality improvements.

The 2011 NZQA national external moderation results showed that some standards needed modification and a recommendation was made to review and strengthen internal moderation processes. Some standards that Crown Institute reported a significant number of credits against were not included in the moderation plan.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope for the EER consisted of the mandatory focus area:

- Governance, management, and strategy.

In addition, the following focus areas were selected:

- New Zealand Diploma in Business (NZDipBus)
- General English
- National Certificate in Travel and Tourism (Core Skills) (Level 3)

The focus areas above were selected to ensure the evaluation covered a representative sample of Crown Institute's activities. Crown English students are all international, and the programme is a distinct and significant part of Crown Institute's training. NZDipBus is a core programme for Crown Institute and includes both domestic and international students. A travel programme was chosen from the vocational programmes and gave the opportunity to understand the pathways followed by students studying travel at Crown Institute. Student support and guidance and the pastoral care of international students were evaluated through key evaluation question five.

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.

A number of documents were supplied to the evaluation team before the scoping meeting, including a review of self-assessment, progress reports, and an action plan for the NZDipBus. A scoping visit was conducted prior to the EER visit, with two of the EER team members visiting the site and meeting with the academic director, the general manager Crown English, the director of studies (Crown English), the head of department for travel, tourism and hospitality, the business studies programme coordinator, and the campus manager.

The EER visit was conducted over three days at the Crown Institute site in Auckland. The evaluation team, consisting of the lead evaluator and two other evaluators, conducted interviews with the owner/director, management staff, teaching staff, student support staff, students, and a number of external stakeholders. A wide range of documentation was also viewed, including Crown Institute's review documents; staff and stakeholder meeting minutes; evaluations of courses, tutors, services, and facilities; programme documentation; industry training organisation moderation reports; the most recent Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) investment plan; and the current business plan.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

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

It is significant that course and qualification completion rates across the vocational programmes delivered by Crown Institute continued to improve over 2009-2011. Course completions climbed from a low of 39 per cent in 2009 to 65 per cent in 2010, and then 74 per cent in 2011. Qualification achievement rates have improved from 32 per cent in 2009 to 62 per cent in 2011. These results benchmark slightly lower than the 2011 sector medians for level 3-6 programmes of 78 per cent for course completions and 67 per cent for completion of qualifications. There are strong indications that these improvements are linked to better programme entry processes and enhanced student support mechanisms, including stricter attendance monitoring and targeted strategies to support at-risk students.

Improved graduate tracking processes have enabled Crown Institute to begin to demonstrate value of the qualifications achieved by the graduates. For example, the majority of NZDipBus graduates staircase to higher levels of study and there is some evidence that they are prepared to succeed at the higher levels. Learners value Crown Institute's memorandum of understanding with a large multi-site university which gives recognition of prior learning to successful Crown Institute graduates with a B average, enabling them to begin their business degree in the second year. The travel certificates provide students with the foundation knowledge and skills required to work in the industry, and some students move directly to related employment. A number find work in sales or customer relations roles, which is necessary experience for moving into the travel industry.

Crown English is carefully tracking individual learner achievement, and evidence demonstrates that students make expected progress through the levels of English competence. The needs of the English language students are varied and satisfaction rates indicate that they value their time with Crown Institute in supporting them to achieve their goals.

Students are well supported by both the student support team and the programme teams. This support begins on entry and continues through enrolment, orientation, and ongoing pastoral care and study support. A range of teaching and learning approaches is used to successfully engage learners, particularly in the National Certificate in Travel and Tourism and the General English classes. Tutors are well qualified and relate well with the students. There is support in the organisation for ongoing professional development and the evaluation team saw evidence of organisation-wide sharing of good practice, although the potential for this sharing is yet to be fully realised.

The evaluation team noted an openness in the management style of the organisation. There is an open-door policy for all managers and a consultative

approach to decision-making. The sharing of performance data organisation-wide has improved since the last EER.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Crown Institute of Studies Limited**.

