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Report of External Evaluation and Review

Polyethnic Institute of Studies

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 4 August 2016

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Final Report

Purpose of this Report

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

Introduction

1. TEO in context

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Name of TEO: | Polyethnic Institute of Studies |
| Type: | Private training establishment (PTE) |
| First registered: | 1 December 1993 |
| Location and delivery site: | 20 Otara Road, Auckland |
| Courses currently delivered: | New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic) (Level 3) (NZCEL) Polyethnic Certificate in ESOL (Intensive Literacy and Numeracy – English for Speakers of Other Languages) (ILN-ESOL) |
| Code of Practice signatory: | Yes, but no international students are enrolled. |
| Number of students: | Domestic: 36 22 ILN-ESOL (mostly Chinese, older students, with New Zealand permanent resident status) 14 NZCEL (mostly Samoan ethnicity with New Zealand permanent resident status) International: none enrolled |
| Number of staff: | 3.5 full-time equivalents |
| Scope of active accreditation: | The organisation's consent to assess is listed at : http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=947105001 |
| Distinctive characteristics: | Polyethnic provides an environment appropriate |

for its two distinctive groups of students, who have either Samoan or Chinese backgrounds, based on Samoan traditional values of aiga (family) and nu'u (village).

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Recent significant changes: | The NZCEL has replaced the former ESOL certificate previously delivered by Polyethnic. |
| Previous quality assurance history: | NZQA was Confident in the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of Polyethnic Institute of Studies at the previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2012. Polyethnic is working towards compliance with NZQA national external moderation requirements. Polyethnic is implementing actions to address the issues identified in the 2014 and 2015 moderation reports, as requested by NZQA in 2014 and again in 2015. Polyethnic met Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) audit requirements for 2015, and met all requirements from the NZQA validation visit in 2015. |

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Focus areas selected covered all programmes the organisation delivers. These are:

- New Zealand Certificate of English Language (Academic) (Level 3) (NZCEL)
- Intensive Literacy and Numeracy – English for Speakers of Other Languages (ILN-ESOL)

The mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy was also included.

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

The EER visit took place at the organisation's premises in Otara, South Auckland over two days. The team of two evaluators held discussions with the chief executive, NZCEL programme manager/tutor, ILN tutor, programme administrator, pastoral care minister, NZCEL graduates and current students.

The team reviewed supporting documents during the visit, including moderation records, board meeting minutes, student feedback, tutor performance appraisals, business plans and a calendar of quality assurance activity.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

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

More than 80 per cent of NZCEL learners achieved the qualification in 2015, the first time delivered, with half-yearly results indicating a higher course completion rate for 2016. The rates of completion are improving further as a result of better progress reporting and attendance monitoring. The organisation also had strong achievement for the previous qualification for ESOL prior to the change to the NZCEL in 2015.

The ILN-ESOL learners' achievements are also meeting the expectations of the funding body and the learners, with strong evidence showing learners are improving their English vocabulary and ability to communicate verbally.

Programmes meet the needs of learners, with daily activities and opportunities for practising English skills. Assignments are moderated to ensure they are at the national standard, and assessor judgements are moderated internally for consistency. The organisation is responsive to external feedback from its advisory board and funding agencies. Work is underway to involve external organisations in developing bridging to further study as well as future qualifications to meet the learners' employment needs.

Overall, the management team has established business planning and is achieving the expectations of the Tertiary Education Strategy, as evident from the increase in EFTS (equivalent full-time student) funding for 2016, as well as activities in place to meet funding requirements.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

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

Polyethnic has good systems in place for monitoring learners' progress which are appropriate for analysing outcomes and any areas for improvement. An example was the introduction of progress reporting on a weekly basis against targets to better track when learners may not be able to complete on time, enabling the PTE to put in place support systems before the issue becomes a problem. Further analysis of the ILN-ESOL learners' gains in skills would help the PTE to understand the value of the programme and identify any improvements.

The organisation has a good understanding of destination data which could be improved with better understanding on how the achievement of the NZCEL affects

employment. In addition, further input from employers on the content of the programmes would help with ensuring learners have the required workplace vocabulary and writing skills.

