



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

QUALIFY FOR THE FUTURE WORLD
KIA NOHO TAKATŪ KI TŌ ĀMUA AO!

External Evaluation and Review Report

Study Group NZ Limited trading as
Taylors College and EmbassyCES

Date of report: 10 July 2019

About Study Group NZ Limited trading as Taylors College and EmbassyCES

Taylors College provides a university foundation programme for international students wanting to prepare for university study in New Zealand or overseas. Embassy provides general English and exam preparation for tertiary study.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	75 Karangahape Road, Auckland Central
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: five International: 319 (70 per cent Chinese, 24 per cent Brazilian)
Number of staff:	38 full-time equivalents, 14 part-time
TEO profile:	See: NZQA - Study Group NZ Limited Taylors College is owned by Study Group NZ Ltd (SGNZ). SGNZ is part of Study Group, a leading provider of international education. Study Group's Australia/New Zealand division headquarters is in Sydney, Australia. Students are able to transfer between campuses. Embassy is the English language division of SGNZ. It changed ownership to EC English in 2018, a Maltese-owned school. EC English operates under SGNZ licence through an approved sub-contract. Once EC English has NZQA-approved registration, it will cease its sub-contracting relationship with SGNZ.
Last EER outcome:	At the most recent external evaluation and review in 2015, NZQA was Highly Confident in the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of Study Group NZ.

Scope of evaluation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundation Studies Certificate University of Auckland (UoA)• General English training scheme (Embassy programme)• International students: support and well-being
MoE number:	7459
NZQA reference:	C34240
Dates of EER visit:	30 April, 1 and 2 May 2019

Summary of Results

Taylors and Embassy academic results are excellent. Foundation and English students consistently meet the academic and social requirements to successfully complete tertiary study in New Zealand and to improve their English language skills.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Student achievement at both Taylors College and Embassy has been consistently high over time. This success can be attributed to excellent teaching and learning, focused and appropriate support of students' academic and personal needs, and a dedicated, highly capable management team.
- Both Taylors and Embassy benefit from well-trained, experienced, long-standing academic and support staff. These staff engage professionally and pro-actively with students and collaborate effectively to meet student needs.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Programme design and delivery meets and is informed by stakeholder needs. This ensures programme relevance and maintains academic quality and integrity.
- Self-assessment is underpinned by rigorous data analysis that informs ongoing programme review and organisational management of both organisations.
- Effective compliance management processes have been further improved and updated by systematic analysis of relevant rules and regulations. This has led to the development of a comprehensive quality management system.
- Governance and management is strategic, learner-centred, and understands its local and international obligations. It is supported by and contributes significantly to the wider SGNZ corporation.

Key evaluation question findings¹

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student achievement at Taylors College and Embassy has been consistently high over many years. The relationship between Taylors and Embassy has enabled students to gradually progress in their English language competency. A student can progress from the Embassy General English and ELP training schemes (with relatively poor English competency on entry) to a pre-foundation course at Taylors College. If successful, they can progress to the foundation programme at Taylors College, and then to university.</p> <p>Taylors' and Embassy's self-assessment demonstrates a focus on each student's future individual journey, rather than solely ensuring that they gain entry to further study. This is a key factor in securing excellent outcomes for the students, both academic and personal.</p> <p>Once Embassy completes its transition to new ownership and separate NZQA registration, Taylors will increase the focus on IELTS² preparation. All students entering the Taylors foundation programme will in future automatically sit an IELTS test.</p> <p>(Refer Focus Areas 2.1 and 2.2 for Taylors' and Embassy's achievement data.)</p>
Conclusion:	Student success indicates that the preparation provided at both Taylors and Embassy meets the educational, personal and social skills required to manage independent study in a New Zealand tertiary learning environment.

