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Report of External Evaluation and Review

Educational Tourism NZ Limited
trading as Coromandel Outdoor
Language Centre

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 9 November 2017

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Final Report

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Educational Tourism NZ Limited trading as Coromandel Outdoor Language Centre (COLC)
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	4 October 2010
Location:	21 Robinsons Road, Whitianga
Delivery sites:	As above
Courses currently delivered:	English as a Foreign Language (Level 1)
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	International: approximately 210 per year. At any one time, there are mixed genders and mixed ages between 16 and 75. Student numbers fluctuate between 20 in winter and up to 50 in summer.
Number of staff:	Staff are employed on a seasonal basis with four full-time seasonal staff and 10 part-time.
Scope of active accreditation:	English as a Foreign Language
Distinctive characteristics:	COLC is an English language school combining English learning with outdoor activities, giving learners a uniquely New Zealand outdoors experience. The cornerstone of the PTE is its

philosophy of 'learning by doing'. Learners will typically have their lessons in the morning and then activities in the afternoon. This allows learners to practise their English in everyday situations while enjoying what the Whitianga area has to offer.

Recent significant changes:	The most recent change since the last external evaluation and review (EER) has been the employment of a new director of studies who started in 2015.
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>COLC was last quality assured by NZQA in May 2013. COLC received statements of Highly Confident in educational performance and Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment.</p> <p>COLC is also an accredited partner of the International Association of Language Centres. The PTE has met the standards of the Annual Quality Return (ARQ) which is an online self-audit. Currently COLC has a four-yearly inspection, having regularly met its AQR standards.</p>
Other:	The seasonal nature of COLC's operations enables the PTE to annually review a planned selection of its policies and procedures. These are structured reviews overseen and formally recorded by the directors.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of the EER included two focus areas. These were:

International students: support and wellbeing

This is a mandatory focus area. The EER evaluated how well international students are being supported in accordance with the Code of Practice.

English as a Foreign Language

This is the only programme delivered by COLC.

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. 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.

The EER was conducted over one and a half days by two evaluators who visited COLC at its main site in Whitianga. The evaluation involved engagement with:

- The two owners/directors of COLC
- Head of studies
- Three tutors
- Administration manager
- Six learners each starting the programme at various times: two Spaniards, two Swiss, one German, one Japanese
- Four stakeholders consisting of homestay parents and local business owners.

In addition to documents provided for the initial EER scoping, the EER team sighted and was provided with programme training plans, management and operational policies, quality management system documents, self-assessment documents, and monitoring and programme review data (including results data and stakeholder and learner feedback).

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Educational Tourism NZ Limited trading as Coromandel Outdoor Language Centre**.

Key reasons for this judgement include the following:

- COLC is a small boutique English language training provider which offers language instruction and internationally recognised English exams alongside outdoor activities that expose learners to situations where they can apply their new-found English language skills. The governance and management of COLC is highly effective and well led by the two directors. A board adds value by providing effective oversight and strategic planning, independent of the day to day operations management.
- Learners are increasing their English language competency levels while enjoying the practical activities that comprise the programme of study. Using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, learners are assessed and rated on their English language proficiency. As they progress through the programme and the weekly progress review meetings with tutors and monthly exams, learners can see their listening and speaking skills increasing, giving them greater confidence to be expressive in the practical activities of the programme.
- The current teaching staff are well qualified, with some having taught at COLC for a number of years, indicating a stable working environment. All the teaching staff have experience teaching overseas and with international learners.
- Key stakeholders, particularly learners, derive high value from studying at COLC. Most learners arrive at COLC wanting to increase their level of English and at the same time sample the outdoor activities that the Coromandel region is well known for. The combination of theory sessions – typically held in the morning – followed by practical activities in the afternoon enables learners to apply their new skills, and provides the fun learning environment that appeals to learners.
- Other community stakeholders, including local businesses, have found value in providing homestay and boarding accommodation and engaging with the overseas learners through the outdoor adventure and environmental activities planned by COLC. The cultural exchanges with the overseas learners are viewed by stakeholders as being a rewarding aspect of their association with COLC. They are well supported by the administration staff and have regular access and contact with the directors and staff of COLC.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Educational Tourism NZ Limited trading as Coromandel Outdoor Language Centre**.

