External Evaluation and Review Report

Nelson English Centre Ltd

Date of report: 12 February 2025

About Nelson English Centre Ltd

Nelson English Centre (NEC) provides English language programmes tailored for international and domestic students seeking to enhance their communication skills or prepare for external certifications. The organisation customises study plans to meet the individual needs of its students.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	41 Selwyn Place, Nelson
Eligible to enrol international students:	Yes
Number of students (2024):	Domestic: 20 equivalent full-time students[1]
	International: 80 equivalent full-time students[2]
Number of staff:	10 full-time, four part-time
TEO profile:	See NEC's profile on the NZQA website
Last EER outcome:	In March 2021, NZQA was Highly Confident in the educational performance, and Confident in the capability in self-assessment of NEC.
Scope of evaluation:	Focus areas:

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- General English (Training Scheme) – this currently constitutes NEC's entire delivery
- International Students: Support and Wellbeing

MoE number:	9816
NZQA reference:	C58783
Dates of EER visit:	19 and 20 November 2024

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[1] Domestic students are predominantly new migrants enrolled in Intensive Literacy and Numeracy courses funded by the Tertiary Education Commission.

[2] Nationalities (at the time of the EER) include: Japanese; Korean; Taiwanese; Saudi Arabian; Chinese; Thai; German; Swiss German; Brazilian; Swiss French; Czech; French; Dutch; Spanish; Italian; Austrian; Hungarian.

Summary of results

NEC consistently delivers high-quality education and comprehensive support, resulting in strong satisfaction levels and positive outcomes for students and graduates.

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- NEC achieves strong course completion rates and progression. Students are achieving their academic and personal goals.

- NEC designs, delivers and reviews programmes to meet the evolving needs of students and stakeholders.

- Experienced, qualified staff teach the courses and use their qualifications and experience to ensure the education delivery is engaging and relevant to students' aspirations.

- Students experience a caring, supportive learning environment and are highly engaged in their learning.

- The organisation is effectively managed, guided by a clear philosophy and core values that are consistently demonstrated across all aspects of its operations. The PTE supports learning with sufficient resources – including a purpose-designed building – ensuring an engaging and effective educational experience for the students.

- NEC manages its important compliance accountabilities effectively.

- The processes that form the foundation of NEC's strong performance are well embedded and have been continuously refined over time to enhance their effectiveness. These practices are thorough, genuine and transparent, reflecting a strong commitment to continuous improvement.

Key evaluation question findings[3]

1.1 How well do students achieve

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Students are gaining valuable knowledge and applying it in meaningful ways that support their personal goals and aspirations, such as building confidence, engaging with their community, and navigating daily tasks in an English-speaking environment.
	Students at NEC consistently demonstrate strong academic performance and personal development. Course completions are high, with formal exam results consistently exceeding national and international benchmarks.[4] Progression through language proficiency levels remains high, supported by sound assessment processes.
	Students in the General English programme show notable gains in English language proficiency and confidence throughout their studies. In addition to four-weekly tests, they self-assess their proficiency at the start and end of their enrolment, linking their progress to everyday activities such as conversing with friends or staff and watching TV.
	Most students rated their improvement as 'quite a lot' or 'a lot', though a small number reported minimal progress. This is expected for those enrolled for only a short duration, such as one or two weeks. Success rates are

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

[4] Obtaining national and international results for benchmarking purposes has been notoriously difficult in recent years. Appendix 1 includes data up until 2018.

