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# External Evaluation and Review Report

ICL Education Limited trading as ICL Graduate Business School

Date of report: 20 September 2022

# About ICL Education Limited t/a ICL Graduate Business School

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*ICL Graduate Business School (ICLGBS) is part of the ICL Education Group. It delivers programmes in management, business informatics, and early childhood education at levels 5-9, predominately to international students.*

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Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Level 1-3, ICL Education Centre, 10-14 Lorne Street, Auckland Central
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: three equivalent full-time students International: 197 equivalent full-time students, representing 24 nationalities
Number of staff:	28 full-time; eight part-time
TEO profile:	See <a href="#">ICL Graduate Business School</a> on the NZQA website.  There have been a number of significant changes at ICLGBS since the previous evaluation in 2018, many of them brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on student numbers, and the corresponding reduction in staff numbers. Repeated lockdown events led to the introduction of online teaching, initially as a temporary response, but since then leading to the development of hybrid teaching. Hybrid delivery enables some students to study in class and others to study remotely as part of the same class.
Last EER outcome:	The previous external evaluation and review (EER) of ICLGBS, held in August 2018, resulted in summative judgements of Highly Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	The current EER looked at the following focus areas:

- Master of Business Informatics (Level 9) [ID: 122349-3] (ref# 3749)
- Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Early Childhood Education) (Level 7) [ID:126061-1] (ref# 4207)
- International Students: Support and Wellbeing

MoE number: 7548

NZQA reference: C50788

Dates of EER visit: 3 and 4 August 2022<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ICLGBS operates in partnership with Auckland English Academy and Bridge International College. The three PTEs share premises, student support, marketing and corporate services; and are collectively owned and governed by the ICL Group. The EER of all three organisations took place simultaneously over a two-week period as most of the services and performance are common across the three PTEs.

# Summary of results

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*There is clear and comprehensive evidence that ICLGBS is providing quality education and support leading to high levels of satisfaction and positive outcomes for its students and graduates.*

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## **Highly Confident in educational performance**

- ICLGBS has strong course and qualification completions along with high student satisfaction with their education. Students are achieving their academic and personal goals to attain high-level qualifications leading to valued and sustained employment.
- ICLGBS is effectively using its expertise to develop, deliver and continuously improve programmes that closely meet individual and stakeholder needs.

## **Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment**

- Students are engaged in their learning and are experiencing a supportive and caring learning environment.
- Education is delivered in appropriate contexts for industry and student needs. Stakeholders confirm that ICLGBS graduates have work-ready skills and qualifications. Programmes are fit for purpose and regularly reviewed and updated to match the existing and emerging needs of students and stakeholders.
- Teaching is underpinned by a strong research culture and infrastructure, which is well resourced and supported by the organisation.
- The organisation is well managed and has a clear philosophy and values which are reflected throughout its operation. The learning activities are well resourced, and ICLGBS uses its resources effectively. Important compliance accountabilities are being managed effectively. The contributing processes that underpin ICLGBS's high performance are well established and have been refined over time.
- Records and discussions indicate that self-assessment is well embedded and is comprehensive, authentic and transparent. NZQA is highly confident that ICLGBS will continue to use its self-assessment findings insightfully to maintain high performance.

# Key evaluation question findings<sup>2</sup>

- 1.1 How well do students achieve?
- 1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>ICLGBS students are completing their courses and qualifications at a consistently high rate. Successful completion of the Graduate Diploma in Teaching has been 100 per cent, and Master of Business Informatics, 85.4 per cent.</p> <p>Qualification completion rates generally at ICLGBS are over 85 per cent and have remained stable over the 2019-21 period.</p> <p>Aggregated pass rates show no significant difference in the study periods affected by the lockdowns and the move to online and hybrid delivery.</p> <p>Interviews with students and feedback from employers indicate that the students are acquiring useful skills and knowledge, including a strong emphasis on analysis and critical thinking. These skills prepare them well for employment in New Zealand.</p> <p>Staff at ICLGBS demonstrate a good understanding of, and commitment to, the factors that lead to student achievement, and they regularly analyse, discuss and implement ideas for improving achievement. The organisation has fortnightly staff meetings where ideas for improving course delivery and student achievement are discussed and agreed.</p> <p>ICLGBS has good systems for tracking and engaging with graduates, who are gaining worthwhile and sustained employment. For example, 100 per cent of the first cohort of 17 graduates from the Graduate Diploma in Teaching in June 2022 gained registration with the Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, and had secured employment as early childhood teachers within a month of completing the programme. In fact,</p>