The organisation has regular reviews of tutor performance, and tutors are involved in suitable professional development activities. For example, the ILN-ESOL tutor, who has a Master's in languages, is completing an adult literacy and numeracy course to better support the learners, and the NZCEL programme manager/tutor is receiving support from a member of the academic advisory board, who is also a member of English Language Partners.¹

Both tutors work together on moderating assessments and gain input from an external assessment advisor to ensure that the assessments meet the English sector standards and are at the required level. Further analysis of learner support services would enhance the current services provided by the staff at Polyethnic.

The organisation has manageable systems for analysing learner achievement and systems in place to monitor the quality of processes, along with external advice to ensure that information gathered can inform programme improvements. However, a formal programme review involving a range of feedback, such as from employers, would help to confirm that the programmes are valued and meeting the needs of all stakeholders.

¹ English Language Partners is an organisation that delivers English language programmes to migrants and refugees.

Findings²

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**.

The organisation's records show that the majority of Polyethnic learners achieved the level 3 NZCEL qualification in 2015, and most of the 2016 learners are on track to complete this year. The results for this programme are used to measure the organisation's performance for funding by the TEC. This data, displayed in the table below, shows that the learners have high rates of course and qualification completion. This success has also supported an increase of EFTS from 10 to 14 in 2016.

Table 1. Polyethnic educational performance indicators, 2013-2015 compared with the national median, 2013-2014 (NZCEL)

| Year (total) | Course completion | Median | Qualification completion | Median |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| 2013* (18) | 80% | 85% | 74% | 80% |
| 2014 (32) | 89% | 85% | 84% | 81% |
| 2015 (28) | 92.43% | Not available | 88.89% | Not available |

*The figures for 2013 are for the previously delivered ESOL certificate, a general English programme with similar outcomes.

The rate of course completion is currently tracking at 94 per cent for 2016. The organisation attributes this to better monitoring of learners' progress towards completion of unit standards and the pastoral support to ensure students are attending.

The success of the second group, the ILN-ESOL learners, is measured by the amount of progress that the learners make from the beginning to completion of the course. The results show high improvement overall, particularly with increased vocabulary. The lower rate of improvement for the 2015 intake was because the majority of learners did not have previous experience learning English, and the PTE was using the 'snapshot' version of the TEC online assessment tool. The organisation is using a new assessment tool developed by the TEC in 2016. The new tool is designed to assess learners with lower English language skills to better assess their needs and measure their progress. For these learners, the new tool is

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

preferred to the current online tool used to assess native English users' literacy and numeracy skills alongside a paper test at enrolment.

Table 2. ILN-ESOL targeted online assessment tool outcomes, 2014 and 2015

| Year | Vocabulary | Numeracy | Reading | Writing | Overall |
|-------------------------|------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| 2014 (full version) | 85.50% | 76% | 91.80% | 100% | 89.57% |
| 2015 (snapshot version) | 71.70% | 71.36% | 56.60% | 50.70% | 73.76% |

The organisation also gathers feedback on how helpful learners found the course for giving them confidence to go on to further study or work, with over 80 per cent reporting that they gained confidence in English from the course.

Enhancing the data to gather information about the range of progress would help to better understand success. In addition, measuring NZCEL learners' soft skills, such as personal presentation, confidence and teamwork, would identify how the organisation could help improve employment or provide further educational opportunities.

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 courses provide value to people who need to improve their English language skills. The ILN-ESOL course helps people to learn about New Zealand culture and to develop language skills to communicate sufficiently to find employment or study in New Zealand, as well as to interact with family and the community. The end-of-course evaluation analysis and learners' interview responses provide assurance that the programme is providing good value.

There is good value in achieving the level 3 NZCEL for those that complete. In 2015, of the 26 students that completed from 28 enrolled, four found employment, eight enrolled in further study, and 14 were already employed but felt that their opportunities for promotion or better paid work increased as a result of improving their English. There was some evidence to support this in the feedback gathered by Polyethnic for analysing destination data. Polyethnic has begun collecting data on how well the graduates perform after they enrol in higher-level courses at other providers. The evidence shows that the students are prepared with the appropriate English language skills. The two students that did not complete in 2015 withdrew for family reasons.