	also strong for students pursuing Cambridge or IELTS[5] exam results.[6] NEC collects extensive and useful data on student achievement, and has a strong understanding of both progress and outcomes. Processes are well connected, supporting a thorough analysis of factors contributing to continued strong performance, or identifying areas for improvement. NEC fosters a culture of collaboration and reflection, driving continuous improvement in its programmes. Staff maintain a strong focus on student success and are encouraged to discuss, trial and implement strategies to enhance achievement. For instance, when staff noticed that some students were finding it difficult to adapt to the local learning environment and language demands, they organised out-of-class social activities and encouraged participation among those facing challenges. This initiative provided students with additional support and opportunities to build confidence in a relaxed setting. NEC has built longstanding relationships with partner education providers, international education agents and homestay families, fostered by the high levels of trust and confidence in NEC's educational quality. These relationships not only enhance NEC's ability to attract and retain students, but also create a supportive network that contributes to a positive learning environment and overall student experience. Graduate outcomes are positive, demonstrating the relevance and value of the programmes. NEC students are achieving both academic and personal milestones such as improved communication skills for social interactions, travel, work or further education. While quantifying long-term outcomes for general English programmes will always be a challenge, anecdotal evidence, exit interviews, social media observations and stakeholder feedback suggest that graduates derive substantial benefit from their studies.
Conclusion:	Significant student progress and the attainment of personal and academic goals is underpinned by robust

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[5] International English Language Testing System

[6] Refer Appendix 1 for further details.

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	systems for monitoring and enhancing achievement. Students are not only advancing academically but also improving their wellbeing and developing valuable skills and attributes.

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:	NEC regularly reviews and updates its programmes to reflect emerging student needs. Programme design at NEC reflects a comprehensive understanding of student and stakeholder needs. Feedback from students is actively sought and used to inform teaching and programme improvements. This includes surveys, focus groups, one-to-one interviews, and an open-door policy for real-time feedback. NEC's 'Academic Warrant of Fitness'[7] process is used to track programme and teaching improvements over time.
	Teaching practices at NEC are student-centred, with teachers tailoring their approach to align with the aspirations, interests and needs of the students. This can be challenging, as students may enrol for periods ranging from as short as one or two weeks to as long as one or two years. The PTE takes a structured and systematic approach to enhancing teaching quality, including regular peer reviews, annual teaching observations and evaluations.
	Ongoing professional development sessions for staff play a pivotal role in further refining teaching methods. These sessions actively incorporate insights gathered from student feedback and peer reviews, ensuring that teaching practices remain dynamic, responsive and effective.
	Teaching and learning activities at NEC are designed to be flexible, allowing teachers to respond effectively to students' specific needs. Students report that their

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[7] NEC's Academic Warrant of Fitness is a live document which provides a summary of all programme and teaching quality assurance activities.

	teachers address individual requirements based on both direct feedback and indirect indicators, such as test results and performance data. The director of studies plays a proactive role in monitoring patterns and trends in progress reports. These observations often inform adjustments to professional development priorities. For instance, a recent workshop on pronunciation was introduced as a direct result of the director of studies identifying this as an area requiring additional focus.
	Progress reporting is closely aligned with descriptors derived from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This ensures that assessments that contribute to the progress reports are relevant and grounded in internationally recognised standards. These descriptors are further linked to real-world tasks, enhancing the practical application of students' learning outcomes.
	Programmes are enhanced with New Zealand-specific content, fostering cultural integration and contextually relevant learning. The teacher handbook includes a section on the Treaty of Waitangi, offering a detailed list of activities for both students and teachers to engage in. A direct relationship with local iwi would further enhance these activities.
	Regular internal moderation ensures the validity and reliability of assessments, reflecting NEC's commitment to upholding high academic standards. Introducing an external partner for moderation would enhance this process, promoting best practices and further strengthening the robustness of assessments.
Conclusion:	NEC's responsive and inclusive approach to programme design and delivery ensures that student and stakeholder needs are consistently met.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Students at NEC benefit from a holistic support system that addresses both academic and personal needs. A strong commitment to student success and wellbeing is evident. The enrolment process begins with detailed pre-enrolment guidance to ensure students are placed in the right programme at the right level and that they are provided with quality accommodation and support that meets their needs. A thorough orientation programme helps new students settle in, while small class sizes enable personalised attention from teachers. The multicultural environment at NEC is enhanced by a diverse mix of nationalities. The campus operates with an 'English-only' rule, which fosters an immersive language-learning environment. The rule is enforced through a light-hearted system where any use of a native language results in a $1 donation to the SPCA, reinforcing the commitment to English immersion while supporting a charitable cause. That said, if necessary, NEC staff possess a wide range of languages and have strong networks within the community. This ensures that students are able to converse with someone in their first language, providing support when needed. Attendance is closely monitored, with staff proactively addressing any concerns to ensure students remain engaged. Students are encouraged to voice their opinions through surveys, focus groups and informal channels, with feedback used to enhance learning and support systems. There are high levels of student satisfaction. NEC has submitted attestations to NZQA that they have completed annual self-reviews of their implementation of the Code of Practice[8], as required for all PTEs by 1 November each year. The self-reviews have been a team effort involving an appropriate range of staff. In the latest

