External Evaluation and Review Report

Ashburton Learning Centre Incorporated

Date of report: 1 August 2022

About Ashburton Learning Centre Incorporated

The primary focus of Ashburton Learning Centre (ALC) is on literacy and numeracy education, including targeted programmes for specific learner groups (including refugees and migrants), and responding to community needs. ALC also delivers a literacy programme to local primary schools.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	71 Park Street, Ashburton
Code of Practice signatory:	No
Number of students:	Domestic: in 2021, 510 students (seven EFTS – equivalent full-time students), including 311 adult learners; 23 Māori (8 per cent) and 18 Pasifika (7 per cent); International: nil
Number of staff:	Two full-time and seven part-time staff and 60+ volunteers
TEO profile:	Ashburton Learning Centre – provider page on NZQA website[1]
Last EER outcome:	In 2018, NZQA was Highly Confident in ALC's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	- Workplace Literacy (WPL) (includes delivery of NZQA-approved Health and Safety Training Scheme) - Intensive Literacy and Numeracy (ILN) (including ESOL ILN)
MoE number:	7867
NZQA reference:	C50781
Dates of EER visit (virtual):	14 and 15 June 2022

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[1] ACL is funded by contracts with the Tertiary Education Commission (ACE, Workplace Literacy, ILN and ESOL (ILN) funds), MSD and various community groups.

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Summary of results

ALC provides accessible learning opportunities in a supportive environment to students with varied personal, educational and social backgrounds. ALC programmes are highly valued for meeting community and learner needs. Self-assessment is comprehensive and effective.

Highly Confident in educational performance

- Highly effective community and stakeholder engagement informs programme design and delivery, ensuring the PTE responds appropriately to emerging needs and funding requirements.

- Achievement is closely tracked and understood in relation to students' goals and challenges. Comprehensive records demonstrate students' academic and social progress. The positive impact of the training for individuals, their whānau and community is well evidenced.

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

- Student-centred learning, based on individual learning plans and holistic support and guidance, reduces barriers and helps students to have relevant and successful learning experiences.

- Tutors are qualified and experienced and well supported to work effectively in this learning context. ALC has been recognised for its commitment and expertise in supporting neurodiverse learners.[2]

- ALC is a stable and well-led organisation with a clear purpose and direction.

- Self-assessment is well embedded at all levels of the PTE. Systematic information gathering, reflection and analysis leads to change and actions for improvement.

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[2] ALC has recently achieved the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark (DFQM) https://ako.ac.nz/our-community/the-dyslexia-friendly-quality-mark/

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Key evaluation question findings[3]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Student achievement is very strong in ALC's learning context, and considering the diverse educational backgrounds and personal circumstances of its students.
	ALC has comprehensive evidence of students acquiring useful skills and enhanced wellbeing. This includes significant gains in literacy and numeracy test scores[4] for more than 70 per cent of students in Intensive Learning and Numeracy and Workplace Literacy programmes in 2021. Students are improving their English language communication skills for everyday living. Other achievements include digital skills, unit standards (such as Health and Safety unit standard 397 and NCEA literacy and numeracy credits), IELTS[5] passes and a first-time pass rate of approximately 90 per cent for achieving driver's licence theory tests. In addition, ALC intentionally develops and measures soft skills and personal growth, such as confidence, self-management, social and communication skills.
	Neurodiverse learners are effectively supported to understand and overcome learning challenges. Achievements include school qualifications, workplace skills, improved language and communication skills, and enhanced self-esteem.
	Māori and Pasifika students are achieving at comparable rates to other learners in the programmes they pursue.
	Individual progress and achievement are closely monitored and well documented in individual learning plans, tutor and learner evaluations, the student database and reports to funders. Discussions on achievement take place regularly, including

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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] Using the LNAAT assessment tool.

[5] International English Language Testing System

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	'next tutor' feedback, to confirm students' rates of progress and to identify opportunities for improvement.
Conclusion:	ALC has effective processes for measuring and understanding achievement. Students are gaining useful skills and achieving personal growth and development.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ALC is a valued part of the Ashburton community and has ongoing funding contracts with various agencies to deliver customised programmes to their clients. These include literacy and numeracy programmes and workplace upskilling, as well as providing support to the unemployed, foundation learning and te reo Māori. More recent developments include English language programmes for newcomers to the region, including refugees from Afghanistan and other migrants.
	Students benefit from enhanced opportunities and confidence to access further education, gain employment, and participate more fully in the community. Improved language skills and increased confidence and knowledge about the New Zealand way of life supports refugees and migrants to settle and integrate into New Zealand society. Completing courses and/or gaining skills is life-changing for some students, with benefits such as enhanced family life, improved work performance and confidence to follow new interests.
	ALC regularly engages with key stakeholders and is an active participant in various local community groups. ALC has successfully extended its engagement with local Māori and Pasifika communities, to enhance participation and support. Case studies and regular reports to funders provide strong evidence of valued outcomes. During this evaluation, interviewees confirmed their satisfaction with the outcomes for their clients and communities.
Conclusion:	The value of outcomes for students and key stakeholders is high. ALC has highly effective networking and review

	processes which ensure programmes are relevant and meet community needs.