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

² International English Testing System

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 enrol to articulate to university study. A pre-foundation stand-alone course was introduced in 2018. Prior to this, students stayed longer in the foundation course to meet university entry requirements. Students must now pass the pre-foundation course to advance to the foundation course. In the first intake of students, 100 per cent completed and 65 per cent gained entry to foundation.</p> <p>In the first intake of students, 100 per cent completed and 65 per cent gained entry to foundation, but only 24 per cent gained the New Zealand certificate qualification. Most students' English ability held them back. To address this, Taylors' pre-foundation programme now has an extra two hours of English preparation each week, an increased focus on language acquisition in all subjects, and more opportunities for practice exercises similar to the IELTS to gain entry to the foundation programme.</p> <p>Student satisfaction rates in the Taylors foundation programme are very high: in 2015, 97 per cent (238/245 students); 2016, 96 per cent (275/285 students); 2017, 97 per cent (299/307 students); and in 2018, 99 per cent (91/92 students). These satisfaction rates are particularly significant given the high numbers of students involved.</p> <p>Evaluations are undertaken twice a year. The academic director presents the findings to staff which are used to make changes and improvements.</p> <p>The first alumni survey of foundation students was undertaken in 2018. Eighty-seven students responded. Of these, 66 students (76 per cent) agreed that university study was not too difficult, and 71 students (82 per cent) that they were ready for life in New Zealand after completing the foundation programme. Annual alumni surveys will be ongoing.</p>
Conclusion:	Both Taylors and Embassy have cooperated effectively to ensure that universities gain students who have the English language capabilities and entry-level subject knowledge to successfully complete degree-level study.

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>Programme design meets a wide range of student abilities and plans. The Taylors College Student Study Journey enables students to understand the requirements of each stage. Each student's academic English is assessed on entry. Students who meet the entry criteria progress to the Auckland Foundation Year (31-40 weeks); others enter the pre-foundation course (20 weeks) and may progress to the Foundation Year if successful. Other students will require academic English preparation (minimum 12 weeks) and then may progress to pre-foundation and possibly Foundation Year. Taylors' programme delivery is closely matched to University of Auckland (UoA) requirements for entry to university programmes.</p> <p>The foundation programmes deliver a wide range of subjects to cater to student interests. Delivery is underpinned by excellent resources (teachers, teaching materials, facilities) and small class numbers. Internal and external moderation is used to ensure assessments are fair and accurate, at the correct level, and that the content of programmes remains relevant. Assessment activities are moderated twice a year by the UoA academic committee. Internal moderation at Taylors also occurs twice a year. Embassy students are assessed every six weeks on their writing, and moderation occurs the week following. Assessment at both organisations is closely aligned with learning outcomes.</p> <p>Teachers are appraised annually using an evaluative inquiry model, designed to encourage self-reflection and improvement. Appraisal is supportive and highly valued by academic staff.</p>
Conclusion:	Quality professional relationships between Taylors and partner universities ensure that high academic standards and integrity are fostered and maintained. Embassy programmes are learner-centred, flexible and aligned to best practice English teaching.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Student support is robust, focused, readily accessible and highly responsive. The welfare team covers all the programmes on campus. Welfare staff speak a range of languages and deal with accommodation, attendance, communication with parents, academic tracking, visas and insurances and general well-being. Students consistently rate the team highly. Additional support for under-18 students includes interviews every three months until the student turns 18, and regular reporting to parents and close attendance tracking.</p> <p>Foundation students can access free subject tutorials, and students assessed as needing extra English language tuition may attend extra English support classes. The well-resourced library is well frequented and supports all students, particularly those with learning difficulties.</p> <p>Students are provided with extensive information about programmes and subject choices. To ensure they make the correct selection of subjects, there is a two-week flexible period on entry when they can change subjects. Regular reporting to students across all programmes plus individual feedback is timely and comprehensive.</p> <p>Each student has a mentor teacher and attends a mentor group every second week where university options and any other issues are discussed. Free trips to partner universities (UoA, AUT, Massey) help students to decide the university that would best suit them, and to meet the international team on each campus.</p>
Conclusion:	Timely study information and advice assists students to make informed choices for study. Barriers to learning are reduced through generous targeted academic support of individual students. This helps to ensure that students stay involved in their learning and meet academic requirements.

