



Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

External Evaluation and Review Report

Rotorua English Language
Academy Ltd

Date of report: 16 January 2024

About Rotorua English Language Academy Ltd

Rotorua English Language Academy (RELA) delivers short English language programmes, mostly to international students who want to become more involved with their local community.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Hinemoa Tower, 1154 Hinemoa Street, Rotorua
Eligible to enrol intl students:	Yes
Number of students:	International: 37 full-time equivalents at the time of the EER
Number of staff:	Six full-time equivalents, two part-time staff
TEO profile:	Rotorua English Language Academy
Last EER outcome:	In October 2017, NZQA was Highly Confident in RELA's educational performance and Highly Confident in their self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate in General English to Speakers of Other Languages (Level 3) Training Scheme (ID 108978)• International students; support and wellbeing <p>NZQA recognises the TESOL¹-specific English New Zealand standards and audit process as an important input to this EER. RELA met all standards at the English New Zealand audit in August 2023.</p>
MoE number:	9497
NZQA reference:	C50775
Dates of EER visit:	13 and 14 November 2023

¹ Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Summary of results

RELA provides individualised learning programmes that meet students' goal to improve their English language skills. RELA has consistently delivered quality English language programmes over time.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Students gain useful language skills and improve their competency in using English. Students improve their confidence. RELA measures this important outcome for students.
- RELA has an effective system for gathering information on how their students progress. Data gathered from this system has been used over time to guide and improve programme delivery.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- RELA continues to evaluate and improve its systems and is responsive to changes to student demographics.
- Governance and management were successful in supporting RELA and their stakeholders through the Covid period. This involved transitioning into and out of hibernation. All compliance responsibilities are well managed.
- RELA has effective strategic planning and tracks performance, with positive results.
- RELA shows commitment towards involving and responding to stakeholders' needs. This includes the wider community.
- Programme delivery is adapted to suit the needs of the students. All processes and procedures are useful at capturing and responding to the best interests of the students. All staff are involved and well informed.

Key evaluation question findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students at RELA are achieving strong, positive gains in English language skills, as well as confidence and independence.</p> <p>RELA tracks progression from entry to course completion through both summative and formative testing. All students are tested with the Oxford placement test at enrolment. Students who have studied for six weeks or more have the test repeated prior to leaving, to measure and record progress. Since 2017, of 300³ students, only 26 failed to make a positive gain, and 91 per cent made a gain in their overall results. Students' results are recorded and analysed annually.</p> <p>Educational performance since the last EER is consistent. The only anomaly was in 2021, when all but three students were residents funded by the PTE English for Speakers of Other Languages Provision Fund. This cohort progressed at a slower rate, and their skill gains were less, although highly significant in terms of personal and community outcomes.</p> <p>Students who study for six weeks or less are monitored just as closely for gains in skill. RELA notes that most show good improvement in listening and use of English.</p> <p>Since coming out of hibernation in October 2022, RELA has noted certain trends in performance, in particular that the listening skills of students are lower than in earlier years. At this stage, there is no evidence to form a sound conclusion for the reason, but RELA is monitoring and evaluating this as a team.</p>

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

³ Results from students who timed out on tests were not counted. This only applies to a small number of students.

	RELA has a strong system of self-assessment, looking for any variation in performance trends and strategising how to address these. The academic team is proactive in enabling students to take accountability and ownership of their progression. The recent English New Zealand audit gave RELA a commendation for providing a 'best practice model' of student reporting. The process provides clear guidance and information to students, giving them more input and awareness of their progress.
Conclusion:	Students at RELA make strong, positive gains in language and social skills. Progression is tracked and analysed, and the results are used to inform and guide RELA's excellent self-assessment process.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students and other stakeholders value the highly positive outcomes they gain from their relationship with RELA. Aggregated student exit surveys show that overall rates of increased confidence and independence are very high. The questionnaires gather useful responses to measure gains in confidence, independence, cultural knowledge and understanding as well as improvement in language skills. Leaving certificates provide detail on the level achieved, attendance rates, plus a general comment.</p> <p>RELA records students' intended destinations at exit. Since RELA has reopened, the student demographic has changed. There is now a larger number of longer-term students with a wider range of potential outcomes. RELA could consider how best to track these outcomes in a meaningful and useful way.</p> <p>RELA gathers and aggregates host family survey information and provides feedback via an informative newsletter. Results indicate that hosting a student is valued by families. The main reasons for doing so are to gain cultural awareness and to support their families financially. RELA also surveys, listens and responds to the feedback of its long-term agents.</p>

	<p>During Covid, RELA provided a place to learn, and also provided support to Rotorua migrants who had restricted access to their community. These residents made good progress and strong gains in confidence to become involved in their community.</p> <p>Te ao Māori is embedded in the school and the wider community. RELA's programmes give students access to improved cultural and environmental awareness. This aspect of the school is highly valued and commented on positively by the students.</p>
Conclusion:	.Outcomes are positive for all RELA stakeholders. The PTE uses stakeholder feedback effectively to inform and support the delivery of programmes.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>RELA was successful and supportive in retaining key academic staff over the period of hibernation and restart. A new director of studies was employed. This focus on maintaining high quality staff has meant that academic oversight is very strong. While RELA's teaching and assessment practices are largely unchanged, the period of hibernation enabled many processes and practices to be reviewed and improved.</p> <p>The highly experienced teaching staff are fully involved in the process of review. The professional development calendar and conversations held with teachers provided good evidence that teachers' opinions are gathered and responded to. Teachers collaborate and share best practice routinely. Writing up moderation results forms part of the annual professional development calendar and is overseen by the director of studies.</p> <p>The staff handbook provides an exemplary operational and academic manual on policies and processes, with clear information and templates. This also includes expectations of integration of the Treaty of Waitangi and te ao Māori</p>

