External Evaluation and Review Report

Nelson English Centre Ltd

Date of report: 15 March 2021

About Nelson English Centre Ltd

Nelson English Centre (NEC) is a small English language teaching centre situated in the South Island of New Zealand. NEC offers general English courses to support both domestic and international students in their language proficiency development.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	41 Selwyn Place, Nelson
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	42 at the time of the evaluation (tbc breakdown of international and domestic)
Number of staff:	14
TEO profile:	See NZQA: Nelson English Centre
Last EER outcome:	Highly Confident in educational performance and capability in self-assessment
Scope of this evaluation:	• General English (NZQA-approved programme)
	• International English Language Testing System preparation (IELTS); offered under General English approval
	• International Student Support and Wellbeing
MoE number:	9816
NZQA reference:	C44257
Dates of EER visit:	1 and 2 December 2020 (virtual)

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Summary of results

Nelson English Centre is successful in supporting students to make gains in their English language proficiency, and in immersing students in the New Zealand experience. Self-assessment practices led by experienced staff have strengthened the adaptability and capability of the private training establishment.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Students gain proficiency in English at a positive rate. This is the primary reason why students study with the centre.

- Outcomes for students are positive and go beyond gaining proficiency in English. Students establish lifelong connections and are immersed in New Zealand culture and community.

- Students reported a strong sense of community in the centre and an overall positive student experience.

Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Programme design and delivery and learning outcomes are clear. Teaching and learning activities match the needs of students through appropriate needs analysis.

- The support services at every level of the organisation are of high quality. Students are very well supported.

- NEC has demonstrated agility with its response to recent changes in the sector (the global pandemic and impacts on international students). A capable governance and management team leads the direction of the PTE.

- Overall, compliance management is generally sound. However, there is room to improve compliance processes to improve future oversight.

Key evaluation question findings[1]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	In the General English programme, students make gains in their proficiency in English language development and grow in confidence during their studies. Students self-assess their gains in proficiency on the first and last day, with overall improvements moving from a 20 per cent to a 70 per cent average by the end of their individual study period. Success rates are positive for students aiming to achieve IELTS exam results.
	Staff collect, track and analyse the reasons students study English, with the most recent analysis concluding that the primary reason is life skills development. NEC monitors educational trends and understand the learners well. The centre identified a decline in students studying English for travelling or employment purposes, reflecting changes in the sector.
	Student self-assessment activities enable staff to tailor lessons and learning plans, contributing to student gains in English proficiency (see 1.3). Furthermore, sound practice assessment tools are used for measuring student progress.
	NEC found students generally use their English to engage with friends, homestay family and community, and to read or watch television and engage with social media. Gains in proficiency and use of the acquired language skills align to the organisational mission statement: 'students learn English and have the time of their lives'.
	Collated anecdotal feedback and student surveys report continuously high student satisfaction, exceeding the internal key performance indicators of the organisation.

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

Conclusion:	Students make gains in proficiency, supported by strong self-assessment activities such as tracking progressions and identifying and understanding the reasons for students wanting to study English.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	NEC offers students the opportunity to learn English through classroom-based teaching and immersive activities. Beyond gaining proficiency in English language, students highly value the experience through which they make friends, learn about – and engage with – New Zealand culture, and participate in new cultural and social activities.
	Students improve their wellbeing during their study through growing their confidence, extending their ability to experience new opportunities, applying for employment, and making social connections. The value of these outcomes is confirmed by the student voice and stakeholder feedback.
	Stakeholders reported high trust in the training establishment and confidence in the placement of their international student clients. NEC has many longstanding relationships with international education agents and homestay families, and has processes, such as a comprehensive agent database, to support these relationships. The database allows risk ratings of agents and homestays to ensure quality and safety are maintained.
	NEC stays in touch with past students via social media. Anecdotal evidence is collected to track student satisfaction, value of outcomes and destination data. Some students go on to study in New Zealand, others return to their home country and maintain connections with English speakers.
	Use of self-assessment activities to support student outcomes is a strength of the organisation. International students are at the core of the centre, ensuring students have a positive immersive experience.
Conclusion:	The value of outcomes is strong, triangulated by the student voice and stakeholder feedback. Students and stakeholders are

	consulted regularly, with an aim to improve the student experience.

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:	Programme design and delivery match the identified needs of students and stakeholders well. NEC exhibits strong curriculum design delivery and assessment processes, including moderation, further validated by English New Zealand.
	Student feedback is used to improve the student learning experience. The recent move to the new campus was prompted by student feedback and aimed to benefit student learning and engagement. The design of the building ensures staff and students have opportunities to interact within the space. For example, students now have to walk past the front desk to enter the building, where a staff member is always present to greet students in English and answer any questions.
	Relevant teaching and learning practices are applied in the classroom, supported by regularly reviewed teaching and learning materials. Students receive regular and constructive feedback on assessments and progress.
	Students said the teaching and learning activities are relevant and useful. Students appreciate the opportunity to experience education outside of the classroom with community trips, visits to museums, and other activities in the Nelson community. A range of contemporary materials support teaching and learning, and reflect the New Zealand context and culture.
	Self-assessment of programme design and delivery is comprehensive, with supporting processes in place to recognise and respond to any gaps in teaching and learning. Self-assessment activities, such as the 'warrant of fitness' reviews, focus on review of curriculum and teaching practice.
Conclusion:	Programme design and delivery are regularly reviewed to match the needs of students and stakeholders. Relevant learning and assessment activities, both practical and theoretical, are