Other benefits of the training were improved confidence for speaking in work situations or to large audiences. Another indicator of value was seen in the feedback from both groups of students that they were able to communicate better with their families in New Zealand. Some students found their improved skills gave them confidence to talk to their children's school about their education or to support their family with their business or studies. However, more knowledge of whether NZCEL graduates are gaining promotions or better jobs as a result of the course would help inform the value of the course, as well as more specific data on ILN-ESOL outcomes, such as the number of repeat courses it takes to achieve desired outcomes.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

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

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

The NZCEL programme replaced the previous ESOL qualification in 2014. The aim of the NZCEL programme is to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills necessary to enter the workplace or further study. The academic advisory board – made up of staff and literacy and numeracy experts – and English language teaching specialists provided input into the development of the programme content and activities to ensure that it met the needs of learners and the English language sector.

The programme consists of four five-hour evening sessions where learners receive course materials to work towards assignments that contribute to the final assessments for each unit standard. The tutor bases the lessons on generic Headway resources, which cover the basic requirements of learners. The learners found the use of group discussions, class presentations and role-plays were helpful in building their confidence in using English. Learners' self-directed learning activities include reading newspapers, listening to the radio and watching television, which support the classroom-based activities. Integrating workplace language into class and self-directed activities would help learners to develop the appropriate vocabulary for enhancing employment opportunities.

Currently, the chief executive and programme manager meet monthly to review learner results and identify actions to take to help meet learners' needs. The NZCEL and ILN-ESOL tutors conduct monthly reviews of programme activities and learners' progress. Graduate surveys are also conducted to determine whether the programme is meeting their needs. The responses gathered show that the learners felt that they had improved their vocabulary and use of English to help them in the workplace. The academic board meets annually. However, formal programme

review using the range of information has yet to occur since the programme was first delivered in 2014. A systematic review of overall outcomes with input from relevant stakeholders, including employers, would help to ensure that the programme matches learners' needs for specific vocabulary and written skills that they can apply in the workplace. Learner feedback to the EER team also mentioned needing more time using the computer for research and writing assignments, which would help with job-seeking.

The ILN-ESOL learners attend classes during the day to develop literacy and numeracy skills to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and values to enable them to enter the New Zealand workforce or study further. The learners have a booklet which contains a selection of tasks and activities that help the learner with functional languages, such as reading signs. Some more activities specifically relating to New Zealand usage and external activities would help to ensure that the language skills are relevant to the learners' 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**.

Learners' satisfaction with the teaching is evident, with the majority of learners' feedback being highly positive about the supportive environment and the skills they are learning. The tutors' engagement with the learners is helping to improve confidence in using English for the two distinctive groups of learners (native Chinese and Samoan). Both the NZCEL and ILN-ESOL tutor are well qualified and experienced in adult education as well as language teaching, which is contributing to the effective development of skills.

Comprehensively documenting lessons plans and learning outcomes for each session would help to identify suitable programme activities and levels, as well as inform programme review to ensure that the teaching is effective in helping learners to develop their English language to meet their needs. Some NZCEL learners already have a reasonable level of English prior to enrolment, but require better comprehension, writing skills and extended vocabulary which could be developed with higher-level texts to challenge them and help with their transition to higher study.

The moderation system is useful for checking that all assessment activities meet unit standard requirements. Reviewing the spread of activities would help ensure they are manageable for staff. The peer method of moderating assessment decisions is enhanced with the use of external feedback from an English language expert, helping to confirm the results are valid and to identify improvements. Peer observation is also contributing to consistency of assessment.

Polyethnic carries out a formal tutor appraisal each year which is used for professional development purposes, as highlighted at the previous EER. The tutors are supported with upskilling and share their learning with each other.

The high achievement rate for the NZCEL programme is maintained through close monitoring of attendance as well as the learners monitoring their own progress towards completing unit standards. The tutor calculates when learners are expected to complete and follows up to ensure they are able to. Tutors review results and attendance fortnightly, also contributing to the high attendance and completion rates.

Overall, Polyethnic tutors provide learning activities focused on improving language skills. The organisation carries out performance appraisals and professional development activities and uses peer observations to help identify any gaps and to make improvements. Further development of formal lesson plans and carrying out the schedule of moderation would help contribute to programme review and inform teaching practices.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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**.