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[8] The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021

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	self-review, NEC rated itself as 'well implemented' for all outcomes.
Conclusion:	Students at NEC benefit from an inclusive and student-centred learning environment, underpinned by an organisational culture that is both reflective and focused on the needs of the students. This strong commitment to student wellbeing and success ensures that the PTE remains responsive and effective in meeting the diverse needs of its student body.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	NEC is effectively managed, with a clear vision and purpose, and a strong focus on its core business. Its strategic plan is formally documented, and both management and staff share a common understanding of the PTE's direction and objectives. The business model has proven its sustainability over three decades of successful operation, including effective management of challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic and its aftermath, when enrolments were minimal or non-existent. Recommendations from the previous EER have been thoroughly addressed and documented. Educational delivery is well resourced and fit for purpose. The location of NEC in the Nelson central business district is ideal for student and stakeholder access. Systems are in place to ensure resources are continuously monitored and sufficient to meet the learning needs of the students. NEC has well-established administrative and management systems, grounded in ethical practices. Staff are highly qualified, experienced and valued. They receive strong support through ongoing professional development and regular performance reviews. Academic leadership is robust, well disseminated, and firmly embedded within the organisation. NEC demonstrates a strong commitment to self-assessment, with structured processes for performance

	monitoring and implementing improvements. NEC's clear vision and understanding of its mission are supported by strong leadership, which actively promotes educational success. Regular, transparent and effective performance monitoring ensures accountability and drives continuous improvement.
Conclusion:	Strong governance and management enable NEC to maintain high educational standards and outcomes, fostering an environment where both students and staff thrive.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	NEC's chief executive oversees compliance and ensures all staff are aware of their compliance obligations. The chief executive also ensures that policies and procedures comply with the requirements of NZQA, Immigration New Zealand and relevant legislation such as that relating to visas, employment and health and safety, etc. Indications of effective compliance management include: • NZQA attestations and returns have been submitted within required timeframes. • There is no recent 'risk' history with NZQA. • Policies are in place to manage requirements for fees protection (e.g. Public Trust, withdrawal and refund policies, etc) and visas (e.g. attendance requirements). • A sample of student files was checked during the EER. The files contained all required documents and information. • The courses at NEC are being delivered consistent with their NZQA-approved training scheme. • NEC was deemed to be fully compliant in the 2024 audit by the International Association of Language Centres.

	• Police have vetted all staff and homestay hosts in compliance with the requirements of the Children's Act 2014. • NEC is meeting its obligations with respect to the Code of Practice.
Conclusion:	NEC has a clear understanding of its compliance accountabilities and manages these proactively and effectively to ensure obligations are met.

Focus areas

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

2.1 General English

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

2.2 International Students: Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The goals of international students are clearly understood, and they receive strong support from management, teachers and international student support staff to achieve these objectives. Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of their responsibilities toward the academic progress and overall welfare of international students. During interviews, students highlighted the variety of pastoral care services and interventions provided, confirming the support they have received. They also expressed appreciation for the diverse range of extracurricular activities, which helped them build friendships and improve their English language skills. NEC has well-structured processes in place for the appointment and ongoing review of educational agents.
Conclusion:	International students are well supported to achieve their goals, both academic and personal, as well as for studying and living in New Zealand.

