External Evaluation and Review Report

International College of Auckland Limited

Date of report: 2 October 2020

About International College of Auckland Limited (ICA)

ICA delivers programmes in Auckland and Hamilton from foundation to level 4 in English language, levels 5-7 in information technology, and level 7 engineering. Current enrolments are international learners.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment
Location:	ICA's head office is located at Level 3, 520 Queen Street, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	57 international learners are currently enrolled: 33 in Auckland and 24 in Hamilton. Most learners are from India and China. EFTS (equivalent full-time students) to date in 2020 are 53 (and 157 in 2019).
Number of staff:	15 full-time, four part-time and five contractors
TEO profile:	International College of Auckland
Last EER outcome:	At ICA's last EER in 2018 (reported 2019) NZQA was Not Yet Confident in ICA's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	Three focus areas were selected for the EER based on the size of the organisation. These focus areas are:

- International Students: Wellbeing and Support. This was selected as all current students are international. Interviews included learners based at the Hamilton campus to ensure this perspective was captured.

- New Zealand Certificate in English Language, (Level 4) (NZCEL4). This focus area represents a currently taught programme and is the highest-level programme in the English department. The English department typically has had the highest enrolments since 2017.

- Diploma in Mechanical Engineering (with strands in Automotive Engineering and Mechatronics and Control Systems)[1] (Level 7) (Diploma in Mechanical Engineering). This programme currently has 13 learners enrolled and is the programme with the highest number of enrolments in the engineering department and ICA programmes overall.

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NZQA reference:	C39370
Dates of EER visit:	4 and 5 August 2020

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[1] To date, ICA has only delivered the strand in Mechatronics and Control Systems.

Summary of Results

ICA delivers relevant programmes informed by regular internal and external review. Graduates gain valued skills and knowledge and progress to relevant destinations. A move to collaborative information-sharing, decision-making and review across departments has strengthened organisational oversight and quality.

	• Quality teaching, programmes and learner support contribute to strong achievement. Learners gain relevant skills and knowledge and enter relevant employment or further study.
Confident in educational performance	• Effective graduate destination tracking shows 70-80 per cent of graduates progress to further study or relevant employment each year. This seems strong, though ICA does not have benchmarks to assess this. ICA's self-assessment information does not provide a full understanding of graduate outcomes.
Confident in capability in self-assessment	• Stakeholders value ICA's qualifications and the potential contribution of ICA graduates to New Zealand workplaces. ICA has carefully selected partners to contribute relevant industry information and to support programme and assessment quality.
	• ICA has undertaken much work to strengthen processes and address issues since the last EER. As a smaller organisation, ICA has moved to a more collaborative style of management with greater transparency and oversight, including to effectively manage compliance.
	• Self-assessment is generally strong in most areas. Some aspects of self-assessment could be improved. Information is very accessible and used effectively to make a range of improvements. ICA collects a lot of information, though it seems timely to review what is of most relevance and establish relevant benchmarks to guide performance. There is uniformity in processes and self-review by all staff across campuses and departments, providing a good foundation for growth.

Key evaluation question findings[2]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Averaged across programmes, course completions are high at 95 and 93 per cent respectively in 2018 and 2019. Qualification completion rates[3] are 89 and 85 per cent respectively (refer Appendix 1). Comprehensive moderation processes support the reliability of results. The results reflect programmes of high relevance, effective learner engagement and support. Most learners come with previous study experience. Successful completions are lower for English programmes and NZCEL4. ICA identifies that learners prioritise gaining sufficient English language skills over the qualification. ICA makes ongoing changes to support improved achievement, including recent revisions of assessment material and gaining approval for an applied level 3 programme to better transition learners. High rates of progression to higher level and other English language or foundation study (see 1.2) shows that even if learners do not complete the qualification, they gain the skills and confidence to progress, with goals of further study. ICA collates a relevant body of data to understand learner achievement. However, analysis against relevant benchmarking information was absent from ICA's reporting. This could better establish how well ICA is performing. Staff understand learner progress and skills acquisition well. ICA collects goal achievement information from learner exit surveys, but there is no overall analysis of this information.
Conclusion:	Learners gain valued skills, knowledge and confidence and progress to relevant destinations. Completions are mostly high. Self-assessment provides a good understanding of achievement but could be strengthened.

