



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Southern Lakes English College
Limited

Date of report: 31 January 2024

About Southern Lakes English College Limited

Southern Lakes English College (SLEC) is wholly owned by Southern Institute of Technology / Te Pūkenga. The college provides English language education to international students wishing to travel, gain employment or transition to higher-level study in New Zealand.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Locations:	<u>Queenstown campus</u> Level One, 57 Shotover Street, Queenstown <u>Invercargill Campus</u> Southern Institute of Technology, 133 Tay Street, Invercargill
Eligible to enrol intl students:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: New Zealand permanent residents: four full-time, nine part-time International: 144 full-time, four part-time
Number of staff:	17 full-time equivalents: Queenstown: six teaching staff, four administration and support staff Invercargill: five teaching staff, two administration and support staff
TEO profile:	Southern Lakes English College (NZQA website)
Last EER outcome:	In April 2017, NZQA was Highly Confident in both the educational performance and self- assessment capability of Southern Lakes English College.
Scope of evaluation:	<u>Focus area 1</u> : NZQA-approved training scheme – includes 105583 Academic English (Training Scheme) (Level 4) and 105493 General English (Training Scheme) (Level 2)

Focus area 2: International Students:
Wellbeing and Support

MoE number: 9244
NZQA reference: C45370
Dates of EER visit: 28 September-2 October 2023

Summary of results

SLEC staff provide English language education to students who have a wide range of goals. Inconsistent application of systems and processes has been observed. While this has not affected the quality of outcomes, it has affected review.

Confident in educational performance

- Students are progressing in their English language capability, enabling access to employment or higher-level study while in New Zealand. SLEC has not been effective in using performance data to inform decision-making and review since the Covid-19 lockdowns.

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

- SLEC understands the value of the outcomes for stakeholders at an individual level. The PTE uses this understanding to provide training that meets stakeholder needs. However, SLEC needs to collect and analyse stakeholder feedback more systematically.
- Each campus undertakes programme and assessment review. Students are engaged in their learning and gain feedback that supports individual improvement and achievement. Continued development of systems and processes supports consistency between campuses. This will further support effective self-assessment and improvement.
- Internal post-assessment moderation verifies assessor decisions and assures fair and valid assessment. However, SLEC now needs to restart external moderation.
- SLEC promptly identifies and appropriately responds to the students' learning and pastoral support needs. Consistent evaluation and review of the effectiveness of student support is a work in progress.
- SLEC experienced a significant loss of experienced managerial and tutorial staff during Covid. This has resulted in discontinuity in leadership and disruption to the management's review of educational performance. SLEC is

rebuilding capability in all areas, with some positive results.

- Staff recruitment now focusses on employing tutors who are appropriately experienced and qualified. Planned development and appraisal of staff will support emerging support and learning needs.
- Since the last EER, the pandemic and a tertiary sector review has impacted SLEC's ability to rigorously conform to policies and procedures. SLEC has identified this gap and management is working to address it. This includes consistent reporting and review of the PTE's compliance accountabilities.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Southern Lakes English College (SLEC) uses the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) to describe the achievements of the students studying English. SLEC students' progress in English language capability within or between levels on the framework.² The PTE collects progression data during the contracted study period, informing further progress for each student. This data should be collated to inform the decisions of management and governance.</p> <p>SLEC knows the reasons for withdrawal at the individual student level. Also, the current learning management system collects withdrawal information³. SLEC does not analyse this data. The data is not used to provide reliable reporting for management decision-making.</p> <p>Conversations with stakeholders show that students are achieving personal growth. They are gaining confidence in using English as well as the skills and knowledge that support progression to higher education opportunities or gaining employment. Another benefit is the ease of communicating within their communities.</p> <p>A high number of students gain the required external examination results.⁴ This enables these students to meet their goals of undertaking further study.</p>
Conclusion:	Students are achieving progress in English language capability, enabling access to employment or higher-level

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

² See Appendix 1, Table 1 for enrolment and completion data.