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.

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

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[9]
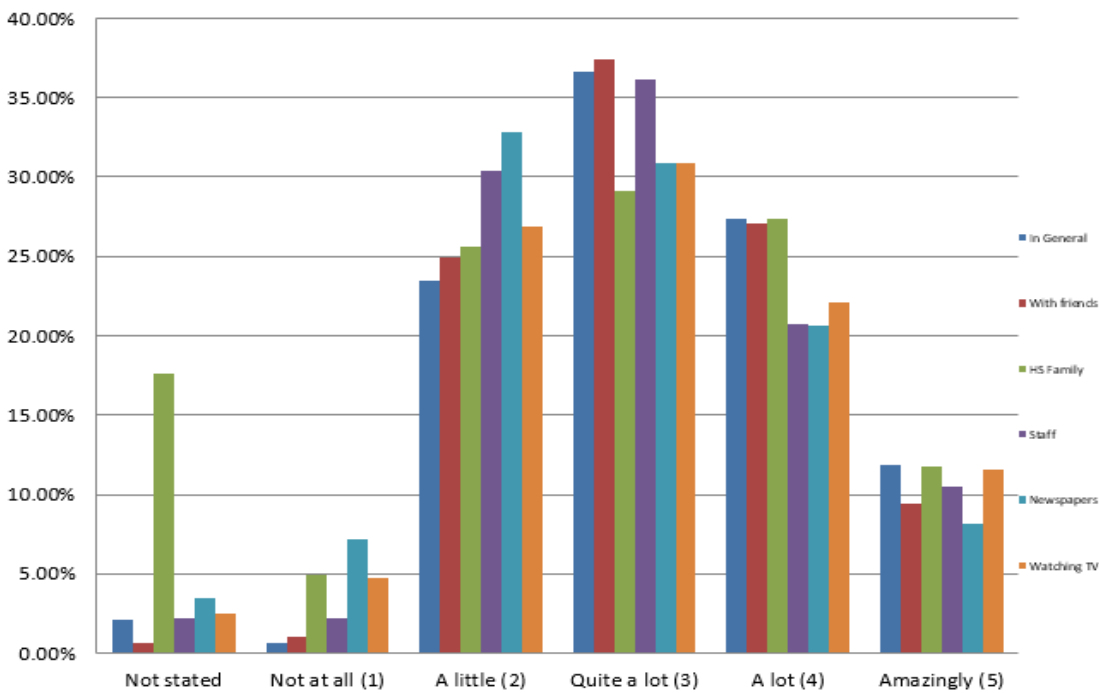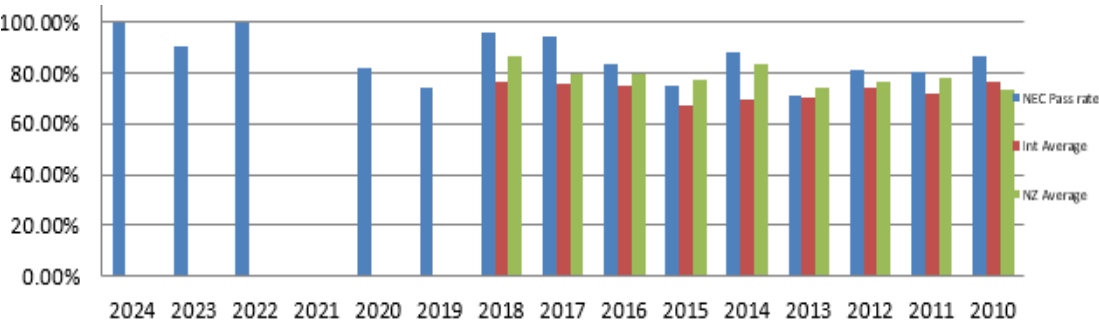
Table 1. English learning improvement – self-assessment

Table 2. Cambridge exam benchmarking

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[9] From data supplied by Nelson English Centre.

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 fraud[10]*

- *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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[10] 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.

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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