



NEW ZEALAND **QUALIFICATIONS** AUTHORITY
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Report of External Evaluation and Review

Bridge International College NZ
Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 14 August 2018

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	4
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	5
Summary of Results	7
Findings	9
Recommendations	17
Appendix	18

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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:	Bridge International College NZ Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	21 December 2000
Location:	10-14 Lorne Street, Auckland Central
Delivery sites:	As above
Courses currently delivered:	General English Course (Training Scheme) (Level 4) delivered as English for Academic Purposes
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: nil International: 45 students (44 Chinese, one Saudi); 57 per cent female, 42 per cent male; average age 28.6 years; almost all on student visas
Number of staff:	Four full-time equivalents; one part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	General English Course (Training Scheme) (Level 4) delivered as English for Academic Purposes; and Bridge TESOL Course (Level 4) (teacher training), not currently being delivered
Distinctive characteristics:	Bridge International College is part of the ICL Education Group of colleges. Bridge International was acquired by ICL Education Group in 2014 and in 2016 its trading name was changed from Bridge International College of English to Bridge International College. The other colleges in the ICL Education Group are: ICL Graduate Business

School (ICLGBS, formerly ACG Business School); Auckland English Academy; and New Horizon College, Napier. Bridge International College is a member of English New Zealand. Governance and management, administration and marketing staff are shared across all ICL Education Group schools.

Recent significant changes: In July 2017, Bridge International refocused its curriculum from General English to English for Academic Purposes. This transition was completed in January 2018, when a new director of studies was also appointed.

Previous quality assurance history: NZQA recognises the English New Zealand standards as part of the external evaluation and review (EER) quality assurance system. An English New Zealand audit of Bridge International in April 2018 met all the required standards.

At the most recent NZQA EER in March 2015, Bridge International was Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment. Three recommendations were made: continue to build staff capability through a targeted professional development programme; continue to develop the range of evaluative activities and the engagement of staff at all levels in these activities, including measuring the impact of changes on learning and other important outcomes; and ensure adequate access to a native language speaker for all ethnicities Bridge International is marketing to.

Other: Bridge International does not receive any direct funding from the New Zealand government.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas selected were for the only programme offered:

- English for Academic Purposes
- International students: support and wellbeing. This is a focus area for organisations that enrol international students and are therefore mandatory signatories to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016.

Governance and management, administration and marketing functions and staff are shared across all ICL Education Group schools. NZQA has conducted EERs for both Auckland English Academy and New Horizon College in 2018. NZQA was Highly Confident in both educational performance and capability in self-assessment for both schools. This information informed the scoping of the Bridge International EER, including the time required on site. This process was assisted by the NZQA team for the Bridge International EER having an evaluator who was also on the evaluation team for the Auckland English Academy EER. However, each school is unique, therefore similarities and differences across shared functions were closely reviewed to ensure the outcomes were fair and transparent.

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](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction) 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 evaluation was conducted over one day. The evaluators met with the governance and management team, staff with international student responsibilities, the English for Academic Purposes teachers, all the students currently on site (16 – 12 from English for Academic Purposes and four from a preparatory English class, and six graduates who have transitioned from Bridge International to ICLGBS). A range of documentation was reviewed, including a selection of student files for compliance with Education Code of Practice requirements, minutes of a range of meetings (teacher, board) and the English New Zealand audit report of 18 April 2018. The inquiry was also informed by the comprehensive self-assessment document provided by Bridge International before the EER.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>. 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 fraud¹*
- *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.*

¹ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission 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.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Bridge International College NZ Limited**.