³ Withdrawal information includes students who did not start the course; paid but withdrew prior or during the course; finished a 12-week contract then started another; students who did not or could not come to New Zealand; year-end closing of open contracts (restarted/ issued in the new year).

⁴ See Appendix 1, Table 2 for achievement in external examinations.

	study while in New Zealand. Improvement in analysis and use of the collated achievement and withdrawal data by management will strengthen decision-making and review.
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1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Stakeholders get valued outcomes from the training. SLEC students are highly motivated to gain English language skills to meet their own goals. Student exit surveys note a gain in capability and confidence around using English. Analysis of collated exit survey data and reintroduction of orientation and in-course surveys would expand current understanding of the value to students.</p> <p>Some data is collected about transition to further education and/or employment after SLEC. SLEC needs to develop consistent capture of information from both campuses. In addition, collecting from tutors and employers the benefits of the skills and knowledge their employees had learnt during training with SLEC would provide evidence of the value to transitioning graduates. Such information would inform organisational self-assessment.</p> <p>SLEC has developed a connected, collaborative approach to supporting the needs of their community. The PTE provides an alternative source of English language training for New Zealand permanent residents, local workplaces, and refugees. This supports these community groups to access higher education and better employment opportunities.</p> <p>Stakeholders say that employing or enrolling SLEC students benefits their organisations and communities. Reflecting on the success of these relationships and the courses provided will support an understanding of the next steps, future development and, ultimately, business growth.</p>
Conclusion:	SLEC understands the value of the outcomes for all stakeholders and uses this understanding to provide courses that meet stakeholder needs. Systematic

	collection and analysis of feedback would support organisational self-assessment.
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1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Strong stakeholder relationships and programme review prior to the Covid lockdowns and border closures ensured the relevance of the training to stakeholders and local communities. A quick pivot to online delivery during lockdowns – and while borders remained closed – ensured stakeholder needs could be recognised and met. Likewise, the quick return to face-to-face learning recognised the students’ need to return to campus. However, programme review during and since Covid has been less effective. This is recognised as an area for improvement by SLEC. The continued development/reactivation of regular evaluations, effective use of data and increased cohesion between campuses should support the self-assessment that is beginning to occur.</p> <p>Teaching uses CEFR-related workbooks. Additional learning activities such as games, guest speakers and ‘field trips’ keep the learners engaged. The provision of additional academic skills is appreciated by the level 4 students as it prepares them as they transition to higher-level study. Students were very positive about their enjoyable learning experiences and appropriate learning environments.</p> <p>Students are assessed weekly when they complete a section in their workbooks. Tutors supervise these assessments to ensure authenticity⁵ and provide targeted, improvement-related feedback to each student. Students confirmed that such feedback was useful. The acquisition of skills is captured in a central system as well as on each student’s learning plan. Weekly review of the results allows tutors to consider each student’s progression. Collating</p>

⁵ Authenticity while assessing online is maintained through constant camera footage of the students completing the writing and reading-related assessments.

	<p>and analysing such data could inform management's understanding of programmes.</p> <p>Internal pre- and post-assessment moderation indicates that assessment is valid, fair, and consistent. The academic manager provides oversight of assessment across both campus teams. Undertaking external moderation with a partner would provide further assurance.</p>
Conclusion:	SLEC is reviewing its programmes and assessment practice. Students are engaged and gain feedback that supports their improvement. Continued development of processes to support the quality and consistency of delivery will further improve performance and effective self-assessment.

