

Report of External Evaluation and Review

ILA Education (NZ) Limited
trading as Kaplan International
Colleges

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 8 May 2013

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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:	ILA Education (NZ) Limited trading as Kaplan International Colleges (Kaplan)
Type:	Private training establishment
Location:	10 Titoki Street, Newmarket, Auckland
Delivery sites:	As above
First registered:	1 July 1991
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General English• Examination Courses• Study skills• Business English and English for Academic Purposes (EAP)• Cambridge and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) courses are also offered
Code of Practice signatory?	Yes, for students aged 13 years and upwards - mainly for study groups. No individual students taken under 16 years of age.
Number of students:	Domestic: nil International: 1,433 in 2012
Number of staff:	15 full-time equivalents; seven to 10 part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General English

- Examination Courses
- Study Skills

Distinctive characteristics: Kaplan is one of the largest providers of English language tuition in New Zealand and is part of an international chain. The headquarters of Kaplan International is in London and the Australia/Pacific area headquarters is in Sydney, Australia.

Kaplan is a full member of English New Zealand, and an approved Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission English language provider.

Kaplan usually has on its campus 25-35 different nationalities at any one time, and although there are sometimes seasonal fluctuations, Kaplan applies a cap on the numbers from each nationality to ensure this diversity.

Because of the large number of students who need to apply for a student visa with Kaplan, Immigration New Zealand has given Kaplan the status to be an online visa provider.

Recent significant changes: Blended course delivery methods have been introduced in response to student and staff feedback and new K+ notes workbooks have been produced internationally to amalgamate the blended delivery.

Following feedback from the English language market around a need for more Cambridge test centres, Kaplan Auckland has decided to start processing and running all Cambridge exams for Kaplan students and other providers, with the first exam run in March 2013.

Previous quality assurance history: At Kaplan's most recent English New Zealand (ENZ) audit in March 2012, Kaplan was found to meet all six ENZ standards. ENZ noted the following strengths and offered some suggestions (which have been followed up by Kaplan and put in place since the audit):

'KIC Auckland is a well run school with sound policies and procedures in place in order to provide quality ESOL education. This was evident from talking to academic management, teaching

staff and learners.

There is a well qualified and experienced teaching staff, backed by a strong academic management team. KIC Auckland's main building is very attractive and well resourced, and it's convenient setting, near the Auckland Domain and Museum and the hubs of Parnell and Newmarket, is a bonus.

Suggestions –

All observation documents are named and signed off by senior staff.

Feedback is gathered at the end of every course (for example at the end of a 10-week General English block or a 12-week Cambridge course). While there are very good mechanisms in place to get feedback in more personal ways through one-to-one tutorials and the Student Clinics, anonymous feedback is also very important. This would feed more directly into the review of teaching and learning processes as it would be course (and teacher) specific.

Complaints are signed off more regularly by senior management.

The English New Zealand complaints procedure is posted clearly in the school – evidence of this has been forwarded since the audit.

Kaplan could consider keeping a record of academic changes as they happen, which could then be cross-referenced to the ENZ standards. This could take the format of a table with headings such as:

- Change Made,*
- Reason*
- Actioned by*

ENZ Standards reference – or something along these lines.'

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the external evaluation and review (EER) of Kaplan included the following focus areas:

- Governance, management and strategy – this is a mandatory focus area
- International student support – this is a mandatory focus area.
- Intensive English. This programme includes General English, an elective of Specific Skills and Structured Study. Most Kaplan students are taking one or all of the three options.

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.

Two NZQA evaluators conducted the EER at Kaplan's head office and sole delivery site over two days. The evaluators met and interviewed the director of operations (Australia and New Zealand), the principal, director of studies, student services manager and student support staff, head teacher, accommodation officer, activities manager, internship manager, three homestay families, teaching staff, three groups of current students and two graduate students, and two agents. The evaluators also spoke to the study centre coordinator, and one graduate each by Skype and phone.

Documents and information sighted included: self-assessment information including the English New Zealand 2012 audit report; the Kaplan International benchmarking survey applied across all sites and results; learner information and resources; exit surveys and student and staff survey feedback and analysis; social media feedback; five-weekly test evaluations and feedback; results of evaluations, achievement data and analysis; teaching and assessment materials workbooks; and progress and attendance reports.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **ILA Education (NZ) Limited trading as Kaplan International Colleges**

Kaplan offer courses not qualifications. Many students study at Kaplan for an overall New Zealand tourist experience and can study for a minimum of two weeks to potentially 52 weeks. Their main focus area of study is General English with Intensive English options and structured study which include beginner to advanced levels.