The organisation has improved its processes for monitoring student achievement and using this data to bring about meaningful improvements. Processes for collecting and sharing this information across the organisation have also been strengthened, and this was evident in the consistency of data which was lacking at the previous EER.

Graduate and employer feedback is being collected systematically and provides indications of value. With time, as the body of evidence accumulates, this information will become even more useful for analysis and decision-making. Industry advisory groups and other key stakeholders are being consulted and the feedback is being used to inform programme reviews and improvements. This is happening most effectively in the tourism and hospitality suite of programmes. The business and English programmes are still embedding good processes for gaining a clear understanding of how effectively they are matching learner and stakeholder needs and gaining valued outcomes.

Crown Institute has a range of mechanisms for gauging whether students' needs are being met while they are studying. These include a range of surveys, both paper-based and online, a student council, student counsellors, and targeted focus groups. Various approaches are also used to ensure teaching is effective, including surveys and peer and management observations. The organisation continues to review how it is collecting information to ensure it is getting a good coverage of its programmes and activities, student groups, and other key stakeholders.

Self-assessment logs are developing into a useful new tool, used across the various departments. They are a tool that take people through the process of thinking about improvements and using evidence to inform change. Staff have responded proactively to reflect on and review their work and give attention to where improvements could be made.

While the programmes have improved links with key stakeholders, these could be extended and strengthened at governance and senior management levels. A recent management review tool has been trialled, and an extension across the organisation is planned. Other than this, there are limited processes to review the effectiveness of governance and management.

It was encouraging to hear from a number of people across the organisation that they are seeing the value in the process of self-assessment for organisational improvement. It is expected that quality will continue to improve at Crown Institute as the new and improved processes become embedded.

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**.

There has been significant progress made at Crown Institute to support the achievement of learners and this is reflected in the much-improved achievement data. Course and qualification achievement rates have been steadily increasing at Crown since 2009. For example, successful course completion rates for the year-long travel programme, which has the level 3 core skills certificate embedded, has improved from a low of 39 per cent in 2009 to 79 per cent in 2011. The 2011 rate benchmarks against a sector median of 81 per cent for level 3 and 4 courses. For the NZDipBus the completion rate improved from 36 per cent in 2009 to 61 per cent in 2011. Currently, Crown Institute's NZDipBus courses are aggregated, if disaggregated the course completion rate for 2011 would be closer to 70 percent for domestic learners and 76 percent overall. This benchmarks against a sector median of 78 per cent for level 5-6 programmes. Along with disaggregation, improvements in achievement are due to better programme entry processes (ensuring only those students capable of achieving are enrolled), better processes for identifying and supporting at-risk students, and enforcing a tighter attendance policy.

Individual learner achievement is being tracked in the Crown English programme, through initial placement tests and then regular skill checks to determine whether students are ready to advance a level. Internal records demonstrate that most learners achieve at expected rates and a significant number of learners who attempt the Cambridge external exams are successful.

While processes for tracking and analysing achievement have improved at Crown Institute, there are still some gaps in understanding how well learners achieve. For example, the business department is exploring ways of understanding how well learners achieve generic work-ready skills, demanded by employers, while they are studying. Although literacy and numeracy have been embedded into the core skills 14-week travel programme, achievement of these skills is not being systematically tracked.

However, promising initiatives include asking employers how well learners have achieved the skills required for employment. Early indications are that graduates are displaying these skills. Māori and Pasifika learner achievement is also being tracked systematically and shows significant improvements. Achievement is now a

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

key focus for the organisation, and the collection and analysis of the data is far more evident and consistent across the organisation.

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 **Good**.

The previous EER report noted that Crown Institute was unable to comprehensively demonstrate valued outcomes for learners and other stakeholders. In the year that has followed there has been considerable effort to establish processes to increase and improve the quality of data in order to answer this key evaluation question.