1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student support needs are identified and responded to as they emerge. Both campuses have support staff roles addressing accommodation and international student pastoral support. Additional Southern Institute of Technology (SIT) student support services and external support agencies can be accessed as required. SIT and SLEC policies and procedures support fulfilment of these roles. However, SLEC is in the process of evaluating the effectiveness of these services to inform organisational review as SIT aligns practice with Te Pūkenga.</p> <p>Marketing staff recruit, review and manage agents in the South American and Asia regions. Meetings between the marketing and the support/tutorial teams ensure relevant information is updated to agents as needed. SLEC receives the feedback from the students, directed through agents.</p> <p>Students access study-related information on the PTE's website. This is reiterated during the orientation day and in the student handbook. Icebreakers and a tour start the process of embedding the students in their communities. A survey is planned to capture feedback on students' experience of enrolment and orientation. The</p>

	<p>reintroduction of beginning and in-course surveys are part of SLEC’s plans to provide additional opportunities for students to provide feedback on support received or desired. This will strengthen SLEC’s understanding of how well it is meeting student support needs.</p> <p>Learning action plans capture placement test results, progression information and the study goals of each student. An additional personal goal board is kept in each classroom so SLEC can support students in the community. Both are revisited regularly and adjusted to ensure emerging needs and goals are captured and monitored. Specific learning needs are identified and appropriately supported. However, addressing how the Te Pukenga disability policy and procedure match SLEC’s learning environment is still a work in progress.</p> <p>Individual attendance is monitored closely and captured daily in campus-based spreadsheets. This supports SLEC staff in addressing emerging student needs and maintains SLEC and visa requirements. This information is not collated at cohort or campus level. The learning management system also records attendance information. Analysis and use of the data to understand trends and issues at management level has not occurred.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Student learning and pastoral support needs are promptly identified and appropriately responded to as they emerge. Consistent evaluation and review of the effectiveness of student support is a work in progress.</p>

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

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Significant loss of experienced managerial, operational, and tutorial staff during the Covid pandemic has resulted in discontinuous leadership and management. This has affected educational performance and review activity. SIT's ownership enabled SLEC to remain operational throughout border closures.⁶ However, the resultant loss of staff and experience in academic leadership has led to inconsistent application of systems and processes.</p> <p>A lack of understanding of requirements, analysis, reporting and use of data to support and inform academic leadership has resulted in less effective self-assessment. The re-employment of some former staff and the re-introduction of systems is supporting improvement in management decision making processes.</p> <p>SIT's distance education capability enabled SLEC to quickly pivot delivery to online when the borders closed, and lockdowns occurred. Despite the Queenstown campus closing and staff numbers reducing significantly, management worked with community organisations to investigate and develop training in new areas. These included teaching English in the workplace and to New Zealand permanent residents. Such diversification of delivery has become part of the strategic rebuilding planned for SLEC. Documentation of the strategic plan will allow the recording of actions taken at a management level.</p> <p>Throughout the restructures brought about by Covid, staff were fully informed and involved. However, the significant loss of staff left SLEC with insufficient levels of appropriately qualified and experienced staff to maintain English New Zealand standards and conformance with the PTE's own policies and processes. Experienced, qualified staff are now being employed, and non-qualified staff are being developed to ensure the threshold of unqualified</p>

⁶ Due to Covid lockdowns and border closures, a large number of SLEC staff needed to find alternative employment or retrain. This was despite students switching to online training and alternative work sources being identified.

	staff is now met. SLEC would benefit from consistent quality assurance processes such as student evaluations and observations to inform and guide scheduled organisational development.
Conclusion:	Significant loss of experienced managerial and tutorial staff as a result of Covid has resulted in inconsistent leadership and management of educational performance and review activity. SLEC has recognised this and is currently rebuilding capability in all areas.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Prior to Covid, SLEC regularly met the audit standards set by English New Zealand. During Covid, SLEC completed self-audits against English New Zealand standards and NZQA key evaluative questions and indicators. These self-audits and a 2022 spot-check by English New Zealand identified areas where standards were not being met. SLEC withdrew from English New Zealand as a result and has been working to address the identified issues with an aim to rejoin. SLEC plans to adopt an annual programme evaluation review process to align with future programme development plans and SIT processes.</p> <p>An effect of the Covid pandemic and lockdowns has meant policies and procedures were not met in practice, as indicated by the complaints received in 2022 and the lack of qualified staff. SLEC has addressed the issues and is updating their policies and procedures to reflect changes as they occur.</p> <p>The check made of the international student files, support and accommodation indicates that it is being sufficiently managed to meet the requirements of the Code of Practice for pastoral care and support. As mentioned in 1.4, attendance data enables daily monitoring, ensuring students meet Immigration New Zealand expectations.</p>
Conclusion:	The exceptional circumstances caused by the Covid-19 global pandemic, have resulted in policies and procedures not being followed as rigorously as during pre-Covid times. This is recognised and is being addressed.