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[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] Qualification completions exclude learners who have withdrawn.

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

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ICA's process for tracking learner destinations ensures that it understands the destinations of many of its graduates. Across all programmes, between 70 and 80 per cent progress from ICA to relevant work or study each year. This seems to be a strong outcome, though ICA has not established benchmarking targets to inform this understanding. For mechanical engineering, ICA has tracked and identified that 19 of 37 graduates are in relevant employment. ICA considers this to be a satisfactory outcome, and valued employment is achieved. However, there is no analysis to show, for example, why results are below overall organisation destination outcomes. Of the 40 learners who enrolled in NZCEL4 in 2019, 32 progressed to further study: 25 to higher study, five to other foundation learning, and two completed other English language proficiency certification. Two are in employment. Graduates and industry stakeholders interviewed for this EER considered that ICA prepared graduates well for further study or employment. In particular, this includes the core skills developed (e.g. problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork and project management), technical skills and knowledge acquired, and readiness for work or higher study in a New Zealand context. ICA is yet to establish an effective process in all departments to comprehensively gain feedback from graduates and employers on graduate preparedness. ICA does have options to explore that may support data collection for this purpose. ICA's local advisory committee (LAC) partially contributes to this understanding. It was evident that LAC members value being part of ICA and the contribution they can provide to learners, who in turn are seen to contribute to industry.
Conclusion:	A high proportion of ICA graduates progress to relevant further study or employment. ICA tracks learner destinations well but its self-assessment does not provide a full understanding of the valued outcomes achieved for graduates and 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?

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The mechanical engineering programme is valued by industry and academic LAC members interviewed for the EER, including the knowledge developed and applied through the Mechatronics specialisation in a New Zealand context. These stakeholders value the experience and expertise of staff who are up-to-date and well connected within their sectors.
	Staff are well qualified, experienced and access relevant professional development. For example, the NZCEL teacher has qualifications in teaching English to speakers of other languages and 15 years teaching experience. Professional development has focused on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, assessment, moderation and NZCEL.
	Moderation is well embedded. External moderators are purposefully selected. Feedback is used thoughtfully to inform assessment and programme development. NZQA's December 2019 moderation of NZCEL4 confirmed that the programme met approval and accreditation criteria for assessment and moderation. Some issues with assessment have been responded to in ICA's development and ongoing review of the newer version of the qualification. Staff have worked closely and reflectively to develop the programme, with the contribution of recent changes likely to be realised once more learners enrol and complete. In other programmes, ICA has met NZQA national moderation, consistency review and approval requirements.
	Programmes are regularly reviewed and updated. Learner satisfaction is well tracked and mainly positive. Two key issues found at the last EER and impacting academic integrity – evidence of individual assessment within group contexts and credit transfer mapping – have been addressed.
Conclusion:	Programmes are of relevance to learners and stakeholders. ICA values and uses external input to ensure the quality of its programmes and to strengthen self-review.

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

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Learning activities and resources are appropriate and effective in engaging learners. ICA works closely with learners to ensure that their learning goals are well understood. Useful formative feedback is regularly provided to support learners to understand their progress and to focus on areas where they need to improve. Staff are careful to ensure feedback is appropriately and positively framed to keep learners focused and motivated. After-class workshops provide additional academic support to learners who require this. Staff develop supportive relationships with learners. Their proactive and 'open-door' stance ensures strong learner satisfaction and that challenges to learning are identified and responded to as they occur. Many examples were shared showing ICA's monitoring of, and responsiveness to learners' wellbeing needs. Learners interviewed wished to acknowledge ICA's responsiveness to their learning and pastoral care needs during the Covid lockdown, including quality online learning. ICA surveyed learners during this time to ensure its responsiveness. ICA surveys learners early in their enrolment and twice-yearly to ascertain satisfaction with their progress and experiences. Feedback is used for improvement. ICA understands and appears to meet requirements of the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice well. It comprehensively self-reviews its performance in line with the Code of Practice. ICA's move to a more collaborative style of management (and which now includes managers of student services, marketing and administration at all management meetings) has seen more robust self-review. This has included student support and Code of Practice considerations incorporated into decision-making.
Conclusion:	Learners are comprehensively and proactively supported and receive regular feedback to understand their progress. ICA has well-established self-review processes to understand its effectiveness and ongoing quality improvements in this area.