The evaluators saw and heard strong evidence of high levels of achievement and good evidence of the value of the courses, with learners achieving their goals for English experience, fluency and exam or work pathways. Students and staff reported increased student confidence in using English to interact across cultures and learning levels both in and outside the classroom.

Kaplan defines achievement in relation to student experience and satisfaction and how the student feels about their progress. Not only does Kaplan have very robust practices and data in relation to learner progress in English, but it also has excellent systems, feedback, and review and analysis for student satisfaction. The college's philosophy is that movement from one level to another may not be the only indication of a successful learning outcome and is not always an inevitable result of successful study as this can depend on the length of study

Benchmarking indicators are used internationally, regionally and locally to assess achievement outcomes for Kaplan International. Kaplan Auckland benchmarks student satisfaction and student recommendation results with Kaplan schools across the Asia-Pacific region and has shown an increase in student recommendation rates results (94 per cent) from 92 per cent for the previous year. This result benchmarks well against the other Kaplan providers across the Asia-Pacific region with the highest score being 97 per cent and the lowest 87 per cent.

The school's educational programme is run to an international curriculum using centrally produced resources. As part of the Kaplan New Zealand aspect, the teaching staff enhance the prescribed material with locally relevant material to ensure students gain knowledge of New Zealand and its culture during their study.

Students interviewed all stated that the English language they are learning will be of use to them in the future, particularly in employment and further study, and this has been confirmed by graduates and agents and from feedback from employers to the internship coordinator.

Kaplan is highly effective in meeting student needs and interests, from pre-enrolment through to graduation. Important features include:

- Offering a variety of courses, reflecting a New Zealand context

- Ensuring only English is spoken at all times
- Offering an extensive range of pathways with formal arrangements with six key pathway partners
- Making available internships and organised work experience and English for Academic Purposes.

Students complete an evaluation and are counselled during their first week to ensure they are placed at the correct level in English and that their homestays are satisfactory. Variations in student learning needs are monitored long term through the student's course of study with progress tests, individual student reports and individual counselling with teachers every five weeks, as well as a student clinic, which is available four times per week for students to ask any questions about their course and school services.

The teaching at Kaplan is highly effective. Kaplan has employed well-qualified, up-to-date and culturally diverse teaching staff who are led by a director of studies who is also well qualified in English language teaching. The tight teaching team work collaboratively and are well supported by the director of studies and head teacher through ongoing, regular open-door communication, meetings, peer review sessions and targeted professional development.

Learners are guided and supported well, as evidenced by the quick responses to the feedback surveys and one-to-one discussions by teaching staff, homestay managers, counsellors and support staff.

The progress of the students is not formally tracked beyond their time at Kaplan, but a new initiative to maintain contact with graduates has been put in place and is being monitored. The potential benefits of this will be for students before they arrive and for Kaplan in terms of gaining information and feedback, and for graduates in staying connected with Kaplan.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **ILA Education (NZ) Limited Trading as Kaplan International Colleges**.

Self-assessment at Kaplan is comprehensive and robust with much analysis, reflection, change and review occurring organisation-wide on a regular basis, which is recorded and monitored. Evidence of how the many new (and trial) initiatives have improved Kaplan's capability in educational performance can be seen throughout all aspects of the organisation and are outlined in this report.

Continuous student feedback, referrals and recommendations from past students, homestay families and agents and staff reflection are used to measure satisfaction and educational provision and to gain information for improvement or change. The feedback is passed on to the relevant departments and management for their information and subsequent actions.

Annually, staff complete a self-reflective assessment to identify and record aspects requiring change. The evaluators saw records dating back to 2010 where the self-review, reflection and analysis of various different aspects of the way of working at Kaplan have resulted in changes in practice and positive educational outcomes.