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

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Taylor's and Embassy are well-supported by SGNZ in a number of key functions. This support includes finance, information technology, human resources, marketing and sales, legal advice and compliance. The benefit is that these processes are standardised across the SGNZ corporation and contribute to the overall robustness of Taylor's and Embassy's day-to-day operations. They also provide an external objective overview of local management functions. Resourcing for teaching and learning is generous. It includes excellent facilities, modern learning technology and generous staff professional development opportunities, all of which support educational achievement.</p> <p>In 2017, in response to the poor attendance and motivation of some students, a number of initiatives were put in place. These included the mentor programme where students receive one-to-one support and counselling from a designated teacher, the appointment of a welfare officer, closer scrutiny of under-18 students, more face-to-face time with at-risk students, and improved attendance tracking.</p> <p>In 2019 the Taylor's director of studies role was split to form two new roles of academic director and director of teaching and learning. Tertiary counsellor duties have been added to the academic director's job description. This has streamlined administration processes around progressing students from foundation to university. It has also freed up the director of teaching and learning to concentrate on teaching matters, including teacher appraisal and support and classroom management. These are examples of review leading to change and improvement.</p>
Conclusion:	The business relationship with SGNZ corporation is well documented and understood. It is open, respectful and productive. SGNZ operates a business model that is sustainable, aligned to its educational purpose and values people. This enables Taylor's and Embassy to work effectively with SGNZ to support educational achievement.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Taylors and Embassy have comprehensive management systems for compliance accountability. Some compliance-related functions are undertaken by SGNZ corporation, as detailed in 1.5.</p> <p>On-site staff with compliance management responsibilities are focused and invested in the accuracy, upkeep and usability of the information in the TQMS (Taylors quality management system). The TQMS is accessible to staff, as appropriate, and regularly used to clarify policies and procedures.</p> <p>The most recent annual self-review of the Code of Practice (for the pastoral care of international students) was completed in September 2018. Pro-active preparation for upcoming changes to the Code in 2019 have been discussed and documented.</p> <p>The Taylors compliance overview document is updated annually. This overview involves a comprehensive check of the provisions of all relevant legislation and NZQA rules. Taylors and Embassy were found to be compliant with all NZQA-approved training schemes and programmes.</p> <p>Several discrepancies with student visas and class attendance were found. NZQA is satisfied that Taylors understands how these occurred and has put in place measures to mitigate against similar issues recurring.</p> <p>The foundation programme offered by Taylors is approved by the Committee on University Academic Programmes. There is a signed agreement between Taylors and UoA outlining the responsibilities of each organisation in relation to this qualification.</p>
Conclusion:	Compliance management is systematic, effective and prioritised to ensure the safety of students and staff. Compliance management and the different rules, regulations and accountabilities that apply to New Zealand is well understood across both the New Zealand and Australian operational teams.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Foundation Studies Certificate (UoA)

Performance:	Excellent																							
Self-assessment:	Excellent																							
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students undertake English for Academic Purposes and also choose four subjects from the following: accounting, art, biology, chemistry, classical studies, economics, geography, information technology, mathematics and statistics and mathematics with calculus.</p> <p>Over the last four years, completion rates in the Taylors foundation programme have been consistently high, as shown in Table 1.</p> <p>Table 1. Taylors' foundation programme completion rates 2015-2018 (student numbers in brackets)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2017</th> <th>2018</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>84%(419/500)</td> <td>84%(392/469)</td> <td>90%(373/413)</td> <td>95%(124/131)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Performance is regularly reported and reviewed at a range of meetings. This ongoing analysis gives assurance that any changes to student performance will be noticed and appropriate action taken. Taylors' alumni university pass rates over the last four years have been exemplary, as shown in Table 2, indicating that the preparation for university is comprehensive.</p> <p>Table 2. University pass rates Taylors alumni 2015-2018</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2017</th> <th>2018</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>UoA (University of Auckland)</td> <td>93%</td> <td>94%</td> <td>96%</td> <td>97%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AUT (Auckland University of Technology)</td> <td>96%</td> <td>90%</td> <td>88%</td> <td>Not yet available</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2015	2016	2017	2018	84%(419/500)	84%(392/469)	90%(373/413)	95%(124/131)		2015	2016	2017	2018	UoA (University of Auckland)	93%	94%	96%	97%	AUT (Auckland University of Technology)	96%	90%	88%	Not yet available
2015	2016	2017	2018																					
84%(419/500)	84%(392/469)	90%(373/413)	95%(124/131)																					
	2015	2016	2017	2018																				
UoA (University of Auckland)	93%	94%	96%	97%																				
AUT (Auckland University of Technology)	96%	90%	88%	Not yet available																				
Conclusion:	<p>Taylors' foundation certificate students successfully complete Taylors' courses that enable them to continue academic study at one of Taylors' partner tertiary institutions of UoA, AUT or Massey. Academic success at UoA and AUT has been consistently high over time. Taylors analyses data, notes trends and take actions accordingly.</p>																							