	<p>into programmes. Syllabi and CEFR⁴-aligned learning outcomes are clear and followed. Content is varied and discussed between the students and the teacher. Students appreciate this collaborative approach.</p> <p>Assessment is regular and contributes to progression. The objectives of the testing are to monitor progress and to move a student up a level if appropriate. It provides a measure to give students formative feedback on how well they have acquired the language and what skills need further support and development. Students attest to the value of this process and to the professionalism of their teachers.</p>
Conclusion:	Programme design and delivery clearly matches the needs of the students. The process of ongoing review is effective at supporting and improving programmes.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>RELA provides high quality, individualised care for each student, from pre-arrival to departure, and often after graduating. Student information is detailed to ensure that each students' learning or personal goals can be met. Communication with the families of under 18-year-old students is regular and consistent.</p> <p>RELA is experienced at supporting students with additional pastoral or learning needs. Sound, prompt feedback systems give staff opportunities to work proactively to support these students as well as other stakeholders, for example homestay families.</p> <p>RELA places considerable emphasis on how positively students rate their experience. All students complete a departure survey, and the consistently very high rates for increased confidence and independence indicate that the needs of all students, including those who have additional requirements, are well met.</p>

⁴ Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

	<p>One suggestion from the English New Zealand audit was to better demonstrate that the student voice is heard and responded to. RELA showed good initiative here, putting up a feedback poster. In addition, RELA offers students a conversation club and self-study afternoons on request. Student uptake for these initiatives is good. In addition, an exit interview for longer-term students provides additional opportunity for feedback.</p> <p>Student reports provide a high level of detail on their progress. Information is both quantitative and qualitative. Students get clear guidance on which of the appropriate CEFR outcomes they have achieved, and which require more practice.</p> <p>Code of Practice⁵ documentation reflects the long-term process of review of pastoral support and how well RELA is meeting stakeholder needs. Staff are part of the monthly routine of self-assessment and there is good evidence that actions noted are followed up.</p>
Conclusion:	RELA provides high quality pastoral care for the students. Systems are informative and are constantly reviewed to drive improvements.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>RELA's educational delivery is supported and managed by a highly experienced owner and managers. RELA has a long history of membership of English New Zealand and continues to be an active participant.</p> <p>Business strategies are clear and in line with the school's aims and goals. Key performance indicators are tracked and reported on annually. Indicators for success focus on both quality and commercial sustainability. RELA continued to set and report on quality indicators during the transition into and out of hibernation. During the Covid pandemic, RELA was mostly successful in meeting its goals,</p>

⁵ The Tertiary and International Learners Code of Practice

	<p>regardless of delivering education to a different demographic. RELA was proactive in supporting both students and staff during this time. RELA used the time effectively to evaluate and update policies, procedures and operational documents.</p> <p>RELA has made some worthwhile improvements to its self-assessment strategies. A succinct and well-crafted self-assessment calendar guides staff to self-evaluate NZQA's key evaluation questions and English New Zealand standards in manageable chunks. There are clear, traceable actions which are easily tracked over time. Teachers said they enjoyed participating in the timetabled key evaluation questions.</p> <p>Data analysis is used effectively throughout the organisation. RELA has been collecting, analysing and reporting on relevant indicators of education achievement since before the last EER, and is therefore very clear about what contributes to successful outcomes. The PTE is continuing to make changes and consider how best to gather quality information and respond to it.</p> <p>Staff are well supported, kept informed and contribute to quality assurance processes.</p>
Conclusion:	RELA governance and management are highly effective at supporting the students to achieve. There are many contributing processes that are part of an effective system of self-assessment.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Up-to-date policies and procedures guide well-informed staff to manage their compliance accountabilities.</p> <p>RELA's risk management policy is updated annually. All activities outside the classroom follow prescribed health and safety procedures.</p> <p>RELA is highly experienced at supporting students, including those under 18, to enjoy learning in a safe</p>

	<p>environment. Their caregivers, including homestay families, are kept informed and supported.</p> <p>The self-assessment calendar mentioned in 1.5 is used effectively to identify and respond to compliance areas. Staff are well informed of Code of Practice responsibilities and act accordingly. Documents are updated and improved to reflect current delivery and policies. Code of Practice outcomes are assessed and reviewed throughout the year.</p> <p>RELA is a member of English New Zealand and therefore must adhere to membership rules. This includes academic standards that must be met and monitored. Membership also requires annually scheduled self-assessment. RELA received two commendations for performance and two suggestions in their recent audit report. The suggestions have been actioned.</p> <p>RELA was successful in managing the transition into and out of hibernation and maintained compliance with NZQA rules for continued registration of a private training establishment.</p> <p>International student files examined during the EER showed no issues.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>RELA uses an effective system of self-assessment to ensure they are compliant with the relevant regulatory bodies.</p>

Focus areas

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

2.1 Certificate in General English to Speakers of Other Languages (Level 3) Training Scheme

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

2.2 International students; support and wellbeing

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent

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 Rotorua English Language Academy Ltd:

- Consider tracking the outcomes for long-term students who have either an academic or work-related goal, to demonstrate added value for these students.

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

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 fraud⁶*
- *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.*

⁶ 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 2022, 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 excluding universities, and*
- *maintaining micro-credential approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022, the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022 and the Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2022 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, micro-credentials 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 2022. 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.

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