These include:

- Staff noting that there were not enough resources for beginner students, in particular writing tasks to help students from the Middle East. As a result, a booklet was developed and a presentation was given to students from the Middle East with the help of the Arabic counsellor on how to use this new resource, which resulted in a faster progression for these students to the next level. This booklet is now used regularly for beginner English students, and is reviewed and materials are added to it on a weekly basis.
- As a result of teachers' and students' feedback regarding the need for more rooms, management expanded into new premises and provided additional resources such as the structured study centre and a conversation room.
- Following the Kaplan International review of the curriculum, contributing to the ongoing development of the K + notes, the development of the study centre, professional development for teachers and monitoring of the uptake of the technology relative to the blended learning approach. These innovations ensured a more relevant and engaging learning environment for the students.
- First and final week evaluations.
- Mid course evaluation – handed out during week 5 – was first introduced in March 2013, and asks: 'is everything ok?' The evaluation covers specific areas around accommodation, happiness in class, use of blended learning, student services and activities programme and their plans for after Kaplan. This provides an opportunity to address issues early.
- The trial of a Facebook 'one question' was used to assess the usefulness of social media as a communication and feedback tool.
- As a result of feedback, different levels of accommodation are now offered to suit particular student needs and to provide greater choice.

Kaplan also outlined its willingness to trial new processes as a result of self-assessment and to 'learn by mistakes'. A record of trials and reflection on the trials is kept, outlining why the new processes were not effective and how the process is then adjusted accordingly or abandoned. Examples of this were:

- The introduction of a night class which did not have a significant uptake
- A teacher evaluation tool that did not produce as much good information as the already-used learner survey
- Pre-testing of prospective students. This was tried and did not work, so a new regime was put in place, which is working well

- A homestay survey that was discounted as not being needed because of the quality of the communication between the coordinator and the families and the capturing of relevant information in the learner surveys.

The evaluators found good evidence from a wide range of sources of data collection, collation, analysis (including surveys and evaluations, meeting notes, internal, at all levels, and in the wider organisation), action plans and reviews of the outcomes of changes made. This activity appears to occur very regularly (weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually). This was confirmed in documents sighted and interviews with range of staff, students and graduates.

The evaluators are convinced that Kaplan has a comprehensive and whole-of-organisation approach to self-assessment which is embedded into the culture of Kaplan. This integrated approach, along with the development of an annual, whole-of-staff self-assessment process that reflects the organisation's culture, structure, range, size and type of student leads to evidence-based conclusions and decision-making that lead to positive change.

Findings¹

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

Students complete courses not qualifications. Tests are provided by Kaplan International and are based on the Common European Framework of Reference 'can do' statements and, therefore reflect what has been taught in the previous five weeks. Kaplan also determines achievement in relation to student experience, satisfaction and how the student feels about their progress, as many students want an overall New Zealand experience. Kaplan has good evidence of high levels of student satisfaction and good evidence of learners achieving their goals for English experience, upskilling, fluency and academic and exam pathways, and this is validated by external benchmarking indicators that are used internationally, regionally and locally to assess achievement outcomes, particularly via student satisfaction and recommendation.

Achievement is measured by the student completing a period of study and the outcomes of their response to a leavers' survey given before they leave during their last week. Success at Kaplan is monitored through course completion, course extension and student recommendations via the leavers' survey.

The exit survey, which Kaplan titles 'World Benchmarking Survey', involves the student answering a series of questions covering such areas as their experience at Kaplan, the effectiveness of the course in helping them to reach their goals, the overall quality of student support, accommodation, homestay, learning, teaching and resources. Particular importance is given to the question: 'would you recommend Kaplan to your friends', and as this correlates to a student's perception of the effectiveness of the school. This question is closely tracked and measured in Kaplan schools internationally and is benchmarked across the Pacific region, where Kaplan New Zealand had a score of 94.7 per cent which compares well with the top Asia-Pacific score of 97.7 per cent.

The Kaplan student recommendation rate has increased from 80 per cent in 2010 to 94.7 per cent in 2012 (as noted above), with an average overall student satisfaction rating of 4.5 out of a maximum of 5, with many students choosing to extend their courses in 2012. Of the groups that sent students to Kaplan in 2011, a high percentage (70 per cent) sent students again in 2012.

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

Feedback data is analysed and rated by the Australian office. It is used along with similar feedback from the other Kaplan schools to provide international and Pacific-wide statistics. Individual achievement is tracked and monitored by weekly testing, teacher observation and student self-assessment. Clear and concise evidence is captured of academic progress through levels and through different courses. Students who are not achieving are identified and supported. Evidence was available that Kaplan has small numbers of low passes because of the ongoing monitoring of student achievement and the quick responses to any areas of need. The evaluators saw good evidence of upward movement through the levels on the organisation's database.