2.2 Focus area: General English training scheme (Embassy programme)

Performance:	Excellent																
Self-assessment:	Excellent																
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Embassy training scheme students successfully complete their courses. Students fit courses into their other interests such as travel and work. Test results over the last four years show improvements in English language capability, as Table 3 indicates.</p> <p>Table 3. Embassy General English training scheme test results showing improvements 2015-2018 (student numbers in brackets)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2017</th> <th>2018</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>90% (37/41)</td> <td>90% (36/40)</td> <td>93% (356/383)</td> <td>93% (244/262)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Embassy completion rates are also excellent as shown in Table 4.</p> <p>Table 4. Embassy General English training scheme completion rates 2015-2018 (student numbers in brackets)</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>2015</th> <th>2016</th> <th>2017</th> <th>2018</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>97%(510/525)</td> <td>95%(635/665)</td> <td>97%(481/495)</td> <td>85%(324/381)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>This course is designed to improve students' English ability for a variety of purposes including future study. It is not a qualification per se but a training scheme that focuses on English competency. It provides a bridge to enable students to undertake further study at Taylors College.</p> <p>Embassy has developed an online programme that students access in their own time. It enables students to catch up if unwell, consolidate classroom learning, submit essays and get personalised teacher feedback. It also encourages students to self-manage, an essential attribute for managing higher-level study. There is an equivalent learning management system for use by Taylors staff and students.</p>	2015	2016	2017	2018	90% (37/41)	90% (36/40)	93% (356/383)	93% (244/262)	2015	2016	2017	2018	97%(510/525)	95%(635/665)	97%(481/495)	85%(324/381)
2015	2016	2017	2018														
90% (37/41)	90% (36/40)	93% (356/383)	93% (244/262)														
2015	2016	2017	2018														
97%(510/525)	95%(635/665)	97%(481/495)	85%(324/381)														
Conclusion:	The Embassy training scheme is flexible. Students complete at their own pace or transfer to other programmes as their English skills improve.																

2.3 Focus area: International students: support and well-being

Performance:	Excellent
Self-assessment:	Excellent
Findings and supporting evidence:	The range of responsibilities outlined in the Code of Practice are well understood by marketing management and staff. Homestay arrangements vary, with some homestay families contracted to Taylors and others externally contracted through agents. These various homestay arrangements need to be closely monitored. There was no evidence to suggest that this monitoring is not occurring, or that there are any problems. However, a focused, written analysis of how accountabilities are managed across the various accommodation arrangements would further increase confidence in this essential aspect of the international student experience (refer Recommendations).
Conclusion:	Support and well-being for international students is well managed. However, NZQA recommends a review of the various homestay arrangements for consistency of student outcomes, student satisfaction levels and overall accountability to the Code of Practice and SGNZ policies and practices.

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 Study Group NZ Limited trading as Taylors College and EmbassyCES consider:

- Reviewing the various homestay arrangements for consistency of student outcomes, student satisfaction levels and overall accountability to the Code of Practice and SGNZ policies and practices.
- Reviewing and updating any licence agreements between SGNZ and its partnering universities to ensure they are sufficiently comprehensive to clearly demonstrate the areas of responsibility for each partner.

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

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 fraud³*
- *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.*

³ 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 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/>.

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz