Report of External Evaluation and Review

Unitec Institute of Technology

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 21 March 2012

Contents

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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

Location:	Carrington Road, Mt Albert, Auckland
Type:	Institute of technology
First registered	1976
Number of students:	Total: 23,879 students, 10,504 equivalent full-time students (EFTS)
	• Domestic: 8,958 EFTS
	• International: 1,547 EFTS
Number of staff:	1,120 full-time equivalents
Sites:	Waitakere (5-7 Ratanui St, Henderson), and Albany (10 Rothwell Avenue, Albany[1])
Recent significant changes:	Since 2008, Unitec Institute of Technology (Unitec) has been repositioning itself in the Auckland city tertiary education market as a credible provider of vocational and applied professional education and practically orientated research. There has been significant change to the management structure and a concerted effort to engage with other educational providers to achieve an integrated tertiary education strategy for the Auckland "super city", concordant with envisaged demographics and employment needs.
Previous quality assurance history:	A full academic quality audit of Unitec was undertaken by NZQA in 2006. In 2008, ITP Quality undertook a "documentary review of its [Unitec's] situation with regard to its audit status and agreed to grant the Institute

[1] Replacing the North Shore campus (132 Hurstmere Road, Takapuna) from July 2011

quality assured status". This status was confirmed at a Mid-Term Quality Review undertaken by ITP Quality in 2009.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Programmes for evaluation were selected from a range of levels and discipline areas and spanning a range of educational performance and capability in self-assessment as determined by Unitec at programme level.

Programme	EFTS	%C*	S-A†
Master of Educational Leadership and Management	23.3	84%	E-G
Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management	16.9	86%	E-G
Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Leadership and Management	7.5	71%	E-G
Bachelor of Architectural Studies	249.3	79%	E-G
Master of Architecture (Professional)	110.2	85%	G-A
New Zealand Diploma in Engineering (Civil)	63.5	66%	G
Bachelor of Engineering Technology (Civil)	89.7	75%	G
Certificate in English	324.2	75%	E-G
Bachelor of Health Science (Medical Imaging)	113.9	96%	A-P
Certificate in Automotive and Mechanical Engineering (Level 3)	92.6	82%	P
National Certificate in Plumbing and Gasfitting	37.4	79%	A
Certificate in Foundation Studies (Level 2)	276.8	57%	G-A
Certificate in Information Technology (Level 4)	70.5	46%	A-P

*2010 EFTS-weighted course completions to EFTS-weighted course enrolments, aggregated to programme level
† Internal self-assessment ratings: E, Excellent; G, Good; A, Adequate; P, Poor

This selection also offered the opportunity to evaluate selected programmes offered at the Albany and Waitakere campuses, and to gain information on learner support services and facilities at these sites in addition to those provided at the main campus.

In addition, the following focus areas were evaluated:

- Achievement and support for Māori and Pasifika students

- Research

- Governance and management

- Achievement and support for international students.

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 document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/for-providers/docs/eer-policy-conduct.pdf

The external evaluation and review (EER) was conducted by a lead evaluator and five external evaluators over a five-day period (7-11 November 2011). For each programme

focus area, discussions were held with programme management, academic staff, students, and external stakeholders (typically employers of graduates of the programmes evaluated, members of advisory committees, or representatives of professional associations).

For the focus areas: *Achievement and support for Māori and Pasifika students* discussions were held with the managers of the respective areas and front-line staff, with the effectiveness of those services being assisted through discussion with students in the programme focus areas and students who had used Māori and Pasifika support services.

For the focus area *Achievement and academic support for international students*, programme leaders and teaching staff were invited to comment on the support provided for international students, complemented by conversations with Centre staff and international students.

For the *Research* focus area, discussions were held with the dean (research) and selected staff undertaking research, with additional information obtained from staff teaching in degree programmes.

For the *Governance and management* focus area, the evaluation team met the chief executive and the leadership team, the academic board, and the chair and members of Council. The evaluation process included reference to annual reports for the programme focus areas and consideration of the comprehensive documentation provided for the development and implementation of recent initiatives by Unitec management.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Unitec.**

Unitec provides a range of programmes from foundation to postgraduate level, with strong student achievement overall, both in terms of course retention and completion of courses and in terms of work-readiness.

Unitec's course completion percentage in 2010 was 77 per cent, an increase of 2 per cent over 2009. In 2010, Unitec led the institute of technology sector in programme retention (64 per cent), a significant increase from 59 per cent in 2009. The high programme retention rates are indicative of the commitment, teaching skills, and industry knowledge of Unitec's teaching staff. This commitment is confirmed by the variety of tools used to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of teaching. Peer observation of teaching, participating in or leading professional development, and research all contribute to the engagement of teaching staff with their discipline and with their students. Where appropriate, literacy and numeracy skills are embedded in programmes. Advice on study skills is available from the Learning Centre – Te Puna Ako, while a wide range of information and pastoral care services are available through Student Central – a "one-stop shop" for student enquiries and assistance. Specific academic and pastoral support is provided for Māori, Pasifika, and international students. The EER team was impressed by Unitec's clear commitment to foster retention of students in its courses and programmes.

Retention and completion percentages for Unitec lie on the trend line for universities (Figure 1), consistent with the higher proportion of students in levels 7-8 programmes than is typical for institutes of technology.
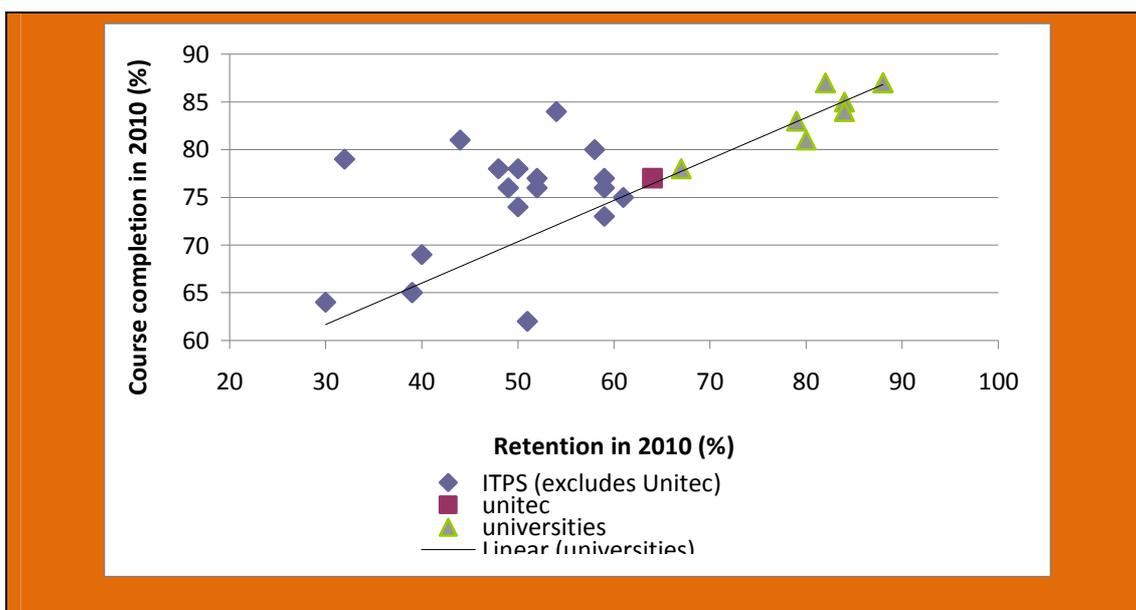

Figure 1. Variation of programme retention percentage with course completion percentage in 2010, showing the similarity of Unitec to universities, where provision is dominated by multi-year qualifications.

Bearing its student cohort in mind, the position of Unitec in Figure 1 indicates that it is a high-performing institute of technology.

Qualification completion percentages have declined a little – from 55 per cent in 2009 to 52 per cent in 2010.[2] The methodology does not take into account the fact that qualifications with a credit value of more than 120 take more than a year to complete, and hence annualised qualification completion rates for an organisation with a significant proportion of such qualifications will appear to be lower. Unitec has a higher proportion of students (~40 per cent) in levels 7-8 programmes (principally degrees) than the sector median (26 per cent), and could be considered somewhat "university-like" in this regard. In addition, the qualification completion percentages in six of the eight New Zealand universities decreased on average by 2.8 per cent between 2009 and 2010. Therefore, the EER team considers that changes in this metric are not significant.

The academic success of Unitec's Māori and Pasifika learners has generally been less than that of other students. Unitec's Māori Success Strategy, developed late in 2010 and approved in 2011[3], contains many of the usual approaches that aim to make Māori welcome and to foster their engagement in study, but there are also specific targets included around academic success. As an example of this approach, the Māori Mentoring Programme – Whai Ake I Te Ara Tika reports[4] on retention in courses by mentees and their success in passing cultural courses. In other words, the programme has expectations of behaviours that are predictors of successful educational achievement. In fact, course completions by Māori students increased from 69 per cent in 2009 to 70 per cent in 2010. The corresponding Pasifika strategic document[5] is less "mature", focusing on enhancing participation and foreshadowing increased completions. Even so, there was a 2 per cent overall increase in course completions by Pasifika students between 2009 and 2010.

Unitec places considerable emphasis on the employability of its graduates. Its graduate destination survey reports that 69 per cent of graduates progress to employment, with 83 per cent of employed graduates in jobs that are related to their qualifications, while 29 per cent progress to further study. A survey of employers revealed their satisfaction with Unitec's graduates as employees, confirming that work-readiness and self-confidence are developed as part of the Unitec student experience. Staff are generally well connected to the relevant industries, either though informal networks, being members of professional associations, or through research and related activities. This engagement is complemented by programme advisory committees, which bring an industry perspective at the time of regular programme reviews and also assist in keeping staff – and thereby programmes – up to date with recent developments in industry.

Unitec has taken steps to position itself in the future provision of vocational and professional education in Auckland. It has been assessing the ways in which it can

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[2] Unitec asserts that a combination of programme retention and course completion percentages is a more appropriate indicator of educational performance than qualification completions as calculated using the Tertiary Education Commission's current methodology.

[3] *Unitec's Maori Success Strategy – 2011 Forward* (2011). Unitec.

[4] *Whai Ake I Te Ara Tika – Māori Mentoring Programme*, Semester one (March-June 2011), pp. 7-8.

[5] *Unitec Pacific Strategy 2010-2015* (2010). Unitec.

collaborate with other educational providers to offer training and education to meet the likely employment needs of the super city, and has already established collaborations and partnerships in a number of discipline areas and with other educational providers.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Unitec.**

Over the past few years, Unitec has implemented significant changes in its annual programme reports, from an audit-based model to an evaluative approach. These changes are evident in the format and content of the reports. Signalling that self-assessment might lead to improvements in educational performance, in 2010 Unitec ranked its programmes in terms of capability in self-assessment and educational performance (Figure 2).
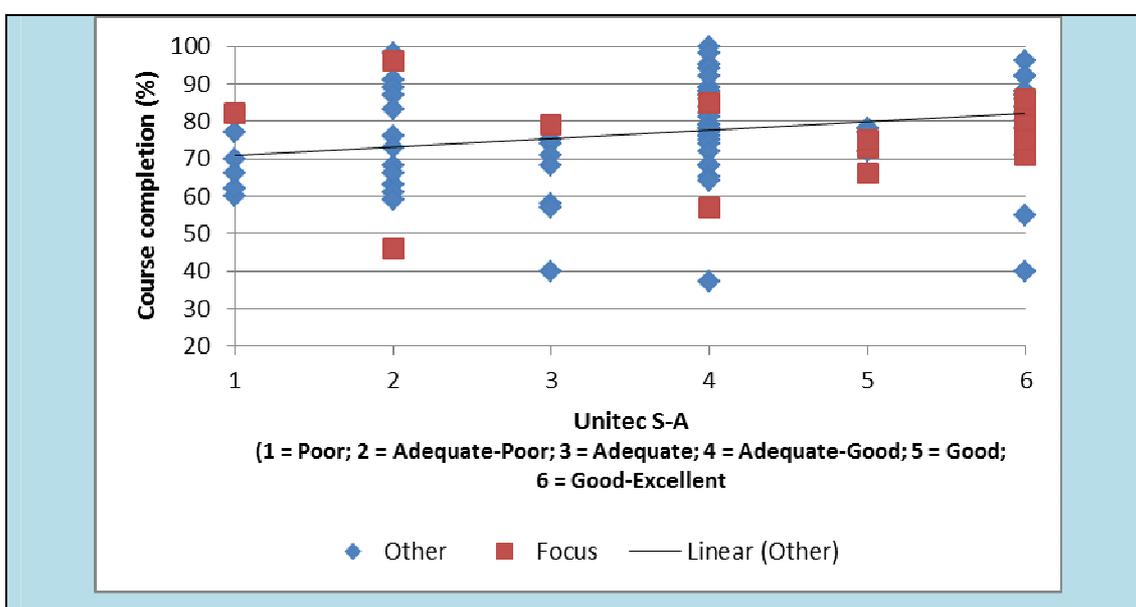

Figure 2. There is a weakly positive relationship between capability in self-assessment (S-A) (as determined by Unitec) and educational performance (as course completions %) for the ~100 programmes Unitec offers.

In such a large organisation it is to be expected that there would be a range of capabilities in self-assessment at the programme level, as is apparent from Figure 2 and Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of capability in self-assessment by programme

	Inferred capability in self-assessment*				
	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor	Total
Number of programmes	23	46	24	6	99
% of programmes	23%	46%	24%	6%	100%

*This assessment was undertaken by Unitec early in 2011, using the annual programme reports 2010 as evidence of capability in self-assessment. Unitec's six-band scale is transformed to a four-band one for consistency with NZQA methodology.

There is an increasingly pervasive and effective culture of self-assessment at Unitec, evident in the increasing use of evaluative questioning in programme annual reports, which has led to increased engagement with students and stakeholders. It is also apparent in the development of the process by which the reports are reviewed, scrutinised, and ranked in

terms of their educational performance and capability in self-assessment; and then presented in the form of a matrix that features all of Unitec's programmes (of which Table 1 forms a part). Of the sample of programmes that the EER team evaluated in 2011, two showed a marked increase in capability in self-assessment from the rating assigned by Unitec in 2010, 12 were unchanged, and one had a decrease in capability (Figure 2). Obviously, caution must be exercised in such a comparison, but it suggests that improvement in capability in self-assessment is occurring, and provides a quantitative measure of confidence.

Table 2. Comparison of capability in self-assessment between 2010 and 2011 for sample programmes in 2011

		Number of programmes			
Capability in self-assessment in 2011	*Excellent*		1		4
	Good		1	6	1
	Adequate		2		
	Poor				
		Poor	*Adequate*	*Good*	*Excellent*
		Capability in self-assessment in 2010			

(▮ = improvement; ▮ = unchanged; ▮ = decline).

A further demonstration of increasing capability in self-assessment is the awarding of the "tick" to programmes that meet the attributes of Unitec's "Living Curriculum", in that they can demonstrate that programmes are: curiosity/enquiry led; are practice-focussed; are socially constructed (i.e. "self-sufficiency and collaboration are equally valued, and together they help nurture resourcefulness and resilience"); blend face-to-face and web-based learning; are research informed; develop literacies for life-long learning; include embedded assessment; and demonstrate an active and responsive interaction with industry.[6] Of the six programmes awarded the big tick in 2011, three were already highly rated in self-assessment capability, but two had been previously very lowly rated. The programme focus areas evaluated in this report include examples of how self-assessment has been used to drive improvements in teaching, learner engagement, and stakeholder relationships.

The leadership team has introduced a number of initiatives to enhance the learning experience at Unitec, most of which include a self-assessment dimension, e.g. the review of foundation education and the e-learning strategy. In the case of the e-learning strategy, Unitec's self-assessment of its progress towards implementation was confirmed by an external independent evaluation. The commissioning of a survey of the perceptions of Unitec held by external stakeholders before and after a series of initiatives to reposition the institute in the tertiary education market, and the analysis of that data (which revealed a significant increase in positive perceptions) provide further examples of the commitment of Unitec to self-assessment methodologies. While it is not possible to attribute the overall gains in course completions (2 per cent in the last year) and programme retention (5 per cent in the last year) solely to self-assessment, it is reasonable to consider that it is at least a contributor to that improvement.

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[6] *Characteristics of a Living Curriculum – Evidence Template for 'The Tick'* (undated). Unitec

The EER team saw abundant evidence of the practice of self-assessment methodologies at programme level, in service units, and in the activities of the leadership team. Taken together, these give confidence in Unitec's capability in self-assessment, both now and into the future.

TEO response

Unitec has confirmed the factual accuracy of this report.

Findings[7]

1.1 How well do learners 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 **Good.**

The course retention and course completion performance statistics across the focus areas are generally high, indicating that most students are completing courses and are acquiring the necessary skills for the workplace and/or further study. Course completion rates at Unitec were 77 per cent in 2010, an increase from 75 per cent in 2009. Course retention has increased from 59 per cent to 64 per cent. Unitec is a high performer in respect of retention in programme of study, being the second-ranked institute of technology in 2009 and the first-ranked in 2010. As explained previously (see Figure 1) the aggregated combination of programme retention and course completions percentages constitutes a more appropriate measure of academic success for an organisation with Unitec's characteristics than qualification completion percentages.

Of Unitec's graduates, 69 per cent progress to employment, 83 per cent of employed graduates find jobs related to their qualifications, and 29 per cent progress to further study.[8] Besides the achievement of qualifications and employment, the monitoring and improvement of which is an important aspect of self-assessment, other dimensions of achievement reported by stakeholders relate to enhanced self-esteem and confidence and work-readiness. Development of these attributes is evident in students spoken to in the focus areas, but they are also significant inclusions in institutional projects, in particular the Living Curriculum. This recognises the value of learning that is "practice-focused – educating students 'for work, in work, through work'", and is "socially constructed – self-sufficiency and collaboration are equally valued, and together they help nurture resourcefulness and resilience". Programmes meeting these criteria qualify for the award of the big tick by the organisation, and thereby contribute to student achievement.

In 2010, Unitec had a progression to higher levels of study of 35 per cent (6 per cent higher than the sector median, and a 4 per cent increase from 2009). However, the progression rates from foundation-level programmes are very low. Low rates of progression from foundation programmes to higher-level programmes (~9 per cent), and low rates of progression from bridging programmes to higher-level programmes (<40 per cent) were confirmed in a review of foundation programmes[9], and are to be addressed through the establishment of a new Centre for Foundation Education and the development of revised programmes. A small proportion (8 per cent) of students at Unitec undertakes foundation programmes, and the influence of these programmes on the overall learner achievement is

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

[8] *Unitec Annual Report 2010* (2011), p. 2.

[9] *Review of Foundation Education – Findings and Recommendations* (August 2011).

obviously low. However, as part of its Auckland tertiary educational responsibilities, Unitec is likely to participate more – albeit collaboratively – in this part of the "market".

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

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 **Good.**

The value of outcomes for stakeholders is high across the focus areas reviewed. Unitec has been determined to reclaim its place as a provider of vocational and applied professional education in Auckland city[10], taking advantage of the opportunity of the reconfiguration of Auckland into a super city to make a submission to the plan for the future of Auckland (Auckland Unleashed[11]) in which Unitec "encourages the Auckland Council to make greater use of the Auckland tertiary sector 'anchor institutions' and to leverage their expertise, knowledge and research capability to support the delivery of relevant aspects of the Auckland Plan".[12] This was followed up with a joint submission by three "anchor institutions" to the Tertiary Education Commission, identifying future training and education requirements that could be addressed collaboratively[13], which is clearly of value to the Tertiary Education Commission, other government stakeholders, and the other educational institutions involved.

Analysis of an initial survey of perceptions of Unitec held by a selection of external stakeholders in 2009, and the undertaking of a subsequent survey of stakeholders in 2011, has not only demonstrated an improvement of perceptions of Unitec's value to the wider community, but the process has resulted in the formation of partnerships with business (e.g. IBM), the health sector (e.g. Waitakere District Health Board), and a recognition of Unitec's thought leadership (e.g. with the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation).[14] These organisations are potential and actual employers of Unitec graduates and participants in or recipients of Unitec's applied research activities, so the partnerships formed are a demonstration of the value of Unitec to this group of corporate stakeholders.

At a departmental or programme level, teaching and tutorial staff are encouraged to develop relationships with relevant businesses and industries, professional associations, and industry training organisations. These relationships provide an obvious way of obtaining information about changed practices which can be used to update Unitec's courses and programmes, and thereby are of value to Unitec. Equally significantly, the relationships are of value to these external stakeholders in that they give access to recent graduates and

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[10] This vision is articulated in Unitec's strategic plan, *Relook, Rethink, Redesign.*
[11] http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/AboutCouncil/PlansPoliciesPublications/theaucklandplan/Documents/theaucklandplandiscussiondocument.pdf
[12] *Submission by Unitec Institute of Technology to the Auckland Council in response to the Auckland Plan Discussion Document entitled Auckland Unleashed* (October 2011).
[13] *A DRAFT strategy for Auckland tertiary education provision* (undated). Submission by Unitec, Manukau Institute of Technology and Te Whare Wananga o Aotearoa.
[14] *External Stakeholder Research: Round 2* (August 2011). PowerPoint presentation.

access to the knowledge and skills of programme staff. An indication of the value put on such relationships by stakeholders is their willingness to offer work placements to students, to provide internships, and to sponsor awards to students that recognise meritorious educational achievement.

The high proportion of graduates in employment related to their study (as mentioned in section 1.1) and the satisfaction of employers (affirmed in the programme focus areas) attest to the value to students of their learning experience and its outcomes.

1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other 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 **Good.**

There are strong links between industry stakeholders and programme staff, confirmed by the comments of members of programme advisory committees and employers spoken to during the evaluation. The advice of external stakeholders is routinely used to update or refresh programmes between formal reviews, and in several programmes these stakeholders contribute to the teaching (e.g. through clinical placements in Medical Imaging, and as "studio lecturers" in architecture), or by presenting seminars about their industry to students, or through sponsoring awards or providing internships to high-performing students (e.g. in engineering).

Several of Unitec's programmes are accredited by industry bodies and professional associations, and have been developed in close consultation with them.[15] Again, the high proportion of graduates in employment related to their study indicates that the programmes meet the needs of stakeholders and that they meet one of the primary expectations of students: employment.

Unitec commissions an annual student satisfaction survey conducted by the student association to assist in determining whether the needs of learners are being met.[16] In 2010, the executive summary of the survey report noted that, "the students surveyed seemed satisfied with Unitec overall, with an institutional average for services at 73%". The Students' Association's online survey tool (Rate My Course) indicated that 74 per cent of respondents[17] would recommend their course to others, a good indicator that courses do match learners' needs. However, there must always be some doubt about the representativeness of such surveys. In attempting to better understand the needs of learners, Unitec interviewed staff and students to evaluate the basis on which students make their decisions to enrol at Unitec (the so-called "entry transition engagement"), the extent to

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[15] For the focus areas: architecture programmes have accreditations with NZ Registered Architects Board and NZ Institute of Architects; engineering with Institute of Professional Engineers of NZ; Medical Imaging with NZ Medical Radiation Technologists Board.

[16] *The Annual Student Survey Unitec Institute of Technology 2010* (October 2010). USU Students' Association.

[17] For the 2011 *Rate My Course* survey there was a sample size of 2,266 courses, derived from 799 students, a response rate of 4 per cent.

which learning, teaching, and assessment engaged students in their first six week of their course[18] ("progressive engagement"), and their movement into employment[19] ("exit transition arrangement"). It is the second of these "transitions" to which most attention has been directed at programme level, and the evaluation team saw several examples of teaching strategies directed to this end for which there was evidence of students being successfully retained in programmes.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Students interviewed spoke highly of the commitment and knowledge of the teaching staff, suggesting a high level of satisfaction with the quality of teaching. Unitec has recognised that a single evaluation tool is not necessarily the most appropriate way of assessing teaching quality across the range of programmes offered. Accordingly, Unitec allows a range of formative and summative methods of evaluating the quality of teaching – as opposed to mere satisfaction – that may be appropriate to the level and discipline of the programme[20], but does require that a programme's quality of teaching is evaluated in some way. The evaluation tools used indicate a high level of satisfaction with the teaching and its effectiveness. However, in order to facilitate comparison between programmes, an institutional rubric for effectiveness of teaching through which the various approaches used can be synthesised and compared was signalled early in 2011[21], and this is under development. This should help to improve the self-assessment of teaching effectiveness.

Staff assess the quality of their own teaching through peer observation, and participate in various professional development activities. Unitec intends to formalise professional development through a points system, allocating points for taking part in professional development activities: attendance or presentation at courses or workshops; participation in development projects; mentoring; peer teaching observation; accreditation panel membership; conference organising; and research, with the expectation that each staff member will accumulate a minimum number of points for professional development over a two-year period.[22] Applied research dominates the research culture at Unitec, and the need has been recognised for a clearer definition of what constitutes a "research-active" staff member, and the extent to which such staff are expected to contribute to degree-level teaching.

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[18] *Transition pedagogy proposal* (September 2011). Memorandum from Dean of Teaching and Learning to the academic board.
[19] *The Student Life Cycle Project Final Report* (November 2009). N. Solomon, Unitec
[20] *Guidelines for student evaluation of courses* (2011). Dean of Teaching and Learning (Unitec) in collaboration with Arahanga Associates. (The 'Guidelines' provide explanations of the *Policy on Student Evaluation of Courses*.)
[21] *Student evaluation of courses – Rubric* (May 2011). Memorandum from Dean of Teaching and Learning to faculty academic committees
[22] *Professional development points system* (July 2011). Memorandum from Dean of Teaching and Learning to leadership team.

Unitec has committed to an e-learning strategy which seeks to embed staff capability, student access and capability, and infrastructure in this area. A recent evaluation asserts the success of the strategy's implementation as a "community of practice" model, but makes a number of recommendations[23], as confirmed by external moderation[24], providing a good example of Unitec's rigorous approach to self-assessment, particularly at management level (see section 1.6). The most obvious sign of implementation of the e-learning strategy is the change in e-learning platforms for provision of course notes, discussion groups etc, a change welcomed by many students, notwithstanding some adverse comments from them about the extent of engagement of some staff with digital technologies. The extent to which literacy and numeracy are embedded in programmes has also been recently reviewed across the organisation.[25]

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Guidance and support of learners in their coursework are the responsibility of teaching staff, complemented by the staff in the International Centre and in the Te Puna Ako Learning Centre, with more general guidance and support being provided by Disability Liaison and other Student Wellbeing staff. The Learning Centre provides course-specific workshops, open drop-in sessions, small group sessions, one-to-one appointments, and generic workshops, for which assistance with academic reading and writing dominates the service provision. Although not commented on specifically by the centre, the number of visits to it by departments[26] shows a weak inverse correlation with the "good teaching" ratings for departments in the annual student survey[27], as shown in Figure 4. This suggests that students attend the Learning Centre in order to redress learning issues they have identified in their particular programmes.

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[23] *e-Learning strategy implementation – evaluation* (June 2011). Unitec
[24] *External moderation of eLearning Strategy Implementation Evaluation* (June 2011). Auckland: Critical Insight.
[25] *Measuring literacy and numeracy embedding* (October 2011). Memorandum from Director of Academic Literacies to academic board.
[26] *Te Puna Ako Learning Centre (Mt Albert) Annual Report of Activities 2010* (2010), Section 3.2.
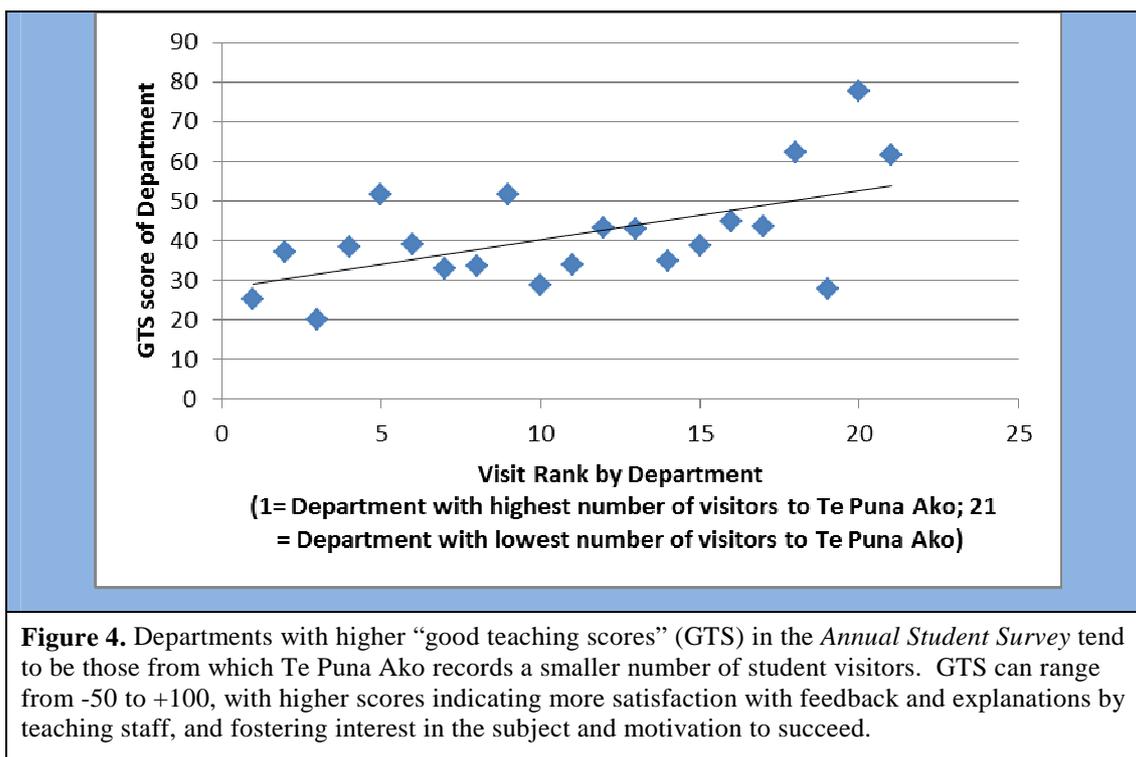[27] *Annual Student Survey,* 2010, pp. 67-71.

Figure 4. Departments with higher "good teaching scores" (GTS) in the *Annual Student Survey* tend to be those from which Te Puna Ako records a smaller number of student visitors. GTS can range from -50 to +100, with higher scores indicating more satisfaction with feedback and explanations by teaching staff, and fostering interest in the subject and motivation to succeed.

The annual student survey records the Learning Centre as achieving 84 per cent student satisfaction. Student Central – Te Pae Kōrero is the one-stop shop for all the information, application, enrolment, and support services (e.g. health, counselling, disability services, etc) that are provided for students. Although the academic success of students who identify with disabilities is recorded[28], no similar correlation appears to be sought between success and the intervention of support services, by which the effectiveness of interventions could be evaluated.

Unitec recognises the benefit of providing support for students in Māori and Pacific contexts, and has facilities and services at the Mount Albert campus (Maia Māori Development Centre and the Pacific Support Centre respectively) to support and make these students feel welcome and valued at Unitec. These services are mandated under their respective strategic documents[29], but the evaluators concluded (see focus area 2.11 for further details) that the support for Māori students is more mature in terms of the number and inferred effectiveness of services and activities offered than is presently the case for Pasifika students.

The Māori Mentoring Programme[30], as well as reporting the extent to which mentees engage with mentors, cites successful outcomes for mentees in terms of gaining interviews with potential employers or being employed. In the same way, an independent analysis of

[28] The *Directorate of Student and Community Engagement Annual Report for 2010* notes (p. 39) a disability retention rate of 83 per cent (which exceeds the Unitec overall rate of 64 per cent in the Educational Performance Indicators), and a success rate of 75 per cent (which is marginally lower than the Unitec overall rate of 77 per cent in the Educational Performance Indicators).
[29] *Unitec's Māori Success Strategy* (2011). Unitec Institute of Technology – Te Whare Wananga o Wairaka; *Unitec Pacific Strategy*, 2010-2015 (August 2010).
[30] *Whai Ake I Te Ara Tika – Māori Mentoring Programme* (March-June 2011).

the services and facilities to a small number of Māori Youth Guarantee students[31] found a "developing effectiveness" in fostering Māori learner attendance, retention in study, and classroom engagement, but there was no specific evaluation of participants' educational achievement in the context of cultural identity[32], suggesting that the link between the assessment of Māori students accessing the Youth Guarantee funding stream and the Māori Mentoring Programme is tenuous at best.

Peer-assisted tutoring by students is another approach used by some departments and programmes at Unitec to foster student learning, the value of which was affirmed in conversations with students who were either providers or recipients of such tutoring.

1.6 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 **Good.**

Unitec signals its commitment to enhancing its educational achievement in its investment plan, particularly through raising course completion and programme retention percentages.[33] In addition, Unitec's Council and leadership team are committed to a broader educational agenda by their participation in cross-sector and inter-institutional discussions about future vocational and professional education in Auckland.

Council and the leadership team identified four key outcomes in the strategic plan:

- Meeting the needs of communities

- Innovation in teaching and learning

- Enhancing the student experience

- Being an excellent business.

These key outcomes are clearly associated with supporting educational achievement.

Council has been supportive of the chief executive's initiatives in re-establishing links with business and industry, since it is from such links that the underpinning stakeholder relationships that are vital to ensuring the relevance of programmes can also be fostered. Council's participation in high-level strategic planning and in the budgeting process through which resources are allocated, together with its formal relationship with the academic board, ensures that it is cognisant of Unitec's educational achievement and the drivers for its enhancement, including campus developments that will improve the location,

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[31] *Mē he horeka torotika kit e rā – Realising Māori potential within the Youth Guarantee funding initiative.* (June 2011). N. Solomon, Unitec.

[32] Correlation between identity and educational success is attributed in the report cited in the previous footnote to: Bennett, S., & Flett, R. (2001). *Te hua o tea o Māori. He Pukenga Kōrero: A Journal of Māori Studies, 6* (2), 29-34.

[33] *Unitec Investment Plan 2010-2013* (2010), pp. 2, 34.

efficiency, and appropriateness of teaching spaces and associated support services on all Unitec's campuses.

The leadership team clearly expects that academic programmes will include evaluative questioning[34] as part of the compilation of annual programme reports. The extent to which evaluative questioning has been adopted in these reports is apparent in the deans' inferences of their capability in self-assessment, which is given together with educational performance in Table 3. Not only does this table demonstrate that the culture of self-assessment is well embedded at the academic management level, but the association of educational performance and self-assessment indicates the leadership team's clear vision and direction to lift educational achievement through fostering evaluative approaches. These are combined with appropriate resourcing and the development of policies and procedures.

Table 3. Distribution of programmes by educational performance and capability in self-assessment

		Educational performance, as aggregated course completions in programme 2010			Programmes*	
		80-100%	65-79%	0-64%	Number	%
Capability in self-assessment 2010	Excellent – Good	15	7	1	23	23%
	Good		7		7	7%
	Good – Adequate	19	15	5	39	39%
	Adequate		6	3	9	9%
	Adequate – Poor	7	5	3	15	15%
	Poor	1	5		6	6%
Number of programmes		42	45	12	99	100%
% of programmes		42%	45%	12%	100%	

*Four of Unitec's programmes were not included in this exercise

Sharing of good self-assessment practice between programmes should enhance capability in self-assessment in the same way as has been advocated for enhancing educational performance.[35] The challenge will be to find appropriate and widely affirmed mechanisms for doing this[36] and ways of effectively communicating them.

Service areas within the organisation have also adopted evaluative questioning as part of their regular review activities, further embedding a self-assessment regime in the organisation.

The leadership team has been proactive in introducing a range of initiatives for fostering learner achievement. Examples include the e-learning strategy, the Student Life Cycle project, and transition pedagogies project, all of which contribute to the Living Curriculum

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[34] Unitec defines this evaluative questioning as addressing the following queries: "What are we trying to achieve?', "Are we successful?", "What remedies should be enacted?", and "Are our improvement actions effective?" From *Self-Assessment Overview for EER Reviewers* (September 2011). PowerPoint presentation.

[35] "We have Departments that know how to do this … so others can too." From *Organisational overview for EER Team* (7 November 2011). R.Ede.

[36] The 2011 *Kaleidoscope* event showcasing educational innovations attracted about 50 per cent of Unitec academic staff.

– with its associated "tick" for programmes that can demonstrate its attributes. Six programmes were awarded the living curriculum tick in 2011, most confirming the excellent-good capability in self-assessment determined in 2010 (Table 4), although it should be noted that the two measures are derived from different evidence bases.

Table 4. Programmes awarded the living curriculum tick in 2011 relative to their 2010 ratings of capability in self-assessment

	Capability in self-assessment in 2010						
	Excellent – Good	Good	Good – Adequate	Adequate	Adequate – Poor	Poor	
No. of big ticks 2011*	3			1		1†	

*A sixth programme was not included in the exercise that led to the compilation in Table 3.
†This programme was one of the 2011 EER focus areas and in that evaluation demonstrated excellent capability in self-assessment.

The management and staff in most programme focus areas commented that they were well supported by the leadership team in terms of professional support and facilities. In Figure 5 and Figure 6, the upper right quadrant shows programmes with increasing EFTS and increasing course retention and completion, suggesting that resources for these programmes are at least keeping pace with growth. By contrast, the lower right quadrant shows programmes with increasing EFTS but decreasing course retention and completion, suggesting that additional resources might be needed for these programmes.
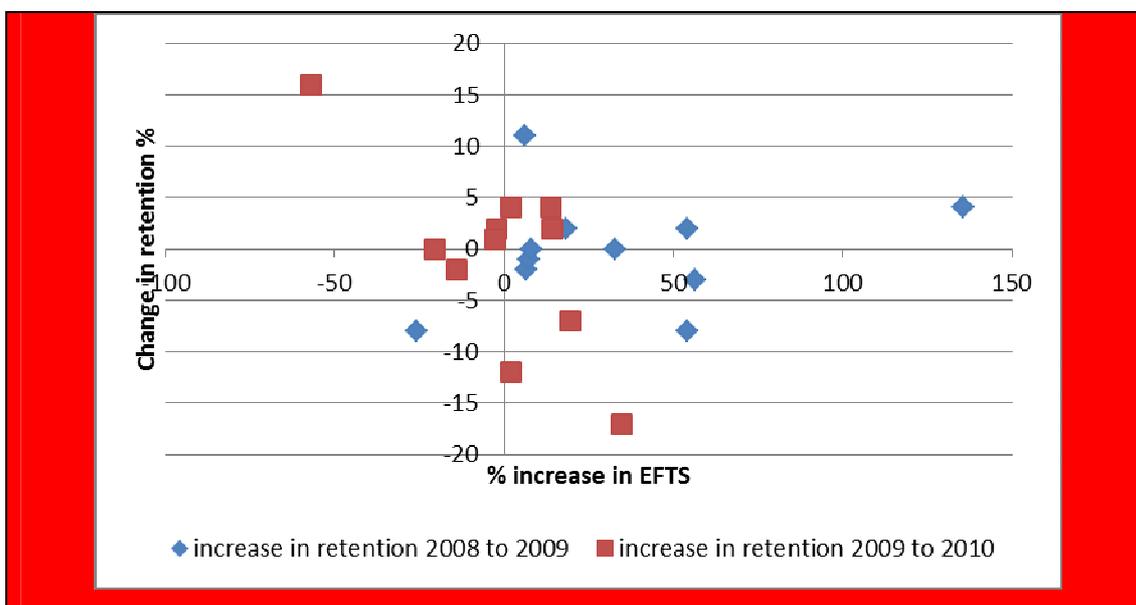

Figure 5. Relationship between yearly change in EFTS and course retention. The lowermost square symbol corresponds to the Master of Educational Leadership and Management in 2010, a small EFTS programme); the square symbol just lower right of the origin corresponds to the Master of Architecture (Professional) for 2009-2010, in which resourcing concerns have been identified by staff and students.
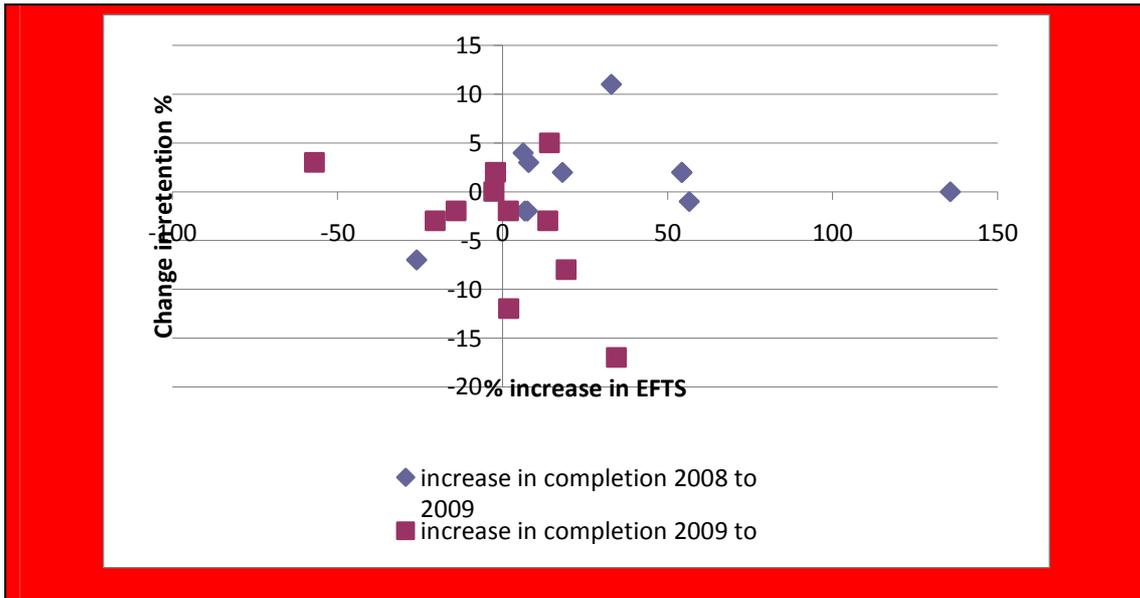
Figure 6. Relationship between yearly change in EFTS and aggregated course completion. The lowermost square symbol corresponds to the Master of Educational Leadership and Management, a small EFTS programme in 2010; the symbol just lower right of the origin corresponds to the Diploma of Engineering (Civil), where staff have potential concerns about resourcing; and the next lowest is the Master of Architecture (Professional), in which resourcing concerns have been identified by staff and students.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Educational Leadership and Management (Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Leadership and Management, Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management, Master of Educational Leadership and Management)

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

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

This is a cluster of postgraduate programmes in which students can progress from the certificate to the diploma to the degree, as their professional and life commitments allow, carrying accumulated credits forward. Across the three programmes, in which 41 EFTS were enrolled in 2010, the EFTS-weighted aggregated course completion rate is high, but declined from 95 per cent in 2008 to 82 per cent in 2010, with a trend of a slight decline in EFTS.

All programmes within the cluster have a very strong emphasis on the integration of learning with individual career aspirations and workplace roles at both strategic and operational levels. Learners highly value the outstanding leadership and teaching by a highly experienced and motivated teaching staff, all of whom are research-active, and who have track records of attracting and completing projects for the Ministry of Education. Staff are responsive and learner-centred in all areas of teaching and learner support. Staff are to be commended for their exemplary engagement with learners and members of the advisory committee, which is highly effective in providing input to the programmes, and which results in improvements.

The culture of self-assessment is fully embedded and highly effective in every aspect of the programme, including its management. Reflection, self-evaluation, and continuous improvement strategies are integral to the management, teaching, and assessment within the programme. Learners commented favourably on these aspects and indicated that achievement in this programme was life-changing and highly relevant to the advancement of their careers at both operational and strategic levels.

2.2 Focus area: Architecture
(Bachelor of Architectural Studies, Master of Architecture (Professional))

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

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

Both qualifications have course retention rates exceeding 90 per cent. The course completion rates for the Bachelor's degree are ~82 per cent (with slight annual variations), and the course completion rate for the Master's programme was 85 per cent in 2010, decreasing from 93 per cent in 2008 and 2009. Both programmes show substantial growth, and there is an unsatisfied demand for enrolment in the Bachelor's degree.

The architecture qualification cluster is one of three internationally accredited programmes in New Zealand, and the only Australasian one delivered outside a university. Student achievement in both programmes is very high, with excellent employment prospects indicated for those who complete the Master's degree. The Bachelor of Architectural Studies has only been offered since 2008; the short time period for which the degree has been offered makes it difficult to discern a clear pattern of employment for graduates. However, the Bachelor of Architecture (which is being phased out in favour of the Bachelor of Architectural Studies and the Master of Architecture (Professional)) has a history of achieving employment rates comparable to those of other schools of architecture in New Zealand, meaning that most graduates have obtained employment in New Zealand or overseas.

The points of difference in Unitec's programmes, identified by staff, students, accreditation bodies, and other stakeholders, include the integrated nature and amount of input from industry-based professionals, concurrent work experience, the Māori dimension, staff responsiveness to suggestions, and the Design Build initiative (customised training). Students are proud of Unitec's programme and appreciate the design focus and one-to-one attention they receive. Their only reservation relates to ongoing concerns about facilities and resources. Staff are universally acknowledged for their standing in the profession, their research activities, their collegial approach to delivery, and their commitment to students.

Self-assessment is continual, using methods consistent with the architecture profession, e.g. analytical thinking, problem-solving, creative solutions, robust discussion. Formal and informal feedback from students, accreditation bodies, and external professionals is used as the basis for decisions on curriculum, delivery, and standards. The studio-based curriculum, focusing on a one-to-one engagement with students, provides immediate feedback on student engagement and progress. Patterns are identified through staff discussion at sub-group team level, then at full staff meetings, and finally at committee level (often with external input). Self-assessment would be strengthened by a more formal approach to collecting student destination information, especially for those who do not progress to or complete the Master's degree. Staff and students expressed frustration about the length of time taken to address recurring resourcing issues, although complexity and financial commitment makes short-term solutions difficult. There is no clear understanding of the

extent to which ongoing concerns about facilities and resources are affecting learning experiences and achievement.

2.3 Focus area: Engineering

(NZ Diploma in Engineering (Civil), Bachelor of Engineering Technology (Civil), Bachelor of Engineering Technology))

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

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

The Bachelor of Engineering Technology (BEngTech) is a new programme developed collaboratively with the Metro Group of New Zealand institutes of technology to replace the engineering degree which has a civil endorsement. Negotiations are continuing to establish a pathway from the diploma to the Bachelor of Engineering degree offered by the University of Auckland, via the BEngTech.

Approved by IPENZ, the new degree was first offered in 2010. Enrolments in the degree and the underpinning diploma are growing rapidly. Both programmes have high course retention rates (> 80 per cent). Aggregate course completion rates are above 70 per cent in the degree, and are increasing for the diploma (from 58 per cent in 2008 to 66 per cent in 2010). Graduates from the programmes are said by industry representatives to be work-ready, with an appreciation of commercial reality not always evident in similar programmes from other providers.

Students value the combination of theory and practice. They commented on the ready availability of staff and appreciated the inclusion of sessions with visiting speakers from industry as indicative of employment expectations. While the feedback from student satisfaction surveys could be improved, students were committed to the programmes. They participate in the class representative system and in the peer student tutorial scheme, and express willingness to contribute to the courses as visiting speakers in the future. The programmes are well resourced and managed and, especially under the current head of department, are enjoying productive links with industry.

The annual report is a living document, being progressively compiled from staff meetings during the year, fostering continual evaluation and improvement. Self-assessment has determined the possible causes of low achievement in courses and programmes. Analysis has identified that class sizes and mathematical ability are not particular causes of low achievement; rather, student engagement is a more powerful determinant of student success than mathematical achievement. Nevertheless, there is ongoing assistance to students in developing their mathematical abilities, and analysis of the effectiveness of these interventions.

The engineering department has a well-structured procedure for assessing the strategic fit of research projects that are seeking funding. It has developed a metric to evaluate research and works actively with industry on applied projects. A single advisory committee has been set up to provide an industry perspective on all engineering programmes.

2.4 Focus area: Medical Imaging
(Bachelor of Health Sciences (Medical Imaging))

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

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

There is unsatisfied demand in industry for medical imaging graduates[37], but numbers accepted into the programme are limited by the availability of clinical placements. Accordingly, there has been no significant growth in enrolments recently. Course retention is strong (98 per cent) and course completion percentages are typically around 95 per cent.

Clinical placements ensure graduates are experienced in a range of workplaces and are work-ready, and are valued both by students and the profession. Both the academic and clinical staff are dedicated to student achievement and provide in-house learning support as appropriate. There is a comprehensive programme of formative and summative assessment, and staff are introducing e-learning and other technology, consistent with Unitec's Living Curriculum strategy.

Moving the programme to the Waitakere City campus was undertaken to foster productive relationships with the Waitemata District Health Board, not only for this programme but also for other Unitec health-related programmes (including nursing). It is anticipated that this move will lead to initiatives in the development of the health workforce and to research and consulting activities in health-related and ancillary areas, including business and computing applications.

Although there are good connections with industry and these are used to effect improvements to the programme, knowledge of graduate destinations could be improved. Staff actively use student evaluations to guide improvements, and the programme leader uses these evaluations in conjunction with other information for appraisal of staff teaching competence. The Annual Programme Evaluation Report is a living document, ensuring continual self-assessment and evaluation of practice.

2.5 Focus area: Elementary computing
(Certificate in Information Technology (Level 4))

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

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

This programme has a history of high course retention rates (96 per cent), but low course completion rates (generally less than 50 per cent), although there has been a recent improvement in success: a course completion rate of 70 per cent was achieved in the first semester of 2011. This improvement is attributed by Unitec to better management of student expectations, recruitment and deployment into the programme of new staff, and the

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[37] This occupation is included in the NZ Long Term Skill Shortage List:
http://www.visabureau.com/newzealand/skill-shortage-list.aspx

use of student forums. Specifically, during 2010-2011, staff identified as the main issues that have resulted in the poor performance of students, viz., mismatch between the programme and the students' expectations and needs, the placement of students, and the pastoral care of students. In response to these findings staff have redeveloped the curriculum and delivery mechanisms, and introduced courses at Level 3 to support the Level 4 certificate, and to provide progression from it. Interviewing of candidates and greater pastoral support for students has also been initiated.

A comprehensive external evaluation of the computing curriculum was undertaken recently[38], and recognised the need for "soft" skills to complement technical skills and a greater engagement with recent shifts in the industry. Consistent with the report's recommendations, staff are seeking a stronger engagement with industry, which will enhance the relevance of this programme to significant external stakeholders. Relationships with major software enterprises that are being developed will be helpful in achieving this.

The main value of the programme is to provide a pathway to higher-level courses, including the Bachelor of Information Technology. Approximately 45 per cent of students progress to higher levels of study. However, there are significant deficiencies in the tracking of students, most notably discovering the destinations – in study or elsewhere – of those students who do not enter the degree for which this programme is intended to be a pathway.

Students regard the teaching staff as individually friendly and approachable, although the EER team discerned that teachers are more focused on remedying student deficiencies than building on their competencies. This may account for the absence of peer-assisted student support in the programme, with students needing assistance being referred to Te Puna Ako (which the students report as providing a satisfactory experience). There appears to be recognition of this lack of learning support and pastoral support within the programme. The programme is also being contracted to a private training establishment which is said to provide higher levels of pastoral care, so the educational achievements by students in the programme offered by Unitec and the private provider can be compared.

The staff include four PhD-qualified teachers who say they are well supported for professional development. That said, students note that the software system is not used by all lecturers. Feedback to staff is provided through the Rate My Course programme, departmental surveys, and – less successfully – through the class representative system, but the feedback does not appear to be being used in a systematic way. Self-assessment is in its early stages of development and currently is focused on high-level achievement data.

A revamped management team and the use of highly qualified and/or industry-trained staff offer the potential to address the significant issues identified among the teaching staff which have adversely affected collegiality and had the potential to undermine the gains made in student achievement.

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[38] *Unitec Computing Curriculum Evaluation* (October 2011). Confidential report, Deloitte.

2.6 Focus area: Automotive
(Certificate in Automotive and Mechanical Engineering (Level 3))

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

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

Introduced in 2010, this programme achieved an 87 per cent course retention rate and an 82 per cent course completion rate overall. Achievement for under 25-year-old enrollees was 86 per cent course retention and 80 per cent course completion, and that for Youth Guarantee students still higher at 80 per cent and 83 per cent respectively. In addition to educational achievement, staff indicated that the programme had also resulted in significant changes in confidence and motivation; they gave examples of the positive impact they had seen on specific students, and cited e-mails received from parents of students who had also noticed such changes.

The programme provides an outstanding example of how staff use the Living Curriculum approach to design, and to facilitate and evaluate effective learning. In 2011, the automotive team's development in self-assessment capability and curriculum renewal earned them Unitec's 'tick'.[39] The foundation-level students create their own learning resources individually and in teams, find solutions to problems that arise, and present their work to others by video, verbal presentations, group blogging, and e-portfolios. Staff described a conscious shift from up-front teaching of content to immediate, real-time assessment of student learning. Course retention and success rates for the first intake are very high, particularly for the Youth Guarantee students. Pastoral care is comprehensive, integrated with the curriculum, and fully supported by actively involved stakeholders. There is a strong response to the initiatives taken by the Maia Māori Development Centre and the Pacific Support Centre in the support of Māori and Pasifika students, which is further enlarged to embrace all students, whatever their cultural identity. Cohesiveness is fostered by a "Team CAME" (Certificate in Automotive and Mechanical Engineering) approach which brings staff and students together under a community of learning umbrella.

Staff and managers are aware of the challenges this approach can present to students, and they use a variety of methods and support services to minimise barriers. They dissect data and any other information they can find to look at student achievement from every angle. Staff meetings are used as a vehicle for problem-solving and ongoing professional development, exemplifying how information and discussion can be used within a self-assessment framework to drive continuous improvement. Staff describe the approach as "thinking about the problems before they occur". As a result, they are not overwhelmed by problems when they arise and are action-oriented. Responses to student feedback are constructive, immediate, and consistent with the Team CAME philosophy.

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[39] *Characteristics of a Living Curriculum – Evidence template for 'The Tick' – The CAME.*

2.7 Focus area: English language teaching
(Certificate in English)

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

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

This is a large programme with 324 EFTS in 2010, enrolled across all three of Unitec's campuses. Course retention of students in the programme is consistently high (90-93 per cent over four years). Learner achievement is also high (75 per cent course completion). This is impressive given the range of levels of the programme and the entry-level abilities of the students; some students enrol with no English ability. The intended outcomes for this programme are progression to further study (professional/employment or academic preparation) or employment. Of the programme's graduates, 50-60 per cent proceed to the diploma programme, while up to 40 per cent proceed to the FFTO employment skills programme.[40] A small number of students exit with improved language skills to live more fulfilling lives within the community.

Teaching is effective and students are provided with extensive support, often one-to-one, to achieve their goals.

This programme provides a good example of ongoing improvements based on evidence, including feedback from students and timely interventions to create improvements. Data is interrogated and improvements agreed collegially among the team as a whole. A consistent picture of a well-managed, effectively structured and taught programme emerged from discussions with managers, staff, students, and stakeholders.

2.8 Focus area: Foundation Studies
(Certificate in Foundation Studies (Level 2))

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

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

This programme has undergone considerable growth in the last few years, with 276 EFTS enrolled in 2010. Students achieve well for this type of programme (achieving a course retention rate of 64 per cent and a course completion rate of 57 per cent in 2010). Māori course completion percentages have increased from 48 per cent in 2009 to 55 per cent in 2010, and Pasifika course completion percentages have increased from 47 per cent to 53 per cent over the same period. Moreover, students highly value the second-chance learning opportunity provided by the programme and the time to develop study skills before entering higher-level study, and noted the flow-on effect, whereby as a result of their involvement in the programme, friends and family were also inspired to engage in higher education themselves. The commitment and skills of teaching staff in achieving these outcomes is

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[40] Foundation Focused Training Opportunities: http://www.tec.govt.nz/About-us/News/Updates/ffto-preparing-for-2011/

evident. Independent learning plans are used to ensure that students focus their learning on the skills needed to progress.

Many students – specifically 63 per cent of Youth Guarantee students – continue to the level 3 programme and progress to their chosen study pathway beyond that. Specific pathways from that programme to sport and nursing programmes demonstrate examples of post-foundation programme success. Nine of 11 applicants from the 2010 foundation programme were offered places in the Bachelor of Sport. Between 2002 and 2010, of the 394 students from foundation programmes who embarked on the Bachelor of Nursing, 69 per cent passed their courses (compared with 73 per cent of other students).

It is clear that the foundation programmes provide an important opportunity for students to gain skills needed to progress. The recent review of foundation programmes[41] has identified the need to make changes to help students achieve, particularly in the programmes to which this programme leads.

Although self-assessment is at a relatively early stage of development, it is contributing to improvements. A recent review identified the need for more comprehensive data to enable the programme to be more effective and for staff to have a better understanding of what is happening in the programme, and in particular how well learners achieve as they progress to other programmes. In response, staff have already begun collecting data on the need for pastoral support, which they have identified as the main cause of learners leaving the programme: specifically, family issues have been recognised as having a major impact on whether students are able to study and complete the programme.

Staff are actively involved in the community and in secondary schools, which provides additional opportunities to ensure that the learning and support needs of students in foundation programmes are identified and met.

2.9 Focus area: Plumbing and Gasfitting

(Unitec National Certificate in Plumbing and Gasfitting, replacing the National Certificate in Plumbing (NCPLU))

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

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

Unitec developed a new programme in this area following the recommendations of a report.[42] It was approved in 2008 and introduced in 2009, replacing the NCPLU. The course retention rate in 2010 was 93 per cent, while the completion rate was 75 per cent.[43] There has been a marked decrease in enrolments in these programmes, from 289 EFTS in

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[41] *Review of Foundation Education – Findings and Recommendations* (August 2011).

[42] Armstrong, H (May 2006). *An independent report into relationships in the plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying industry.* Report commissioned by the Minister of Tertiary Education.

[43] These are EFTS-weighted values, from 21.74 EFTS in the Unitec national certificate programme (achieving 100 per cent course retention, 57 per cent course completions) and 94.94 EFTS still enrolled in NCPLU (achieving 92 per cent course retention and 79 per cent course completion).

2008 to 117 EFTS in 2010. This is inferred to be a consequence of "the industry's problem that, as work has dropped away during the downturn of the past two years, so have the number of PGD [plumbing, gasfitting and drainlaying] companies able to offer placements"[44], making the programme a less attractive option to potential students.

Learners and employers value this programme for developing the students into "well-rounded" tradespeople. Students are well prepared for successful completion of the licensing examination, in addition to achieving the national qualifications.

Teaching staff are to be commended for their commitment and enthusiasm, which has been especially noticeable over the past 12 months. Staff industry experience means that learners are confident in the workplace relevance of the programme outcomes. There has been a noticeable improvement in leadership and management of the programme in recent months, which has provided a change of direction towards a more positive, collaborative team approach to achieve desired institutional outcomes. Employers and teaching staff indicated that departmental culture had improved.

Until recently, it appears that there have not been any self-assessment practices undertaken within the programme. However, recent changes in leadership and management have begun to make an impact on the direction and culture within the department. It is intended that organisational self-assessment practices will be embedded within the changing culture of the department. There is evidence that the introduction of the weekly meetings has provided an opportunity for reflection and improvement. While it is early days, there are signals that the department is moving forward in a more collaborative and collegial way.

2.10 Focus area: Research

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

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

Unitec aims "to be the leading institute of technology in NZ in both the quality and quantity of its research." It was the highest-ranked institute of technology in the 2006 round of the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF), with a quality score 34 per cent higher than the next-ranked institute of technology.[45] There has been an annual increase in the proportion of quality assured research outputs, from 30 per cent in 2005 to 55.6 per cent in 2010; and in 2010, 25 per cent of outputs comprised peer-reviewed journal articles. This is important because of Unitec's intention to participate in the 2011 round of the PBRF, in which, on the basis of previous rounds, peer-reviewed journal articles are likely be viewed as particularly significant in determining the research gradings of staff and the quality status of the institution. However, in a diverse organisation such as Unitec, other types of research output are also valid and significant, and, for example, exhibitions, performances, and other creative outputs are also being produced. In 2010, 13 per cent of the 583 research outputs

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[44] Up with the Play – Investment in the Future (2011). *Plumbers Journal*, Sept-Oct 2011, 10-12.
[45] *Performance-Based Research Fund Evaluating Research Excellence – The 2006 Assessment.* Wellington: Tertiary Education Commission.

were clearly identified as "creative". Over the period 2005-2010, Unitec has generated a total of 4,240 research outputs.

As part of its strategic refocusing, interdisciplinary and applied research is fostered. As an example, of the 108 quality assured journal articles published in 2010 that are listed in the *2010 Research Report* [46], only one is not in an obviously applied area of research. Indeed, applied research dominates the research reported for 2010, and in the five copies of Unitec's research magazine, *Advance,* that were provided to the EER team. Collaboration with external partners is also encouraged, while the organisation continues to promote teaching-based research.[47] Indeed, educational research accounts for 31 per cent of the research outputs reported for 2010.

Self-assessment shows that research productivity varies markedly across the organisation. While there is concern that a metric such as the number of research outputs per staff full-time equivalent may be too crude a measure of research productivity, the need for some measure, and a rubric or some other means to compare the extent to which degrees are taught by research-active staff, is recognised as required and Unitec is working towards this. To this end, Unitec is actively seeking new ways of defining and recognising research in its multidisciplinary environment.

Unitec is encouraging research that has impact and value to stakeholders. An example is building strong links with Waitemata District Health Board at Waitakere to foster research in allied health areas, and also links to business and computing (which also have implications for health workforce development in west Auckland). Mentoring, research writing retreats, and building on the educationally oriented research that is already widespread at Unitec are among the strategies being used to foster emerging disciplinary and interdisciplinary research. The individual and collective research experience of research professors could be better utilised in advancing the research capability of Unitec as a whole.

Supervision of student research is recognised as part of the teaching workload. Although there are guidelines and expectations about the selection, supervision, and examination of student research, the management of these processes appears inconsistent across the organisation. It is recommended that modifications to the policy framework be undertaken to clarify student expectations and staff responsibilities, and to include a specific opportunity for re-examination of theses on academic grounds, rather than the purely procedural grounds currently permitted.

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[46] *2010 Research Report* (2011).
[47] *Unitec Research Strategy 2010-2015* (inferred 2009).

2.11 Focus area: Achievement and support of Māori and Pasifika learners[48]

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

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

The differences in educational achievement between Māori and Pasifika students and Unitec students overall are shown for the programme focus areas in Figure 7.
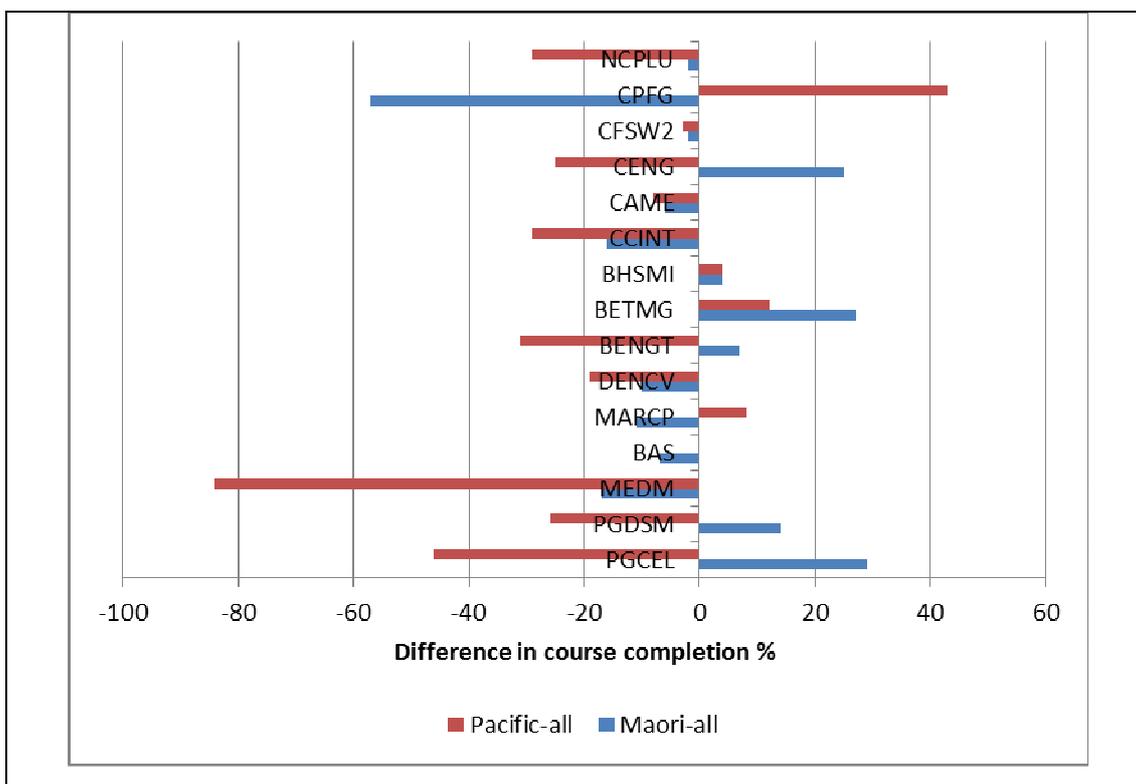

Figure 7. Difference in course completion rates between Māori students and all Unitec students and between Pasifika students and all Unitec students for the programme focus areas (see footnote 50) in 2010

Course completions for Māori and Pacific students across the ITP sector are 9% lower than overall course completion rates in 2010[49], and few of the evaluated programmes at Unitec are outside this 'band'. Indeed, in some programmes performance of Māori or Pacific students exceeds that of the programme overall.

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[48] It became evident during the course of the EER visit that it was more appropriate to consider the support and achievement of Māori and Pasifika students separately, i.e. as sub-focus areas, rather than as a single combined focus area. The ratings for educational performance for Māori and Pasifika sub-focus areas are "Excellent" and "Good" respectively, and the ratings for capability in self-assessment are "Good" and "Adequate" respectively. The overall rating for the focus area approximates a weighted average, taking account of the relative proportions of Māori and Pasifika students at Unitec, 10 per cent and 13 per cent respectively.

[49] From: http://www.tec.govt.nz/Learners-Organisations/Learners/performance-in-tertiary-education/performance-by-type-of-tertiary-provider/about-itps/

It is clear that performance differs by discipline[50] and that the performance of Māori students does not necessarily mirror that of Pasifika students. There may well be analogous differences within Pasifika peoples, but the data is not segmented to reveal these.

Māori students

Programme retention rates for Māori students increased from 48 per cent to 52 per cent (i.e. by 4 per cent) between 2009 and 2010, while over the same period there was a 7 per cent decrease in programme completions (from 46 per cent to 39 per cent) by Māori students. In some areas there have been increases, e.g. a 7 per cent increase in Māori success in sport programmes and a 31 per cent increase in carpentry programmes.

Enhancement of the success, well-being, and identity of Māori students at Unitec is evidenced from the perspective of students who shared their high level of appreciation for Maia, Te Noho Kotatahitanga, Pukenga, and Whai Ake. It is also evidenced by increasing Māori course retention and successful course completions, and the perceived strength of Unitec's commitment. This is also evidenced by the increasing responsiveness to, and incorporation of, Mātauranga Māori into programmes across Unitec and the appreciation of the valuable sense of place of Te Noho Kotahitanga, which contribute to the oranga of both Māori and non-Māori students.

Progress is being made towards the development of key measures to meaningfully demonstrate the achievement of Māori students, and the value of Maia, Pukenga, Te Noho Kotaitanga, and Whai Ake to Unitec students, staff, and stakeholders, the directions for which are clearly articulated in Unitec's Māori Success Strategy.[51] Currently, these, and organisational indicators, demonstrate an understanding of the principles of self-assessment and, when further developed, will provide a strong analytical foundation to capture the success of Māori students and the cultural enrichment of all.

Pasifika students

Over 2009 and 2010, there was an increase of 8 per cent in enrolments by Pasifika students at Unitec[52]. The achievement of Pasifika students still lags behind non-Pasifika students, but the lag in achievement is not the same for all programmes (Figure 7). Indeed, there are some programmes where Pasifika achievement exceeds non-Pasifika achievement, and such programmes may provide exemplars of practice that encourage programme retention and course completion.

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[50] In Figure 7, the course codes are: PGCEL, Postgraduate Certificate in Educational Leadership and Management; PGDSM, Postgraduate Diploma in Educational Leadership and Management; MEDM, Master of Educational Leadership and Management; BAS, Bachelor of Architectural Studies; MARCP, Master of Architecture (Professional); DENCV, Diploma of Engineering (Civil); BENGT, Bachelor of Engineering (Civil); BETMG, Bachelor of Engineering Technology; BHSMI, Bachelor Health. Sciences (Medical Imaging); CCINT, Certificate in Information Technology; CAME, Certificate in Automotive and Mechanical Engineering; CENG, Certificate in English; CFSW2, Certificate in Foundation Studies; CPFG, Unitec National Certificate in Plumbing and Gasfitting; NCPLU, National Certificate in Plumbing.
[51] *Unitec's Māori Success Strategy* (May 2011).
[52] Unitec Annual Report (2010), p. 9.

It is clear that the support provided to learners through the Centre for Pacific Development and Support[53] and the work and support being provided within some of Unitec's departments (and guided by the central framework of Na Kuita) is positively impacting on the learning experiences and achievement of Pasifika learners, and its value is well recognised by departments benefiting from this capability-building approach. That this is also valued by external stakeholders is evidenced by ongoing requests for the expertise of the Pacific Centre. However, the nature of resourcing means that the presence and extent of reach of the Pacific Centre is limited and not able to have as positive an impact as is seen for Māori students.

Self-assessment is predominantly used to identify key areas where the support of the Pacific Centre is best utilised. To this extent, staff work together with departments and other Unitec support services to identify areas of lower Pasifika student achievement and to plan appropriate responses. The Na Kuita model has been developed on the basis of what works well for Pasifika students; however, given the impact of resourcing, self-assessment appears preoccupied with identifying areas that require strengthening, rather than ongoing work to identify what is strong. The Pacific Centre is developing its self-assessment capability, including identifying how best to capture information and data that will meaningfully demonstrate progress to desired outcomes for Pasifika students.

2.12 Focus area: Achievement and support of international students

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

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

Programme retention and completion data (94 per cent and 70 per cent respectively) indicate strong achievement by international students. In many programmes they achieve as well as domestic, although their completion rate is lower than for Unitec students overall (77 per cent). This academic achievement of international students is supported by an International Office which works with departments to enhance educational achievement outcomes. The International Office also provides information and advice about support services, assesses individual needs, responds to concerns, and monitors and assists with accommodation matters. Regular activities are facilitated to engage international students in New Zealand life and to celebrate cultural events. Staff attend relevant cultural workshops to better understand the needs of students from different countries, and undertake regular visits to, and training with, international agents to ensure that accurate information is available to students. Unitec annually reviews and reports on its obligations under the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.

The International Office undertakes ongoing self-assessment activities to understand and support the enhancement of international student achievement. This includes identifying programmes where successful completions are lower and, together with programme management and other support services, potential reasons for this, monitoring first

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[53] See *Unitec Pacific Strategy 2010-2015* (2010), pp. 9-10.

assessment outcomes for newly enrolled international students, and undertaking real-time surveys to assess service satisfaction. These activities have resulted in worthwhile changes leading to improved outcomes for international students (e.g. improvements to accommodation provision).

Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those implied or expressed within the report.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of rules for programme approval and accreditation made under the Education Act 1989. The Course Approval and Accreditation Criteria that were made under the former section 253 of the Act are deemed (by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011) to be rules for programme approval and accreditation made under the new section 253 of the Act. Rules are also being made for training schemes, which will include requirements for self assessment and external evaluation and review.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA Board. 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).

Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction//

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