



NEW ZEALAND **QUALIFICATIONS** AUTHORITY
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

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Report of External Evaluation and Review

Unitec Institute of Technology
Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 29 November 2016

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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:	Unitec Institute of Technology (Unitec)
Location:	139 Carrington Road, Mt Albert, Auckland
Type:	Institute of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) www.unitec.ac.nz
First registered	1976
Number of students:	In 2015, around 19,390 students were enrolled at Unitec: ¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Domestic students: 11,360 (6,905 EFTS (equivalent full-time students)) SAC (Student Achievement Component) funded; 147 (89 EFTS) Youth Guarantee-funded (data supplied by the Tertiary Education Commission(TEC))• International students: 3,659 (approximately 19 per cent of enrolments). Source nations: predominantly India, China and the Middle East – in particular Saudi Arabia, along with multiple other sources (source: Unitec)
Student population character:	Female 48 per cent; male 52 per cent Under 19 years, 18 per cent; under 25 years, 49 per cent Pasifika 13 per cent; Māori 11 per cent Since 2012, the domestic student demographic has broadly been: European 51 per cent, Asian 26 per cent, Pasifika 17 per cent, Māori 11 per cent and Other 11 per cent.

¹ International student numbers quoted are as at 14 December 2015.

Number of staff: 875 full-time, and 286 part-time, excluding a small proportion of casual staff at the time of this external evaluation and review (EER).

Sites: Mt. Albert Campus, Waitakere Campus (Henderson), and Albany Campus (Albany)

Programmes offered: During 2015, Unitec offered 149 programmes comprising 1,634 active courses. These range from non-formal, foundation and certificate programmes to postgraduate degrees and doctoral programmes.

Unitec’s portfolio mix is primarily aligned to meet the qualification requirements for advanced vocational and applied or para-professional occupations. It has a significant balance of enrolments at levels 4-7 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. Table 1 compares Unitec with university and ITP (institute of technology/polytechnic) mix of provision. The largest proportion of students are studying at level 4 or above. In comparison with other ITPs, Unitec has the largest proportion of degree-level graduates and the majority of Master’s graduates. It is also unique in offering a PhD in Computing and a PhD in Education.²

Table 1 : Unitec’s Mix of Provision (MOP) by broad occupation class and relative to other TEOs

Occupation Skill Level	Entry Level Qualification	Uni MoP	Unitec MoP	ITP MoP
High Skilled (L8-L10) Eg Business, Legal, Science, Engineering, Clinicians, Managerial Professionals	PhD			
	Masters Hons, PG Dip			
Skilled (L4-7) Associate/Para-Professionals Technologists, Technicians, Trades, Crafts	Degree			
	Diploma			
	L5 Diploma			
	L4			
Semi-Skilled/Elementary	L3			
	L1-2			

² Sources: Unitec Investment Plan 2015-2016; Unitec Annual Report 2014.

Distinctive characteristics:

Unitec is the largest ITP in New Zealand, and the largest non-university tertiary education organisation in the Auckland region. Unitec's primary focus is on the professional, advanced trades and technology sectors relating to meeting industry skill needs. Across the ITP sector, Unitec is the largest supplier of architecture, construction and computing skills graduates. It also produces a significant proportion of allied health, business, creative sector, and applied science graduates.

As noted above, Unitec enrolls a high number of students from government priority groups (under-25s, Pasifika students, Māori students) as well as international students. Overall, there has been a gradual decline in domestic enrolments since the previous EER: 13,072 (2012); 12,019 (2013); 11,432 (2014); 11,821 (2015). Unitec ascribes this decline to the improving economy and employment opportunities for prospective students. The decline has been somewhat offset by growth in international student enrolments.

Financially, Unitec has achieved a sequence of net operating surpluses since the previous EER: 2.3 per cent (2012), 0.9 per cent (2013), 0.9 per cent (2014) and 1.1 per cent (2015). 'Unitec Institute of Technology performed well both educationally and financially in 2014', according to the most recently published Tertiary Education Performance Report (the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)). Unitec has the second-largest total asset base among ITPs, and a high proportion of this value relates to the value of the land on which the expansive Mt Albert Campus is located (sources: the TEC; Unitec).