Polyethnic provides a safe and culturally appropriate environment suitable for the learners' backgrounds. Learners' end-of-course feedback shows high satisfaction with the organisation's support.

The chief executive is approachable and holds 'matai' status, a respected title within the Samoan community. The chief executive provides learners with guidance about their family or financial problems. Issues are discussed together with the learners and staff to reach an understanding, in a 'faalogo' (to listen) style. The nature of support reflects the Samoan cultural values of 'aiga' (family) and 'nu'u' (village). Although learners were highly satisfied with the support available, a review of the services offered would help to develop a structured support suitable for all learners, for example a range of health services (mental health, depression, elderly), knowledge of the law, and budgeting advice and support. In addition, the academic board recommendation for a student council has yet to be implemented to enhance the support already available.

Learners are interviewed at enrolment and sit an online literacy and numeracy assessment to identify their learning needs. ILN-ESOL learners can speak in Chinese with the tutor to help clarify their needs. Learners receive information about the course and what they will be expected to do at the start. NZCEL learners receive an individual learning plan to monitor their completion of unit standards. A one-to-one interview is conducted at the end of the course to gather learners'

feedback on the support provided. However, there is no detailed information for NZCEL learners on when assessments occur to better help them plan their learning. Academic support is provided through one-to-one tutoring from the tutors during the day.

Withdrawals are relatively low, with few not completing. However, attendance was identified as a focus at the end of 2015, and the employment of a pastor who follows up absences daily is leading to higher attendance and consequent higher achievement. The pastor also provides transport to those that require it to get to and from the school.

An important aspect of the learning is celebrating success, with certificates presented for completing half the course as well as at the end. Celebrations of significant dates, such as Easter, are carried out in accordance with Samoan traditions, which is contributing to the conducive learning environment.

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**.

Polyethnic has a clear direction and purpose outlined in the organisation's business plan. The plan is linked to the Tertiary Education Strategy for improving outcomes for Pasifika and improving literacy and numeracy levels. Course completion and qualification achievement are the key performance indicators used by the organisation to measure performance against funding targets. The organisation's reporting enables it to analyse performance in order to make improvements. The analysis includes reporting on student progress, course evaluations, graduate surveys and overall achievement towards goals. The organisation also has a good understanding of where the learners go after completing the NZCEL.

The organisation's risk management plan shows that Polyethnic understands the policy environment and has identified key activities and required resources. The recent TEC audit identified actions to take, and the organisation is working towards an improvement plan to ensure it remains compliant with the Single Data Return reporting requirements. The quality assurance calendar also enables the organisation to manage various compliance commitments such as moderation, compliance documentation and reviews.

An academic advisory board meets twice a year. The board monitors learner feedback and progressions and provides guidance on academic issues and expertise which is used to develop robust programmes to meet the needs of learners.

All staff are involved in moderation and reviewing learners' performance. This has enabled the organisation to identify improvements to attendance monitoring, which has helped to increase attendance and reduce withdrawals.

Polyethnic has a strong focus on the learner and ensuring there are sufficient resources available for learners. Tutors receive relevant support to carry out their role. For example, the NZCEL programme manager has external support and advice from a member of the advisory board to develop skills in this area. The organisation is providing an environment that is conducive to learning, is safe, and is culturally appropriate.

Polyethnic looks to the future needs of learners and employers and is developing relationships with other training organisations to provide more educational pathways for its graduates. The organisation is also looking at future qualification development, such as in healthcare, and has begun discussions with the industry training organisation responsible as well as employers in the sector.

Overall, Polyethnic demonstrated that it has sound planning in place to understand and continue to meet the needs of learners and the tertiary sector for developing learners' English language for work or further studies.

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: ILN-ESOL (Intensive Literacy and Numeracy – English for Speakers of Other Languages)

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: NZCEL (New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic) (Level 3)

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

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

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Polyethnic:

- Conduct formal programme review using input from employers, learners' course feedback, achievement results and advice from the academic advisory board to ensure that lesson plans and activities are related to the specific learning needs of the two groups of learners.
- Gather data on the range of progress for ILN-ESOL students.
- Review ways in which NZCEL learners' soft skills acquisition, such as personal presentation, confidence and teamwork, could be measured to confirm that students have the skills to enter into employment or further education.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.

The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz).

The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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