Kaplan has noted that unless IELTS results are available for all student attempts, it is not possible to provide valid data. However, the IELTS results that have been reported indicate good scoring rates.

Pass rates for Kaplan for Cambridge First Certificate in English (FCE) and Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) are captured and compared internationally and nationally, showing Kaplan with higher pass rates than both the national and international averages.

Pass rates for Kaplan for Cambridge FCE and CAE, compared internationally and nationally for 2012			
FCE	2012	CAE	2012
Kaplan pass rate	77.69%	Kaplan pass rate	83.75%
International average	73.34%	International average	73.94%
NZ average	73.52%	NZ average	76.32%

There is good evidence that the students gain 'soft skills' such as confidence and self-belief as a result of their learning. The evaluators heard examples of students who originally lacked in confidence and self-belief and are now engaged in ongoing international relationships with other former students from the school and working internationally.

The organisation's database is an excellent resource which is used well, is effective and is well understood for its full use and purpose of collecting valid data for analysis. Evidence was seen of data being collected and analysed and the outcomes monitored to show student progress, attendance, level movements, timelines and any issues noted and/or flagged. Kaplan carries out much analysing of data to gain all relevant information.

Self-assessment around achievement and progress was evident with the change in progress testing and the improvements made with a focus on addressing areas of need. An example is the Saudi students and the support of their progress through cluster grouping and the creation of literacy booklets and the individual student

record checklist. The checklist is now used for consistency of feedback to students in their achievement or lack of achievement.

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**.

Kaplan understands the learner profile and is aware of the significant investment being made by students and families. The organisation is committed to ensuring value for money and satisfaction. Therefore, Kaplan provides a range of opportunities for students to combine their learning with a variety of tourist and social activities.

Kaplan is aware that students have both short and long-term goals and outcomes. Short-term the students want to learn English and for the long term students progress to using the newly learned English to enhance their work and study goals. Students and graduates interviewed were aware of the range of options open to them as a result of their learning, including entry to target universities and academic pathway programmes which are offered as a result of arrangements with six providers: the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) business school, Academic Colleges Group, Le Cordon Bleu, Queenstown Resort College, SAE Institute, Whitecliff School of Design.

The student pathway also includes internships (which combine study with a professional internship placement), organised work experience and English for Academic Purposes achievement. Recently, an agreement was made with AUT which allows Kaplan students direct entry into a range of qualifications at the AUT business school. Kaplan Auckland also offers OPUS Paid Work and Study, which combines a language course with a paid work placement. These courses include counselling and support from a dedicated staff member who is also employed to work with employers in the region to enable them to gain access to good students, which is working well as evidenced by ongoing repeat business.

Student satisfaction feedback is a large factor in measuring the value of the learning for Kaplan. Outcomes are measured in terms of student satisfaction rather than achievement where improvement in English is also determined. Referrals and recommendations from past students and agents are also used to measure satisfaction and to gain information for improvement or change. Referrals and recommendations are often by word of mouth and reputation via feedback by students to agents.

The three groups of students interviewed by the evaluation team were uniformly satisfied with all their goals and expectations being met. They outlined the range of study options available – intensive, structured, vacation – and the New Zealand

lifestyle and experiences blended throughout the syllabus. They also commented on their confidence and fluency in English and the friends and friendships made – study at Kaplan is often the students' first experience travelling away to gain independence – and how the regular activities helped introduced them to life in New Zealand. The graduate students interviewed said that gaining proficiency in English language had helped them with their job prospects internationally.

The cultural diversity in each class is highly valued by students, staff and agents. Kaplan has a policy for no more than 25 per cent per nationality in the school. This encourages all students to speak English only, which helps their conversational English. Students interviewed appreciated the strict English-only rule and supported it because it helped them to immerse them in the English language.

A good example of student satisfaction was shown by students who were at Kaplan to study up to 12 weeks on a visitor visa and who decided to extend their study time as a result of their experience at the school, with their host family and the Auckland environment.

Kaplan has found it difficult to formally track the students who complete the courses; however, informal contact can be and is maintained through a designated Facebook page. At the time of the evaluation, Kaplan had 1,800 students and graduates engaged in the social media page. The organisation is trialling a Facebook initiative using a 'one question per week approach' which has demonstrated continuous stakeholder engagement by students using the forum creatively to inform current ideas and new and prospective students about the opportunities at Kaplan. Students interviewed commented on this initiative and some had responded to the questions. They also noted that they were able to see the outcomes from their English study from graduates in their own country who had communicated via Facebook.

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 **Excellent**.

Course development is largely conducted off-shore with input from Kaplan and some courses designed in house. Kaplan Auckland often swaps ideas with its Australian counterparts about course development.

Kaplan's courses, including English language, university pathway offerings, internships and test preparation, help students achieve specific educational goals and can provide career opportunities that enable them to work worldwide. Employers in other regions are getting access to good students via Kaplan and Kaplan is gaining repeat business as a result.

In the last two years, Kaplan International has overhauled the syllabus. This has been driven internationally, with local input. Each General English level now has a syllabus with a set of overarching goals and specific can-do statements adapted from the Common European Framework of Reference.

Blended course delivery methods have been introduced in response to student and staff feedback, and it is anticipated that this will reach those students who are not always engaged. Students interviewed were very positive about the revised syllabus. Interactive white boards are used for the blended delivery and Kaplan is monitoring the uptake of the new blended delivery with both staff and students. New K+ notes workbooks have been produced internationally to amalgamate the blended delivery. Anecdotal feedback from students has been rewarding in that they find it useful, especially for use after hours and off-site as student i-Pads and laptops are able to link to an online version.

Stakeholder needs are established at enrolment and are met by enabling them to choose courses that meet their needs. Courses are based on the needs of learners and other relevant stakeholders, with each course having a set of specific goals, including learning outcomes and expected standards of achievement. The range of electives at various levels is innovative and clearly caters for different needs and interests.

Student placement is reviewed by the director of studies on day one, and students are surveyed during the first week to ensure classes are at the correct level and that their homestay or dwelling is acceptable, and to see whether structured study and the activities programme are suitable for their needs. Needs and goals are reviewed constantly by teachers and students to ensure the teaching and learning remains relevant. The students improve their English by attending the various language and activities clubs.

A position of blended learning and study centre coordinator was created early in 2013, and Kaplan appointed a teacher to develop this area further. Structured study in the study centre has clear educational objectives. Students spoken to were very complimentary about the study centre, its resources, and how it was helping them improve their English. They were clear on the link between it and their classroom study.

A range of student study options and electives are offered and Kaplan injects local content into all courses. Teachers are encouraged to integrate at least 1.5 hours a week of New Zealand-related material into lessons, and teachers confirmed that the courses are sufficiently flexible to allow for New Zealand content to be introduced when appropriate. Learners also confirmed that there was local content integrated into all delivery.

The director of studies attends regular meetings with the Asia-Pacific regional staff and the Auckland staff to improve current courses, develop new courses and ensure high quality courses. Evidence of this was seen in meeting minutes and in discussions with staff.

Students work in modules of 10 weeks. Kaplan conducts an informal revision quiz each week and test students every five weeks to monitor their progress and allow students to move levels or change courses if necessary. Good evidence is captured of attendance and academic progress through levels on the organisation's database. Students who are not achieving well are identified through the weekly quiz and are then well supported with one-to-one discussion, structured study groups and the student centre. Kaplan has been using, analysing and refining feedback mechanisms regularly. One is a new standardised survey that is given out every five weeks along with the five-weekly test. This includes one-to-one feedback and allows for discussion on specific areas for improvement.

All departments integrate well, liaise daily and hold regular meetings on a weekly and monthly basis to ensure alignment in terms of what information is passed to staff or students to ensure all areas fully understand and cover the needs of the students. Students' goals and needs are consistently met by sharing information between all departments and members of staff.

Changes to student learning needs are monitored throughout a long-term student's course with progress tests, individual student reports and individual counselling with teachers every five weeks, as well as a student clinic, which is available four times per week for students to ask any questions about their course and school services.

While most major programme changes are driven by international issues, there are ample opportunities for management and teaching staff to initiate change. Teachers said they are able to give feedback on the delivery and testing of courses and could suggest changes or innovations. The evaluators heard many examples of changes being made for improvement, one being the literacy elective booklet which had been created with Saudi students in mind and is now used where literacy is noted as an issue.

The innovative use of a social media page is a worthwhile initiative to encourage feedback loops. It demonstrates continuous stakeholder engagement and is used creatively to inform current ideas and new and prospective students about the opportunities at Kaplan.