Key reasons for this judgement include the following:

- COLC has a well-managed annual policy review system led by senior staff. The reviews are conducted during the winter months which is the PTE's quiet season. Policies are scrutinised for relevance, legislation changes if applicable, and improvement. Once a policy change has been suggested, it goes through an approval process with sign-off from either the head of studies or the directors. Once approved, the change is recorded and updated in the quality management system.
- COLC carries out an annual academic self-audit led by senior management. The aim of the audit is to ensure COLC meets its self-instigated standards for academic performance. These include employing appropriately qualified teaching staff, providing regular professional development for teachers, and having programmes that are purposeful and meet learner needs. Standards are rated as either 'to standard' or 'not to standard'.
- COLC employs a comprehensive process of gathering learner information through the initial placement test to assess English competency levels. This process also includes weekly review meetings with a tutor to gather direct feedback, monthly tests to assess progress, class observations during practical sessions to ascertain how well learners are applying their new skills, and learner evaluation feedback to ensure there is written evidence of learner views.
- Community stakeholder feedback is given to the administration coordinator¹, or feedback is given directly to the directors in the regular stakeholder meetings held by COLC.

These self-assessment and review activities clearly demonstrate that, despite being a small organisation operating in a small rural town that is more well known for its tourist ventures, COLC maintains an effective operation based on robust evidence to inform practices.

¹ These stakeholders are primarily homestay and boarding house providers.

Findings²

1.1 How well do students achieve?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Evidence provided by COLC shows that learners are achieving well. They enrol with COLC to enhance and improve their level of written or spoken English. The added features of the programmes combine theory classes with practical outside activities, allowing learners to take advantage of the many tourist activities found in the region. These activities expose learners to practical situations requiring them to speak English. Although learners do not study towards a full qualification³, monitoring evidence shows that learners improve how they listen, read, speak and write English.

COLC measures achievement progression from the time a learner arrives to the day they complete their studies using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, an internationally recognised framework that assesses learner English levels. As they progress they are re-tested, and evidence presented by COLC shows most move up in their English language rating. The benefit for learners, as documented by COLC, is that 'they complete the course with a meaningful statement of their English competency that employers and other educational providers will understand'. Further, their confidence in speaking English in everyday settings increases markedly, to the extent that many were continuing on with their travels within New Zealand and other predominantly English-speaking countries like Australia and other parts of the Pacific.

At the commencement of their study, learners are given a placement test which assesses their English grammar, listening, reading and communication/speaking proficiency levels. Weekly progress reviews are held with their tutor which also include opportunities to share any social concerns the learner may be experiencing. Learners are also given monthly tests. The results from these provide evidence to recommend whether a learner can progress to a higher-level group. At the

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

³ COLC has accreditation from NZQA to deliver a training scheme. The monthly exams help prepare for the Cambridge First Certificate Examination and the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests by Cambridge ESOL in the UK. At the completion of their studies, learners receive a Certificate of Attendance detailing their English level under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

completion of the learner's final exam, there is an interview with one of the COLC staff. The monitoring system provides a structured process enabling COLC to effectively manage individual learner progression.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

COLC provides an English language programme for overseas learners who want to enhance and improve their spoken English while exploring and enjoying the outdoor activities that showcase not only the Coromandel region but what New Zealand has become famous for as a tourist destination. The programmes are typically short in duration, ranging from three to four weeks and extending to six months. The length of stay with COLC is determined by the needs of the learner. For many, this means learning English while seeing the country. Learners highly value the flexibility in how they study and the various activities undertaken during their time with COLC. It is not uncommon for past graduates to visit the PTE and renew their relationship with the management and staff. Some graduates are offered short-term voluntary positions providing language support for current learners.