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

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ICA has worked solidly to respond to issues identified at the last EER, with evidence of improvement seen. The reduced size of the organisation has supported ICA to establish a more collaborative management approach, leading to stronger information, systems and oversight, better supporting educational performance. A culture of transparency and collaboration is apparent. Some developments are recent and operating effectively in a time of change while the organisation is small. ICA recognises that it will need to revise processes as it grows.
	ICA's collaborative management approach is to ensure that academic and administrative leadership is contributing to organisational understanding and decision-making.
	Well-qualified and experienced staff contribute to effective academic leadership. The recent addition of a new owner is contributing new strengths to support ICA's development going forward, while maintaining a focus on ICA's purpose and direction.
	ICA has used its expertise to facilitate well-balanced innovation, responsiveness and continuity during a time of much change. For example, initiatives being explored are aligned to the organisation's purpose, specialised areas of delivery, and knowledge of industry direction and future growth. The new owner has been active in engaging with stakeholders and communities to ensure ICA goes forward at a challenging time with a current and informed understanding of needs. ICA has contingency planning in place in response to current uncertainties and limitations associated with international education. Potentially this could lead to much change for ICA, and it is positive that ICA has strengthened its foundations.
	Relevant performance data and data analysis capability supports ICA to monitor performance, including against key performance indicators (KPIs). There is an opportunity for ICA to develop this capability to fully understand all areas of performance, and to integrate relevant KPIs into programme review.

Conclusion:	ICA has responded well to address issues found at the last EER, and to organisational change. It has used these experiences to strengthen its management and oversight of performance.

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	ICA has responded to gaps in compliance management identified at the last EER and has since implemented changes to achieve greater transparency and oversight. These include validation of information and increased checking and auditing undertaken by more than one person, including in relation to the management of learner enrolment requirements and fees.

ICA described an improved process for mapping evidence and learning outcomes as part of the credit transfer process. The PTE demonstrated this process in action and showed examples of the evidential trail used to support decisions made.

A recent change is the presence of the administration manager at management and academic meetings to ensure that relevant consideration is given to rules, regulations and requirements when programme and organisational changes are discussed. ICA's positive recent application history with NZQA shows that ICA is well cognisant of and compliant with regulatory requirements.

ICA has recently completed an audit of programme learning hours. This auditing has shown compliance with required class contact hours and identified areas for improvement such as in the monitoring of self-directed learning.

ICA is guided by a comprehensive compliance checklist identifying its key accountabilities. It is used to support effective compliance management of legislative and regulatory requirements and rules and shows ongoing compliance with key accountabilities. |
| Conclusion: | ICA has recently strengthened compliance management processes to effectively manage key compliance accountabilities. |

Focus Areas

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

2.1   Focus area: International Students: Wellbeing and Support

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

2.2   Focus area: NZCEL Level 4 (academic)

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**

2.3   Focus area: Diploma in Mechanical Engineering (Level 7)

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Good**

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 International College of Auckland Limited:

- Develop self-assessment tools and processes to collect information on graduate preparedness for their pathway destinations.

- Review and consolidate self-assessment tools to ensure the relevance and value of the data collected.

- Review key performance indicators to ensure that these provide the most relevant benchmarking to understand learner achievement and outcomes across different programmes.

- Implement methods to consistently and effectively monitor learner completion of required non-contact hours.

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

Table 1. ICA completion data

Completion indicator	Year	All programmes	Diploma in Mechanical Engineering	NZCEL4
Qualification completions[4]	2020	-	-	57% (4/7)
	2019	85%	95%	45% (5/18)
	2018	89%	100%	-
Course completions	2020	-	-	67%
	2019	93%	95%	83%
	2018	95%	97%	-
Retention	2020	-	-	89%
	2019	89%	100%	83%
	2018	93%	94%	-

Source: ICA

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[4] Qualification completions are based on those able to be graduated and exclude learners who have withdrawn.

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud[5]*

- *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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[5] 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/.

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