Kaplan's weekly activities programme has recently been internally reviewed. As a result of graduate exit survey feedback and comments made on the social media page, the activities programme has been changed to more closely meet the needs of the students and to also ensure good exposure to New Zealand 'kiwi' conversations and culture.

As mentioned earlier, as a result of review and evaluation, trials around new initiatives were held with regard to matching the needs of learners and other stakeholders. One was a pre-testing for entry and this was found to not work as well as the original student pathway into Kaplan and so was terminated. The second was the offering of a night class which was also terminated due to lack of interest.

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**.

Kaplan recruits, supports and retains a highly skilled staff of eleven permanent teachers with a length of tenure ranging from one to 10 years, who are effective in enabling students to achieve their goals. All full-time and part-time staff members are well qualified, holding either a CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults) or other appropriate certificate and a number have postgraduate qualifications.

Kaplan has a culturally diverse teaching staff, which is appreciated by the students as it gives them an assorted range of English dialects to learn and understand. The teaching team is cohesive and collaborative. These features are promoted and well supported by management who encourage staff to exchange ideas and discuss any issues openly to support a secure learning environment. Teachers are up to date with new teaching and learning initiatives around ESOL and actively work to develop and share new resources and methods to continually improve and enhance the delivery of the courses to the students. The evaluators saw evidence of a focussed and purposeful teaching and learning environment which was enjoyable and engaging for learners and where assessment supports learning. This is reflected in the quality of the feedback staff are able to give the students at the five and ten-week stages.

Teaching is monitored regularly with ongoing formal and informal peer review and a formal observation by a senior staff member once a year. Critique and feedback are both positive and constructive. If necessary, support is offered with observations and targeted professional development. A staff appraisal programme is also in place, which can also lead to targeted professional development, which is encouraged and supported by a monetary contribution.

Evaluators sighted a professional development plan for 2013 where sessions are held monthly and are usually conducted by internal and external presenters. Recently the teachers had a targeted professional development session to ensure they were well versed in how to use the K+ books with the interactive whiteboards and the online technology.

Management supports a buddy system among teachers which is designed for strengthening teaching practice and to aid delivery with regard to complementary skills and specific interests of teaching. The buddy system also offers support for any new teaching staff and supports consistent ongoing internal moderation. Kaplan achieves consistently good results from the ongoing external moderation which is carried out via the Kaplan International sites, ensures validity and consistency across all Kaplan courses.

Teachers are well supported by the organisation's database system where notes on each individual student's attendance, learning, level attainment and support needs is regularly recorded from formal and informal feedback. This information is regularly checked and analysed by the director of studies, to ensure teaching and support is meeting student needs.

Individual student reports are issued to students every five weeks and contain test information with teacher observations on learners' attitudes and achievements over a period of time. These are followed by a discussion between the teacher and the student. This process was confirmed by students, teachers and is described in the student handbook. Both the reports and the follow-up discussion provide positive and constructive feedback to the students to allow them to redirect their efforts or be moved into the next level class or course and is a continuous record of their progress while at Kaplan. The individual student reports are useful for parents and other student sponsors. Because of the need for consistency of feedback to students from staff, a checklist was created to assist all teaching staff to complete the individual student report form in a consistent manner.

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**.

Students are guided and supported extremely well, as evidenced by the comprehensive induction and information available to students when they arrive, including overviews from both the academic and support teams, the welcome survey and a study centre induction. During the induction, students complete an individual study plan to outline their goals and to note particular areas where they may need support or want improvement, which ensures focus can be directed to these areas.

Student services team are responsible for coordinating the students' arrival, welfare and support needs. The director of studies is responsible for coordinating the testing and placement of new students. He ensures that all students are given adequate and correct information on the first day of orientation and this aspect was confirmed by those students interviewed. The director of studies also deals with any students who have issues with their placement, again as confirmed by students.

Students are interviewed by teachers on arrival to affirm their specific learning requirements and to ensure class placements are correct. Several forms of learner well-being are measured after one week, at five weeks, again at 10 weeks and reported on at exit. These have proved effective in ensuring students are studying at the correct level, their accommodation is working well and that the structured study and social activities programme are matching their needs.

A thorough review of the Code of Practice for Pastoral Care of International Students (Code of Practice) is undertaken each year, with any resulting actions being quickly addressed. Pastoral care by a specifically designated staff member is provided for students under 18 years of age, where particular care is taken with aspects around accommodation and support to meet Code of Practice requirements.