Focus areas

This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.

2.1 NZQA-approved training scheme – includes 105583 Academic English (Training Scheme) (Level 4) and 105493 General English (Training Scheme) (Level 2)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal

2.2 International Students: Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that Southern Lakes English College Limited:

- Develop appropriate recording, tracking and analysis of achievement and outcomes-related data to support managerial decision-making.
- Reflect upon the value and success of course offerings provided by SLEC to support future development and business growth.
- Commence robust, regular, recorded capture of stakeholder feedback to inform decision-making. Analysis and use of this information will provide evidence of the value of outcomes for stakeholders.
- Develop and implement scheduled professional development for all internal and contracted staff to meet emerging challenges and fulfil the accountabilities related to each role.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

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

Appendix 1

Table 1. Enrolment, withdrawal and progression figures – both campuses

Year	Enrolments L2 General	Enrolments L4 Academic	Withdrawals L2 and L4	Finished L2 and L4
	Total enrolments # Qtn+Inv =	Total enrolments # Qtn+Inv =	Total withdrawal ⁷ # (estimated) Qtn+Inv =	Total completions # Qtn+Inv =
31 Jul-31 Dec 2017	451 (416+35)	291 (48+143)	2 (Invercargill)	740
2018	980 (914+66)	356 (92+264)	32 (29+3)	1,304
2019	1320 (765+55)	339 (118+221)	205 (200+5)	1,454
2020	570 (558+12)	135 (86+49)	271 (267+4)	434
2021	327 (321+6)	92 (66+26)	228 (225+3)	191
2022	117 (96+21)	118 (31+87)	203 (200+3)	32
1 Jan-31 July 2023	154 (122+32)	180 (20+160)	253 (246+7)	81

Source: SLEC collated data

Table 2. Gained PTE or equivalent for entrance to higher education

	Jan-Dec 2019	Jan-Dec 2020	Jan-Dec 2021	Jan-Dec 2022	Jan-Jul 2023
Passed PTE	49% (135/276)	85% (58/68)	N/A due to Covid	93% (28/30)	78% (25/32)
Passed other entrance qualifications	33% (90/276)	11% (8/68)	N/A due to Covid	0	12% (4/32)
Total	82%	96%	N/A	93%	90%

Source: SLEC collated data

⁷ In the student management system, withdrawal is captured as: student did not start course; student paid but either withdrew before or during the course; student finished one contract then started another (therefore withdrawn from first contract); students who did not or could not come to New Zealand; year-end closing of open contracts (restarted/issued in the new year).

Table 3. Annual attendance average

Year	Queenstown %	Invercargill %	Online %
2018	86	92	-
2019	88	91	-
2020	87	89	-
2021	80	79	75
2022	83	83	83
2023	86	86	68

Source: SLEC collated data

Table 4. Progression to higher study/employment

Year	Enrolments	L4 course	% transition to higher study	% employment
Jul-17	178	138	77	-
2018	330	250	75	-
2019	276	174	63	-
2020	61	42	81	-
2021	32	4	12	N/A
2022	108	35	90	0
2023	192	34	93	3

Source: SLEC collated data

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>. 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.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud⁸*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

⁸ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2021, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*
- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs including ITOs but excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining training scheme approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2021, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2021 and the Training Scheme Rules 2021 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2021 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, training schemes and consents to assess and 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2021. 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). All rules cited above are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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