The longevity of COLC operating in the Coromandel area has enabled it to establish good relationships with many businesses, community organisations, homestay parents and local and national agencies carrying out projects in the area. These projects have included environmental restoration on animal habitats. Many of the homestay providers acknowledged that they received generous financial support for taking in learners, but their biggest reward was meeting overseas people and sharing a little piece of 'Kiwiana' with them. The homestay providers interviewed for the EER commented that they felt valued by COLC because at no time in their relationship did they feel taken for granted. The COLC administration team was always accessible and highly supportive. Business owners also said that overseas learners provided an economic benefit to the region, particularly in the more popular summer months when there is a large influx of learners and tourists.

COLC uses a range of methods to gather information from its key stakeholders to ascertain how highly they value the outcomes from their relationship with COLC. These methods are varied and provide COLC with good information about how stakeholders perceive the PTE. The administration coordinator provides a key contact for homestay providers and is accessible at short notice. The coordinator will meet with providers in informal settings and is able to obtain direct information about how COLC can support them. With learners, evidence is gathered through

regular progress meetings with tutors and the monthly progress test. In addition, COLC conducts formal evaluation surveys with both learners and other stakeholders. These surveys include questions that relate to how they value what COLC provides. Although the surveys are simple and straightforward, the robustness of information gathered this way is validated by the open communications that have been established and maintained through the years by COLC and its key stakeholders.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

COLC understands well the English language needs of its students, its limitations in terms of size as a learning campus, and the financial implications of operating a language school for overseas students, as well as immigration regulations. There is a simple philosophy expressed by all staff of COLC of learning by doing. This understanding allows COLC to provide an effective programme of study that not only matches the needs of its learners but offers a whole lot more, including an opportunity for these overseas learners to experience some of the outdoor recreational activities in the local region.

There is flexibility in the programme design that caters for learners at both beginner and advanced levels. When a learner arrives, they are asked to complete a needs analysis which is then used to design a learning programme – taking into account the length of time the learner is with COLC – and ways to meet learner expectations. The aim of most learners is to enhance and improve their level of spoken English. A typical day consists of theory lessons based on course books, and practical conversation classes in the mornings followed by a range of exams, remedial one-to-one tuition, and outdoor activities in the afternoon that extend the practical conversation sessions from the morning.

The teaching is engaging. During the EER the evaluation team observed learners baking scones and playing a range of card and group games. The activities provide opportunities for learners to speak English in a fun setting. The design of the programme allows for the open enrolment system employed by COLC. Through clear records of when a learner arrives and departs, weekly progress reports and a monthly progress test, COLC ensures management and monitoring of learner progress is maintained regardless of when a learner enrolls or completes their studies. Consistency of assessment is monitored through weekly staff meetings in line with the COLC quality management/self-assessment plan, learner

feedback and staff appraisals that discuss individual learner progression. The head of studies has management oversight of these activities.

The assessment process used by COLC to ensure learner needs are met is simple, comprehensive and effective. The regularity of the process (weekly learner updates and monthly tests, together with regular input from key stakeholders) keeps COLC fully informed of how a learner is progressing and whether there are any issues. Issues that are raised are brought back to the teaching staff in the first instance to resolve and escalated to the head of studies and the directors if required.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

Support for learners throughout their time with COLC is highly effective. It is comprehensive and illustrates a genuine care and focused interest by staff to create a safe and unique learning experience for overseas visitors. From the time learners make an overseas enquiry to COLC, to arriving in New Zealand and completing their programme of study, they are provided with a comprehensive range of services. These are designed to ensure the learners are fully informed of the programme and the administrative arrangements such as accommodation and immigration visa requirements, as well as all the outdoor activities on offer in the region.

The support provided on arrival consists of an induction and interview with the learner. The goal of the interview is to get details of what the learner wants to achieve and create a plan to realise this. The learner is provided with an opportunity to meet and talk with a first language counsellor who is employed by COLC and acts as the initial 'go-to' person for the learner. The counsellor also provides a language bridge should the new learner find the initial stages of their study with COLC overwhelming. The learner also completes an initial English test to assess their level of English competency. In addition, accommodation is arranged with either a local homestay provider or a boarding house that has had a long association with COLC. As part of the quality management system policies, all homestay and boarding house providers are regularly checked by COLC to ensure they meet appropriate homestay standards proposed by COLC. These standards include initial police checks of homestay providers (usually carried out in the application stage), information sharing with parents, as well as regular contact with parents whose children are under the age of 18.