- Student needs are identified through a placement test to assign them to the appropriate class. Individual student progress is closely monitored and tracked through informal weekly tests and formal six-weekly assessments.
- Support for educational achievement was evident in the strategic decision made by ICL Education Group to move from General English to English for Academic Purposes. This strategic move is well documented and purposeful.
- English for Academic Purposes programmes are focused and relevant to the New Zealand business studies context. This adds value for Bridge International students, most of whom plan to transition to ICLGBS business programmes. Students and agents have benefited from programming that focuses on teaching and learning language for academic purposes as opposed to solely testing it.
- The recent English New Zealand audit identified that the well-qualified staff are impressive, the atmosphere in the school is positive, and students were highly complimentary about their teachers, describing them as friendly and helpful. These findings were affirmed at this evaluation.
- Bridge International understands the regulatory environment and has developed close ties with government agencies. This proactive, informed approach benefits all stakeholders as it provides assurance that Bridge International is up-to date and maintaining relevance in the often-changing regulatory environment.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Bridge International College NZ Limited**.

- Governance and management, administration (recruitment and enrolment), student support, marketing functions and staff are shared across all ICL Education Group schools. These policies, procedures, functions and personnel are reviewed in line with ICL Education Group's self-assessment and are consistently applied at Bridge International.
- Consistency of systems, strong governance and management of compliance, and clear documentation of these processes supported the move from General English to English for Academic Purposes.

- Bridge International systematically reviews and moderates itself through its annual plan, review of assessment practices, and Education Code of Practice reviews. The culture of self-reflection includes feedback from staff and students. In the 2016 i-Graduate international survey, Bridge International received a 100 per cent satisfaction rating, compared with 92.6 per cent for New Zealand English language schools and 92.4 per cent globally.
- The three recommendations made at the last EER have been met and exceeded: staff capability has been maintained and improved through professional development opportunities; and improved self-assessment has led to an excellent understanding, by all staff, of the impact of changes on learning. Most students studying English for Academic Purposes are Chinese. These students are mature and Bridge International is well resourced to meet their needs. The one Saudi student has access to a same-language speaker.
- Staff engagement and high standards of professionalism ensure that self-assessment is genuine, embedded and used to review all aspects of the school's operation to improve teaching and learning and the student experience.

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**.

Student needs are identified through a placement test to assign them to the appropriate class level of two options: English for Academic Purposes or pre-English for Academic Purposes (PEAP). PEAP is for those not ready to enter directly into the English for Academic Purposes class. The curriculum is carefully scaffolded to allow student progression. Students' progress is closely monitored and tracked through informal weekly tests and formal six-weekly assessments. Timetables are linked to learning outcomes, and a syllabus and pacing schedule ensures students progress at appropriate rates. Clear marking schedules, rubrics and thresholds provide clarity on student progression.

Links between teaching inputs and outcomes are clear because most students plan to pathway to academic programmes at ICLGBS. To date, 47 students have made this transition – 32 into postgraduate programmes and 15 into undergraduate programmes.

Bridge International has a range of self-assessment activities, both internal (self-audit) and external (English New Zealand audit). These assure NZQA that any deficits in assessment or variations in learner achievement are identified and managed promptly. The strength and academic rigour of the staff provide confidence in student performance and self-assessment practices. Evidence to support this evaluative conclusion was consistently found in a range of documents including the annual plan and weekly teacher meeting minutes, and through conversations with teachers, the director of studies and students.

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

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**.

When Bridge International ran General English courses, students were divided into several categories: those learning English to help with future careers in their own country; support for a New Zealand tourism experience or working holiday; and further study or future migration (the latter were a minority). Most students had a mix of more than one of these reasons and for many the experience itself was the goal. Causative links between study and outcomes were hard to demonstrate. However, the value of outcomes for the Bridge International programmes are closely linked to acceptance into an ICLGBS business programme.

Ninety-two per cent of students surveyed mid-2016 to mid-2017 rated English for Academic Purposes programmes as 4 or 5 with a scale out of 5. Ninety-two per cent of students thought Bridge International helped them to learn English and achieve their goals. Students also give regular individual feedback in class and in formal and informal meetings.