	appropriately designed and delivered to support student achievement.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Students are very well supported throughout their study. Student feedback is consistently positive about academic and pastoral support. Students feel welcome and part of a community at the centre.
	NEC offers a comprehensive orientation and health and safety induction to new students. The multicultural environment is supported by a wide mix of nationalities. Staff promote inclusivity by encouraging new students to speak English.
	NEC appropriately responds to the wellbeing needs of students, outside of classroom hours if necessary. Strong relationships with homestay agents and families further support students outside of classroom time.
	Social media is used primarily to communicate with current students and to monitor wellbeing and track graduate destinations. Open-ended communication allows for academic and pastoral interventions where necessary. For example, frequent needs analysis of students occurs if they need to move up or down an academic level.
	The centre quickly and appropriately responded to the recent national lockdown with a prompt move to online classes. Both staff and students were well resourced and supported during the online period, and support staff were available remotely.
	Information is readily available to students, through both written materials and in person. NEC provides students with an A-Z document guide along with a comprehensive student handbook. Students reported being confident about asking for help and getting the support they needed in relation to study, visas and New Zealand life.
	Welfare, homestay and pastoral care self-assessment processes cover the needs of international student support very well, although they are in redevelopment of staff Code

	responsibilities, arising from pandemic impacts.
Conclusion:	Students are very well supported to successfully participate in their learning and achieve academically and integrate into campus life and a New Zealand community.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	NEC is an adaptable and resilient private training establishment. The organisational mission statement is embedded across the centre and supports a sustainable business model. The centre has had a recent change to its leadership structure but has focused on the continuation of the business to the benefit of its students. NEC used experiences from the recent national lockdown to introduce and strengthen processes and communication across the centre. Management of self-assessment is tailored to meet the needs of the business in context and is cross-purpose. For example, job delegations and tasks can be shared. The centre is appropriately resourced with highly experienced, qualified staff. NEC exhibits strong leadership and investment in staff development through professional development opportunities. Ongoing professional develop opportunities include compliance management practice. Postgraduate research conducted by staff informs in-house development and general skill sharing. Staff reported feeling valued and well supported professionally. Self-assessment activities contribute to educational achievement (gains in learners' English proficiency) and the resilience of the business. Management drives the use of collected data. For example, recent data analysis has informed business decisions such as the capping of student numbers to manage resourcing.
Conclusion:	Governance and management are responsive to change, which supports student achievement and the student experience. Data is used to inform improvements at all levels of the business. Self-assessment activities are sound in supporting the business, with

	room to improve in compliance (see 1.6).

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The PTE's many compliance accountabilities are generally well managed and understood.[2] NEC has effective processes and sound self-assessment practices to identify potential risks in most compliance areas. However, some gaps in the management of record-keeping of international student files were identified during this evaluation.[3] NEC responded quickly to address the gaps and correct the oversight by changing the design of the database. NZQA recommends further strengthening overall monitoring of compliance for the purposes of record-keeping international student files to ensure enrolment processes and the validity of visas are cross-checked. Further to this, strengthening coverage of the annual Code self-review[4] to ensure all Code requirements are met would support self-assessment of compliance. However, all visas and insurance documents checked were valid, and NEC worked to file them chronologically. Management is currently developing a new framework to manage self-assessment of compliance activities in an effort to streamline responsibilities.
Conclusion:	Important compliance responsibilities are generally managed well. Oversight of record-keeping rules identified during the evaluation has since been rectified. NZQA recommends further strengthening of compliance oversight to ensure international student files are maintained as required and to cross-check the

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[2] NEC has compliance responsibilities with NZQA, English New Zealand, International Association of Language Centres, Immigration NZ

[3] Gaps pertaining to Part 1 PTE Enrolment Records 4.1 (i) of the PTE Enrolment and Academic Record Keeping rules 2012

[4] Education providers that are signatories of the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 (the international Code) must: carry out an annual self-review of how they are meeting the international Code outcomes and processes.

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	validity of visas.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: General English Course (NZQA-approved)

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**

2.2 Focus area: IELTS preparation (offered under General English delivery)

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**

2.3 Focus area: International Student Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings:	The reason for this rating is attributed to self-assessment processes of international student files (see 1.6).

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 Nelson English Centre:

- Strengthen the overall monitoring of compliance for the purposes of record-keeping international student files to ensure the validity of visas.

- Strengthen coverage of the annual Code self-review to ensure all Code requirements are comprehensively met.

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 fraud[5]*

- *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.*

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[5] 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.

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Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister authorised as responsible for Part 20 of the Education Act.

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 2018, the Consent to Assess Against Standards Rules 2011 and the Training Scheme Rules 2012 respectively. These rules were also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Rules 2018 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2018 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, 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 2016. 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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