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:	ALC delivers a variety of educational opportunities to meet stakeholder and student needs, including those with very little formal education or learning challenges such as dyslexia.
	Capable and qualified teachers successfully engage students in small groups or one-to-one, delivering tailored programmes of learning based on needs assessments and individual learning plans. Activities and resources are contextualised, for example to reflect New Zealand society and culture, or to incorporate workplace practices and documentation.
	Sound assessment and moderation practices are in place for the small number of unit standards which ALC has consent to assess.
	ALC provides students with regular feedback on their progress and identifying what they need to work on. ALC also reports regularly to funders. Recently, online reporting was set up to enable a stakeholder to monitor clients' progress in real time.
	ALC invested in digital resources and capability and moved to online delivery during the Covid-19 lockdown in 2021. This enabled some students to continue to make progress, although this mode of delivery is not suitable for many of ALC's learners.
	Programmes are subject to ongoing review, as part of weekly meetings and monthly and annual reporting, which are informed by tutor reflections and student and stakeholder feedback. Additionally, targeted reviews are undertaken periodically, for example of the refugee English language programme and resources.
	A number of useful enhancements to teaching and learning arose from the process to achieve the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark, including guidelines and upskilling for tutors working with

	dyslexic learners, and additional resources including assistive technologies and revised assessments.
Conclusion:	Programme design and delivery is well matched to stakeholder and student needs. ALC has effective processes for monitoring and improvement.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ALC provides an inclusive and welcoming environment and highly effective, integrated pastoral support and academic guidance for students with varied backgrounds, personal circumstances and (sometimes) complex needs.
	Tutors meet with all prospective students to assess their learning needs and establish an individual learning plan. These plans form the basis for evaluating achievement and wellbeing and are regularly reviewed and discussed.
	Students benefit from a friendly, student-centred learning environment with small classes which creates opportunities for friendships and supports ongoing engagement. ALC had 24 neurodiverse learners in 2021 and has established a variety of support systems and resources to ensure an inclusive and sensitive learning environment for these students.
	ALC reports that Te Whare Tapa Whā is a useful and effective model for supporting their learners. Staff regularly undertake professional development to enhance their capability to provide pastoral care and support to students. When required, students are referred to specialist support agencies. Practical support is also provided to students (such as modems and digital devices to maintain social connections and continue learning).
	Student feedback is gathered in regular meetings and through student evaluations at course or year-end. This feedback is reviewed and acted on.
Conclusion:	ALC staff work collaboratively to ensure student wellbeing and positive learning experiences. The effectiveness of interventions is regularly reviewed.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ALC is a well-led organisation informed by local knowledge and is well connected to key referring and support agencies and community groups. Management is supported by an appropriately knowledgeable and skilled volunteer advisory committee. ALC responds appropriately to changing circumstances, such as new or changed contracts and the impact of Covid-19, and remains abreast of community developments or emerging needs. ALC is a sustainable organisation, with a strong record of success in achieving community and national funding. Staff are recruited for their ability to relate to the PTE's learner cohorts and are well supported to develop their educational capabilities and to respond effectively to student pastoral care needs. A collegial team environment and regular opportunities to share information and discuss learner progress supports effective programme planning and teaching. ALC has developed useful systems and processes to gather student-related documentation and data which is used as part of day-to-day delivery and review activities.
Conclusion:	ALC is a student-centred and well-connected organisation which is consistently delivering valued outcomes for students and the wider community. Self-assessment is suitable for the size and nature of the organisation and is leading to worthwhile improvements.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ALC has effective processes for managing its compliance accountabilities including: • Monitoring of programme delivery and, where appropriate, assessment and moderation processes, to ensure consistency with NZQA Rules. ALC meets expectations for standards usage and credit reporting. • Effective record keeping and monitoring of performance against contract requirements, and timely reporting as required by funders, including the Tertiary Education Commission. • Ongoing reviews of policies and procedures to maintain currency and confirm that day-to-day practices are compliant. • Reviews and attestations completed as required against pastoral care codes.[6] • Systems in places to maintain compliance with other key legislation, including the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. • Achievement of accreditation for the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark, and ongoing annual reviews and three-yearly re-accreditation.
Conclusion:	ALC is effectively managing key areas of compliance. No concerns were identified during the evaluation.

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[6] Education (Pastoral Care of Domestic Tertiary Students) Interim Code of Practice 2019; Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021

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Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Workplace Literacy (including Health and Safety Training Scheme)

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

2.2 Focus area: Intensive Literacy and Numeracy (including ESOL ILN)

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

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

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[7]*

- *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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[7] 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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