Students receive reports during and at the end of the course. Current and graduate students interviewed agreed that their education was preparing them well for daily life and for further study. The focus on preparation for business programmes meant the teaching and learning was targeted towards business vocabulary and business-related topics, which made it more focused and relevant to the New Zealand business environment. The focus on skills that will be required in a tertiary environment – for example referencing, giving oral presentations, and group and individual assessments – added value for the Bridge International students who plan to transition to the ICLGBS business programmes.

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**.

The ICL English Proficiency Test (IEPT) is administered outside the English for Academic Purposes programme. Analysis of results shows that the students make progress in all four skills tested (reading, writing, speaking, listening). The IEPT result is an important source of achievement information for students. Although Bridge International has permission from NZQA to deliver the IEPT, the test is

delivered outside the English for Academic Purposes programme in secure test conditions. It is ICL policy that teachers do not assess their own students.

Currently there are two English for Academic Purposes levels and one PEAP. PEAP students are exposed to academic English until they are ready to prepare for an entrance test. When successful they join an English for Academic Purposes class. Individual academic plans and reflective journals provide opportunities for students to review their progress, with input from the teachers. Smartphone apps provide English for Academic Purposes students with up-to-date information on their academic progress, assessments schedules, homework allocation and ideas for teaching and learning. PEAP students email the teachers regularly. Eighty-eight per cent of students mid-2016 to mid-2017 agreed that the academic learning plans were helpful in their learning and review of their goals.

Since Bridge International made the transition to specialising in English for Academic Purposes, the PTE has made several important changes:

- Reviewed teaching and learning processes and outcomes
- Supported the teaching staff with professional development to deliver English for Academic Purposes classes
- Redesigned and documented the curriculum
- Made provision for the projected growth of the school
- Prepared for possible higher-level English for Academic Purposes classes.

The teachers are regularly consulted about course books for English for Academic Purposes programmes.

The director of studies has international experience in developing and delivering English for Academic Purposes programmes and is involved with the students by teaching a weekly grammar workshop. The principal has led English for Academic Purposes curriculum publication projects and has a depth of knowledge about English for Academic Purposes programme requirements. Regular curriculum review occurs with input from students, teachers, marketing staff and agents. The loyalty of agents indicates that Bridge International is meeting stakeholder needs well. Staff attributed this to the well-defined processes for informing agents of the academic focus of Bridge International.

Curriculum and assessment meets international benchmarked English New Zealand standards. The English New Zealand report April 2018 stated that: 'There is plenty of evidence to indicate that outcomes, content and teaching and learning strategies are informed by current language teaching principles'. This finding was reconfirmed by this evaluation.

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

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

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

Bridge International students are mostly mature Chinese learners who are focused on progressing to ICLGBS business programmes. The English for Academic Purposes team at Bridge International works closely with the ICL academic support team to understand the academic and literacy demands of the business programmes. The ICLGBS academic adviser has run sessions for English for Academic Purposes students on what to expect when they progress to ICLGBS. Feedback from students who have progressed to ICLGBS confirms that the English for Academic Purposes programme is useful for their study at ICLGBS. This finding will be further investigated at the upcoming EER of ICLGBS.

Lessons are engaging for students. They balance fun, information and intensive activities. Teacher and the director of studies meet or exceed English New Zealand qualification requirements and teach with a learner-centred approach. Teachers are encouraged to tailor their teaching to student needs and provide content that is relevant to New Zealand. They adapt and modify courses, change texts, and review content. The director of studies observes teachers informally and formally to assess whether lessons are engaging, interactive and promote learning. Feedback is discussed in professional development meetings. Peer observation also occurs. Once teacher needs are identified, a professional development plan is developed accordingly. Students described teachers as friendly and helpful and said they enjoyed studying at Bridge International.

Small focus groups provide rich data through informal chats with staff and students, which have led to changes. Services and facilities that have been improved in response to student needs include support for mental health issues, a café and improvements to IT equipment in classrooms. Evaluations gain the student perspective at the end of each block of learning and when students leave the programme. These are seen by the teacher and director of studies, and any issues identified are managed appropriately. The one under-18 student at the time of this evaluation receives extra support such as quick follow-up on any absences.