Through the close relationships that COLC has with its learners, homestay parents and boarding house owners, the PTE gathers information formally through regular feedback surveys, one-to-one interviews with learners and frequent stakeholder meetings held with accommodation providers. Much of the information is centred on how the learner is coping with the programme content and whether the learner has any administrative issues. The family-like environment allows key stakeholders to call the COLC directors or administration manager if there are any issues with the students under their care. If the issues relate to accommodation, COLC is able to quickly find alternate arrangements as they have a number of well-established homestay providers in the area. The importance of this support is that it is almost immediate and in most cases is effective. In addition, the regular contact with learners and stakeholders means COLC is able to assess the effectiveness of the type of support it provides and can quickly address any shortcomings.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

COLC has continued to operate as a highly effective boutique training provider since its 2013 EER. Despite its small size and remote location, the two directors (who are husband and wife) lead COLC so that it remains a well-functioning training provider. COLC has a clear and simple strategic purpose: to combine an English language programme with a uniquely New Zealand outdoor experience for international learners of varying ages and English language levels. The board contributes value to the organisation by providing effective oversight and strategic planning, independent of the day to day operations management. The structure of the organisation is stable, with the directors managing to retain quality teachers – who bring a range of work experiences teaching international learners – despite the seasonal variations of the business. The directors have also sought to strengthen the COLC brand and reputation as a high-quality language school through the employment of a qualified head of studies recruited from overseas. The head of studies has introduced a range of simple systems that provide sound structure to the monitoring and management of learner progression and are easy to implement. An indicator of the success of these processes is the shared responsibility taken on by staff to implement the processes into practice. The significance of these changes for COLC is that it develops strong academic leadership, strengthening the PTE's sustainability.

COLC's continued association with the International Association of Language Centres provides it with a recognised standard-setting body to provide assurance that the language teaching quality of COLC is at an internationally accepted

standard. The association also provides COLC with networks in Europe and Asia where it can market and recruit potential learners.

Internally, the COLC directors have instigated annual quality assurance reviews. The processes ensure there is a coordinated approach to reviewing COLC's policies and procedures. The structure of the review is categorised into three main areas: management, academic and activities. Clear records are kept of the review team, suggestions for change and the outcome of any implemented changes. The significance of these examples of self-assessment capability is that they were occurring during the previous EER which indicates an embedded practice. The whole-of-organisation approach to the review indicates comprehensive buy-in by staff with the encouragement COLC directors, who provide appropriate resources, further illustrating leadership.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Excellent**.

COLC's quality assurance processes are clear, simple and very effective in addressing the PTE's compliance accountabilities. This includes an annual review of the quality management system. The review is overseen by senior management with changes updated immediately and notified to all staff. With small staff numbers, this is relatively straightforward. What makes this effective is the formalised process used to plan, implement and complete the review. The annual review was noted in the previous EER, indicating that this is a regular event on the COLC calendar.

The Code of Practice is continuously reviewed and any changes required are updated in the quality management system. Random reviews of student files by the evaluation team showed well-documented processes of learners having up-to-date insurance policies, an appropriate visa, and signed parental consents for those learners under the age of 18. Most Code of Practice compliance aspects are well managed by COLC.

COLC has received positive audit reports by the International Association of Language Centres and an internal audit using English New Zealand standards.⁴

⁴ The managing directors often attend the International Association of Language Centres annual conferences, normally held in Europe.

In terms of monitoring other compliance legislation, such as the Health and Safety Act 2016, COLC ensures it complies with the Act and that its policies are relevant and fit for purpose. In addition, COLC also ensures that its key stakeholders, including those providing accommodation and activities, comply with the Health and Safety Act by making this a requirement of accommodating COLC students.

Focus areas

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

2.1 Focus area: International students: support and wellbeing

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Excellent**.

2.2 Focus area: English as a Foreign Language (Level 1)

The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Excellent**.

Recommendations

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

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are 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.

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which 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.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 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 and/or 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 External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.

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).

The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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