Student accommodation and homestay needs are effectively supported by a designated accommodation/homestay manager who uses the pre-enrolment information and feedback from the learner well-being checks to carefully match homestay families to student requirements. Close contact is then kept with the student and their homestay family to ensure another homestay arrangement is organised quickly if there are any problems. During an interview with homestay families, the evaluators heard how strong friendships emerge between students and homestay parents.

For those students wanting accommodation, Kaplan has introduced a three-tier accommodation level to cater for different budgets. This has proved to be a worthwhile change as it allows more choice for students.

There are a wide range of speakers of different languages on staff to support students when needed. In addition, there are external advisors on hand to support students where there is no one available to speak the language. If required, Kaplan can provide external foreign language speakers as counsellors for personal needs.

Although the support and administration team is small, they are committed and effective. The evaluators heard and saw evidence of a good level of dialogue between support staff, academic staff and the administration support team in regard to student guidance and support. Examples were heard of their responsiveness to particular complaints and incidents, including the example of the Kaplan response to the Christchurch earthquake disaster where their students were quickly found, accounted for and moved to safe areas and re-housed if necessary, with all parents being informed quickly. The database assisted with this effort. As a result, all information for students is now carefully and thoroughly updated every three months.

Student feedback is not only a source of good statistical data for analysis, it is also an early warning system for any problems that a student might be having. Students can give feedback and discuss problems at the student clinics held twice a week and feedback is also collected by teachers from the one-to-one meetings with their students.

A social programme provides out-of-class activities every day. The 'What's On Club' ties in with this, giving learners ideas on what to do in their free time. A review of the activities has brought about changes that are proving to be more effective with more students taking up the activities than previously.

Discussions on the Kaplan social media page are useful for prospective students, giving them information on tourist and social activities, and have also proved to be

useful for the activities coordinator in highlighting the most popular and valued activities and identifying improvements.

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 **Excellent**.

Kaplan has a clear vision and direction and a good understanding of its future direction. Staff and students are valued. The organisation is effective in supporting educational achievement by following the very clear purpose/mission of providing student-centred, outcomes-driven educational courses that help individuals reach their goals, which are well understood by management, staff and all stakeholders.

Kaplan benefits from being part of a larger international structure, but also has autonomy, which reflects its own identity as a New Zealand enterprise. Kaplan Asia-Pacific is a tiered organisation with an international, regional and local management structure which provides the opportunity to benchmark and track achievement internationally, regionally and locally and allows each school to share positive (and negative) feedback and note trends across all sites and within regions.

Kaplan has a strong leadership model. The director of operations (Kaplan Australia and New Zealand) is based in Sydney with oversight of Kaplan Auckland and good communication links with key staff, which leads to a positive family culture. Kaplan has been able to manage the downturn in student numbers by responding effectively to the market and managing seasonal cycles. It is meeting student needs with the addition of a new purpose-built building and an innovative learning environment.

There are effective participation and communication loops within the organisation and with the other regional and international organisations, as evidenced by regular meetings and workshops. Meetings of principals and directors of studies are held across Australasia, which ensures cross-fertilisation of knowledge, strengths and differences. The regional principals meet regularly to gain broad view of Kaplan and its future direction. Any major changes are made at the regional level.

Management notes that stakeholder feedback is the key to ongoing evaluative self-assessment. The feedback is regularly passed on to different departments and levels of senior management. The feedback helps Kaplan review curriculum and materials, plan professional development for staff, shape appraisals and review overall training, policies and processes.

Kaplan has invested in quality staff who are well qualified, supported by good systems and processes and who share information and support each other well. It also provides adequate resources and maintains technologies that support learning,

teaching and self-assessment, as evidenced by the changes made to accommodate needs as a response to student feedback.

The evaluators saw evidence of management's responsiveness to the need for change as a result of self-assessment which was accomplished quickly and with the minimum of fuss. Some examples include: the new building to ensure enough good teaching spaces, K+ notes to assist with blended learning, the home-stay three-tiered approach, all as a response to feedback from students and agents.

Self-assessment at Kaplan is ongoing and continuous and involves all staff as a result of the comprehensive whole-of-organisation approach. Many new initiatives, ongoing changes and improvements are in place or being trialled as a result of self-assessment. The organisation evaluates the changes made to determine whether they are worthwhile improvements.

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 **Excellent**.

2.2 Focus area: International student support

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: Intensive English with General English,

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

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

Recommendations

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

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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