Students can receive extra one-to-one academic support with a teacher and individual feedback on their progress. Bridge International shares the same support services with Auckland Education Academy, including student welfare and accommodation and first language support. NZQA rates these services at Auckland English Academy as excellent. The same high quality of student support was found at Bridge International. Mechanisms to ensure the ongoing equality of provision include the annual Education Code of Practice self-review and the English New Zealand self-audit, both undertaken annually.

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**.

Shared governance and management functions across the ICL Education Group effectively support educational achievement. The school is ably led by three experienced, knowledgeable ICL Education Group directors with complementary skill-sets. Informal evaluation led to the creation of a chairman position and a more obvious separation of governance and management functions. The chairman of the board is not involved in daily operations.

The governance group all have governance experience and the ICL Education Group principal is the current chair of English New Zealand. English New Zealand membership provides currency in language teaching, access to NZQA, Immigration New Zealand, Education New Zealand and experts in the fields of health and safety and business finance.

Support for educational achievement was evident in the strategic decision made by ICL Education Group to move from General English to English for Academic Purposes provision. Strong demand from students and the marketing staff for a pre-EAP course to better meet identified student needs led to the introduction of the PEAP class in April 2018. While this is a recent change, the decision has been validated as the class is already at two-thirds capacity.

Professional development both supports and develops staff. Needs are addressed by individual and team professional development. This includes off-site workshops, and guest facilitators (English New Zealand professional development days, annual conference). Management and staff attend the likes of Education Code of Practice and professional development workshops.

Responses to student feedback include improved Wi-Fi on campus and new lifts planned by the building owners for 2018. Staff are supported by the Cloud-based human resource system, and the payroll review by an external accounting consultant. In 2017, managers contributed to the development of the strategic plan and all staff are currently being asked for comments on a review of the plan. An inclusive approach shows that Bridge International values staff which in turn raises staff morale. This contributes to the friendly school environment that positively impacts students' wellbeing and contributes to their educational success.

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**.

The board addresses issues around strategy, finance, compliance and external relationships. The same compliance management processes apply across all ICL schools. The board meets regularly and minutes reviewed demonstrate a systematic approach to ensuring compliance accountabilities are well managed. An example of this is NZQA approval of ICL's ongoing use of its English proficiency assessment in March 2018, including its compliance with Rule 18. (The test is undertaken externally even though Bridge International is accredited to offer the test itself.)

Reports to the board are received from the accommodation and welfare manager who oversees code-related issues, and from the health and safety officer who identifies areas for improvement. An external human resources adviser gives an annual review and is currently implementing a staff engagement survey. Improvements include the updated MYOB and connected MyStaffInfo programmes that ensure payroll compliance, and staff access to a desktop link for reporting hazards and incidents.

The board ensures that managers and staff are aware of:

- Education Code of Practice requirements. Bridge International has undertaken more frequent reviews over the past year as the code has changed. Presentations have been made to staff to explain changes in legislation.
- Policies and procedures required to comply with the requirements of NZQA, Immigration New Zealand and English New Zealand. These include policies to manage requirements for fees protection (Public Trust, withdrawal and refund policies) and visas (attendance requirements).
- Changes to health and safety legislation. Staff are supported by the health and safety committee and health and safety officer.
- Changes to human resources legislation. Bridge International has a human resources professional who has reviewed and developed new employee handbooks, updated employment agreements, trained staff, improved policies and procedures, and implemented a Cloud-based human resources system.

Bridge International is fully engaged with the tertiary sector. This is evidenced through membership of English New Zealand (since 2016), attendance at international marketing events, visiting agents in source countries and locally, reading industry updates, and attending conferences. Bridge International understands the regulatory environment and has developed close ties with government agencies. This proactive, informed approach benefits all stakeholders

Final report

as it provides assurance that Bridge International is up-to date and maintaining relevance in the often-changing regulatory environment.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: English for Academic Purposes

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: 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**.

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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Final report