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

	<p>many had job offers before they had completed their training. Likewise, 77 per cent of graduates from Master of Business Informatics move into relevant employment at a level commensurate with their qualification, or in some cases go on to further postgraduate or doctoral study.</p> <p>ICLGBS is a PTE sector leader in research, as demonstrated by its success in the last PBRF<sup>3</sup> round in 2018. ICLGBS's strength and scale in applied research has benefits for students and communities. ICLGBS staff are engaged in research that informs programmes and often involves students and external stakeholders as partners in the research.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Self-assessment material reviewed by the evaluators, and commentary from students, graduates and external stakeholders confirm the success, extent and value of the educational performance of ICLGBS.</p>

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>ICLGBS study programmes are regularly reviewed alongside feedback and achievement results to ensure they are continuously improved to best meet the needs of students and stakeholders.</p> <p>Students regularly complete feedback surveys and engage in structured focus groups to provide feedback on the learning methods, course delivery and learning environment. The results of this feedback are collated, analysed and used effectively to inform improvements to course delivery. Every classroom has a QR code posted on the wall which takes students to an online facility to provide immediate feedback, positive or negative, on their experience. Regular staff professional development sessions often centre around feedback from students.</p> <p>ICLGBS has a strong network of external stakeholder groups. These include the stakeholder advisory board which provides high-level, organisation-wide engagement; the research advisory</p>

<sup>3</sup> Performance Based Research Fund

	<p>board which provides high-level, research-related strategic guidance; and individual advisory committees for programme-related advice. These, combined with programme-related feedback, such as programme reviews, survey data, results data, moderation reports and degree monitor's feedback, provide a sound framework for data collection and analysis.</p> <p>ICLGBS management and the ICL Education Group academic board consider the results of this stakeholder feedback analysis when making decisions to improve design and delivery of study programmes. Stakeholder feedback sources also include student representatives and academic staff. Recent examples of decisions to better match student needs arising from these self-assessment activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A decision to invest in a second learning management system (LMS) (Moodle) to better meet the needs of offshore online students in China.</li> <li>• Investment in hybrid classroom technology to improve delivery to offshore students.</li> <li>• Running employment workshops on campus (Covid permitting) for CV writing and job interview skills.</li> <li>• Producing and uploading of educational video clips on the LMS (Canvas/Moodle) relating to plagiarism and academic integrity.</li> <li>• Integration of the research proposal for the level 9 Applied Project into the Research Methods paper to provide students with more time to work on their level 9 project.</li> </ul>
Conclusion:	ICLGBS's regular and purposeful interaction with students and stakeholders, ensuring that programmes and activities meet their existing and emerging needs, is a strong feature of the organisation.

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Students at ICLGBS receive active, integrated and ongoing social and academic support from staff at all levels of the organisation. There was a clear sense of shared accountability across all staff for the support of students through complementary initiatives and excellent responsiveness to the multiple needs of students, especially during the pandemic lockdowns.</p> <p>The learning environment at ICLGBS is supportive, providing an excellent foundation for enhanced success. Student voice is sought and engaged with by staff. Students have the opportunity to provide feedback in their first language if they prefer.</p> <p>Intending students are well guided into courses appropriate to their aspirations and qualifications. All students hold at least an undergraduate degree, and many have significant career accomplishment prior to entry. Most students are in the 25-35 year age bracket and many have families or other dependents. ICLGBS's support staff are well attuned to the support needs of these students, which are often quite different to the needs of students in ICL Education Group's other schools.</p> <p>A comprehensive orientation programme is available to students in their first week of study. Teachers described numerous activities and initiatives to motivate, engage and encourage students to get the full benefit from their time at ICLGBS. Teachers give students individual attention as required.</p> <p>Attendance expectations are effectively communicated to the students and are monitored closely, with timely and appropriate follow-up as required. The system, while strictly enforced, is supportive and seeks to identify and address the reasons why students may not be attending classes.</p> <p>The organisation has effective processes to review how well it meets the spirit and intent of the Code of Practice.<sup>4</sup> ICL Education Group submitted an attestation to NZQA that they had completed a self-review of their implementation of the Code, as</p>