Therefore, there is more evidence available to demonstrate that graduates from Crown Institute gain value from the qualifications they achieve. This evidence includes feedback from graduates and employers that the knowledge and skills are useful in enabling them to do their work well. The tourism, travel and hospitality department has strong links with employers, a number of whom regularly employ Crown Institute graduates. The business programme is more proactively seeking information about how well their graduates are achieving at higher levels of study, and those who have been tracked are generally doing well. The evaluation team heard from learners that they also value the memorandum of understanding that Crown Institute has signed with a large New Zealand university.

Links with key stakeholders have been strengthened in the business school, with the advisory committee meeting regularly for updates and the academic director participating in the NZQA-led targeted review of business qualifications. This engagement has turned attention to the value of generic skills (including critical thinking, communication and presentation skills, and teamwork) to the employer. Crown Institute is exploring how it can assess the students' development of these skills.

Indicators of value for learners who study with Crown English include positive feedback from agents and student satisfaction at exit. Some students pathway to other programmes at Crown Institute. Many who moved to the Crown Certificate in Business Skills have not coped well and consequently the programme is being reviewed to better meet their needs. Students in the General English course are aiming to gain English skills that will support their travel, work, and intercultural communication goals. Satisfaction ratings indicate these goals are met.

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 **Excellent**.

In 2011, Crown Institute implemented a more rigorous enrolment process to ensure that learners were correctly enrolled into programmes that matched their needs. This strategy appears to have been very effective at lifting achievement rates, with a number of tutors noting that students are a better fit with the programme and therefore less likely to drop out.

Further initiatives to better match needs include the embedding of literacy and numeracy in the 14-week National Certificate in Travel and Tourism (Core Skills) programme. Reportedly, this has been very effective in supporting learners to establish the skills they need to complete the year. This embedding process has not yet been extended to the other level 3 programmes.

There are positive examples of the organisation reviewing programmes and making improvements based on feedback. For example, the National Certificate in Travel and Tourism programme added extra tutorial classes to give students more time to review assessments and access targeted support. Another example from this programme is the increased sales content included in the programme in response to industry feedback. Across Crown Institute, student feedback mechanisms have been strengthened. For example, key issues from course evaluations are now summarised and reported back to students with Crown Institute's responses or suggestions for improvements.

Crown English is reviewing student data and feedback to inform programme developments and improvements. The accelerated English classes are an example of this, as is the example of a teaching approach being adjusted to meet the needs of a group of students who were not making expected progress. Currently, a number of students are not happy with the afternoon classes, but this issue has been identified and solutions are being sought.

Links with industry in the hospitality, travel and tourism department remain strong and regular feedback is used to tailor the programme to match employer needs. Industry contact has improved for the business department, although it is not yet clear the extent to which this contact has had an impact on the programme or activities.

While there are a large number of computers available for students to use, staff and students across the departments at Crown Institute noted the slow speed of the internet and patchy wireless reception. Technology is not well integrated with teaching activities. Further developments are required to better match learner needs.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

A variety of teaching approaches is used to engage students, particularly in Crown English and the travel programmes, including role-plays, simulations, games, trips, and group and pair work. While there are some opportunities apply learning through work experience, these opportunities could be extended further to meet the demands of both students and employers.

Management actively supports quality teaching practices. Staff are well qualified in their respective fields and there is continued support for professional development, both in-house and external. In 2012 this has involved a number of in-house workshops, including working with Māori learners and understanding IELTS (International English Language Testing System). Feedback from staff indicates that they found this sharing across the organisation extremely valuable, and the evaluation team believes it could be extended further to utilise the variety of skills that exist within the different departments. A range of approaches is used to gather feedback for improvement, including peer and management observations, performance reviews, self-reflections, and tutor evaluations.

Assessment and moderation appears to be mostly well managed, with the business department opting to use external moderators, and other teams working with relevant ITOs and NZQA to ensure their assessments meet requirements. The 2011 national external moderation results showed that some standards required modification, and a recommendation was made to review and strengthen internal moderation processes. In addition, a significant number of credits were reported for standards that were not included in the moderation plan. The evaluation team noted an improved external moderation report for the NZDipBus programme for 2011, with moderation results comparing very well against national pass rates. Across the organisation learners are clear about their assessment requirements and feel well prepared, and noted that they get useful feedback.

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**.

There is excellent support for learners at Crown Institute. Students are given clear enrolment information and advice that ensures they are guided to the programme that matches their needs. The evaluation team heard positive feedback about the usefulness of the orientation for introducing students to Crown Institute's facilities and student policies. This includes the clear guidelines given to and understood by students around minimum attendance requirements. This year (2012) has seen a dramatic drop in warning letters and expulsions because of attendance breaches,

indicating that students have a better understanding of expectations when they enrol.

A range of services is available at Crown Institute to support both domestic and international students. Nine international counsellors who speak a range of languages are available for international students for orientation and support during their study. Homestays are managed by Crown Institute, and the evaluation team heard positive feedback about the quality and the responsiveness of Crown Institute to any issues that arise. The counsellors all supply students with their cellphone numbers and are available for support should an emergency arise. The requirements for the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students are well understood and regularly reviewed to ensure compliance.

Domestic students also have a support person available to liaise with around pastoral care issues. This ex-student relates well with the students and has a good understanding of the issues faced by students. However, the evaluation team noted that there may be a lack of clear guidelines and professional support for more serious issues that may confront the pastoral care support person.

Crown Institute has been developing careers guidance and support, and a person has been employed part-time to support students to find employment. This includes running a job club, which is becoming increasingly popular, and careers guidance workshops with the different vocational programmes. This appointment has also seen a small increase in work experience positions available for students. Initial indications are that this new appointment is starting to meet a need and is improving graduate chances of finding employment.

Academic support and guidance is also available for students at Crown Institute. The evaluation team heard how the timetable for the travel programme had been adjusted to ensure more one-to-one time for students. In the business programmes, students have regular meetings with tutors and those at risk are supported with the use of academic plans and timetable adjustments. For international students, there is a well-appointed self-study area which was in regular use throughout the evaluators' visit.

The organisation regularly reflects on how well it is supporting and guiding learners, and the improved attendance policy, careers support, and timetable changes are all examples of how the organisation has been responsive. The student support team are active users of the new self-assessment logs and are regularly reviewing how they approach their roles. For example, there is ongoing work to try to engage students in the activities programme and student council.

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**.

The organisation has a clear focus on achievement and outcomes as demonstrated by a range of activities directed at lifting achievement and improving outcomes. New and improved strategies that have been noted previously in this report are the improved enrolment processes, attendance policy implementation, support for at-risk students, industry engagement, and careers and employment advice. A continued rise in student achievement and a better understanding of value have resulted.

Staff are valued by Crown Institute and this is indicated by the long length of time a large number of staff have remained with the organisation and also the financial support offered to support ongoing professional development. Staff reported that they found the management style consultative and, while they were clear about their reporting lines, they noted that all senior managers were approachable and available should they need support.

Some of the programmes have strong links with industry, employers, and other key stakeholders and these are improving. While a management review tool has been trialled in one department, processes to review the effectiveness of governance and management are unclear.

However, there has been a clear shift in policy to apply a self-assessment framework to all of Crown Institute's activities, with the goal of ensuring continuous improvement. This whole-of-organisation approach was far more apparent, with numerous examples of deliberately collecting and analysing data to inform improvements. For example, the evaluation team noted the enthusiasm with which staff have used the self-assessment logs, which encourage staff to show initiative around improvements and reflect on practice. It was also encouraging to hear from a number of staff across the organisation that they are seeing the value in the process of self-assessment for organisational improvement.

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: National Certificate in Travel and Tourism (Core Skills) (Level 3)

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

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

2.3 Focus area: General English

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: New Zealand 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**.

Recommendations

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

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of programme approval and accreditation (under sections 249 and 250 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Programmes established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act and published in the Gazette of 28 July 2011 at page 3207. These policies and criteria are deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under the new section 253.

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 programmes they own or provide. These criteria and policies are also deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under section 253. Section 233B(1) of the Act requires registered PTEs to comply with these rules.

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 EER process 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-eer/introduction/>

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