<sup>4</sup> [The Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners\) Code of Practice 2021](#)

	it was a requirement for all PTEs by 1 March 2021. Through the self-review they identified areas for further development and continue to address these. This, and other evidence sighted, provides assurance that international students are well supported.
Conclusion:	ICLGBS has structured, client-friendly systems for the academic and pastoral care of its students. The organisation is providing a safe and supportive learning environment for its students.

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

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>ICLGBS's organisational strategy is formally documented, and management and staff have a common understanding of the PTE's vision and direction. Governance structures are robust and regularly reviewed</p> <p>ICLGBS employs qualified and experienced staff, whom it manages effectively and actively develops. Most staff are employed permanently which enhances the academic capital of the PTE. Staff retention is high. The value that ICLGBS management puts on the experience and know-how of their teaching team is clearly apparent and makes a positive difference to educational quality. The performance of the teaching staff is formally reviewed annually, but this does not preclude regular and ongoing feedback of a formative nature.</p> <p>The organisation is well equipped with physical and learning resources, and is ideally located in the Auckland CBD. Students appreciate the atmosphere and facilities and the fact that it is open and accessible for 12 to 14 hours a day, seven days a week.</p> <p>There are systems in place to monitor resourcing so that there are always sufficient resources to meet the learning needs of the students. ICLGBS has well-established administration and management systems and procedures in place, with ethical practices.</p> <p>Teaching at ICLGBS is underpinned by a sound research culture which is well resourced by the organisation. All teaching staff are</p>

	<p>research active and are allowed one day a week to undertake research, which in many cases is additionally funded by ICLGBS to meet associated costs or for conference presentation. The organisation has well-established infrastructure to support research, including a research and ethics committee which approves all research, and an external research advisory board which provides high-level and strategic guidance.</p> <p>The organisation encourages reflection on its role and how to continue to make ongoing and continuous improvements to how it meets the needs of students and other stakeholders. Self-assessment is being well led by management and is comprehensively understood and adopted throughout the organisation.</p>
Conclusion:	ICLGBS has strong leadership and a clear vision and understanding of its business. Monitoring of performance within ICLGBS is regular, transparent and robust, resulting in highly effective support for educational achievement.

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Compliance is overseen by the ICL Group chief executive who ensures all managers and their staff are aware of their compliance obligations and that there are policies and procedures that comply with the requirements of NZQA and Immigration New Zealand, as well as relevant legislation such as that relating to visas, employment and health and safety. This is also monitored at board level and by the (ICL Education Group) academic board, which oversees academic quality.</p> <p>Indications of effective compliance management include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NZQA attestations and returns have been submitted within required timeframes. There is no recent 'risk' history with NZQA.</li> <li>• 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).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The courses at ICLGBS are being delivered consistent with their NZQA-approved programmes.</li> <li>• ICLGBS's research ethics committee framework ensures that research involving human participants conducted by students or staff of ICLGBS complies with appropriate ethical standards.</li> <li>• ICLGBS is meeting its obligations with respect to the Code of Practice.</li> </ul>
Conclusion:	ICLGBS 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 Focus area: Master of Business Informatics (Level 9)

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>

## 2.2 Focus area: Graduate Diploma in Teaching (Early Childhood Education) (Level 7)

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>

## 2.3 Focus area: International Students: Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	<b>Excellent</b>
Self-assessment:	<b>Excellent</b>
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>The goals of the international students are well understood, and they are well supported by management, teachers and international student support staff to achieve their goals. Staff clearly understand their responsibility for the progress and welfare of the international students.</p> <p>Students interviewed described the range of pastoral care services and interventions, confirming how they have been supported.</p> <p>ICLGBS leadership is effective in managing areas of compliance, including Code of Practice obligations and immigration requirements.</p>
Conclusion:	International students are well supported to achieve their goals, both academic and personal, and 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

## 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<sup>5</sup>*
- *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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<sup>5</sup> 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 register. 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](http://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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