There was a drop in overall government funding for the ITP sector over 2012-2013, mainly as a result of changes to levels 1 and 2 foundation learning funding processes. The most recent TEC performance report of Unitec is located at <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Documents/Publications/The-Tertiary-Education-Performance-Report-2014.pdf>

As a function of delivery at degree and postgraduate levels, Unitec has numerous research-active teaching staff. Unitec ranked first among ITPs in the 2013 Performance Based Research Funding assessment round.

Context relevant to this EER:

As a result of its ongoing review and strategic planning process, Unitec is undertaking a programme of institution-

wide change, referred to as 'the Unitec transformation'. Their analysis is as follows:

'Unitec has a business model, learning model, technology and staffing structure designed to be successful in an environment that existed in the past and is challenged to afford the investments that the looming future requires [specifically referencing wide-ranging international and local economic disruption and change, led by technological innovation]. All of these [challenges], whilst posing a threat to Unitec, will allow new industry leaders with broader and more compelling business models to emerge. Unitec intends to be one of these industry leaders.' (Source: Unitec Investment Plan 2015-16)

'Unitec aspires to be a world leader in contemporary, applied learning and an agent of positive economic and social change'. (Source: Unitec Strategy 2015)

In summary, Unitec is undergoing significant, deep change which touches on campus property and facilities; staffing models and approaches to teaching; service delivery to students; and linkages between programmes, industry and labour force needs. Structural changes to the service delivery of enrolments and guidance for students were occurring during this latest EER.

Previous quality assurance history:

At the previous EER of Unitec in 2011 (reported March 2012), NZQA was Highly Confident in the ITP's educational performance and Confident in its capability in self-assessment.

Unitec has professional affiliations with the following entities, and is in some cases subject to their quality assurance mechanisms: Nursing Council of New Zealand; Medical Radiation Technologists Board; Social Workers Registration Board; Education Council; Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors; Pasifika Association of Quantity Surveying on behalf of the New Zealand Institute of Quantity Surveyors; New Zealand Institute of Building; Institution of Professional Engineers New Zealand; New Zealand Institute of Architects; New Zealand Institute of Landscape Architects; Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand; New Zealand Institute of Management.

Unitec participated in the inaugural consistency reviews for the New Zealand Certificates in English Language (Levels 2, 3 and 4). In each case the outcome was 'sufficient evidence'

of graduate consistency which is currently the highest rating available.

Unitec has demonstrated variable to poor performance within NZQA external moderation systems for assessment against unit standards (in particular Communication Skills levels 4-6 and Computing levels 1-4) and for papers within the New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 6) since the previous EER. Performance has been such that improvement plans have been required by NZQA for both moderation systems for the period 2012-2015. On 25 May 2016, NZQA imposed a condition on Unitec's consent to assess Communications Skills levels 4-6 and Computing levels 1-4.

External monitoring by NZQA or other quality assurance or funding bodies revealed concerns with aspects of the quality of delivery of the Plumbing and Gasfitting (Level 4) programme, and the Master of Osteopathy (see also Findings 1.3).

Industry training organisation (ITO) moderation systems with which Unitec has engaged since 2012 have included: New Zealand ITO, Primary ITO, InfraTrain, Building and Construction ITO, CONNEXIS, and Skills ITO. Performance by Unitec in 2015 showed assessments for 10 standards were accepted as at the national standard, with two not meeting the standard.

The TEC conducted a scheduled audit of Unitec in 2015, and concluded with six requirements and recommendations. Updates on Unitec meeting these is noted in brackets:

- Confirm that all Collaborative Arrangements including sub-contracts are regularly updated and are subject to ongoing monitoring. (Completed in early 2016. A central system and process is in place to monitor sub-contracts and provide updates where necessary.)
- Confirm that all programmes and qualifications being provided were NZQA-approved, and as programme or course modification was required Type 1 or Type 2 change procedures have been followed. (Completed late 2015. All programmes and qualifications were confirmed to be NZQA-approved. No errors in Type changes were found.)
- A timeframe needs to be made to ensure the back-up person to the Business Analyst-Decision Support position

is trained as soon as possible. (Completed late 2015 with ongoing training.)

- The recommendations listed in the Unitec strategic plan need to be addressed and implemented as soon as possible. (Completed late 2015.)
- To ensure the monitoring of student progress and achievement is being managed efficiently staff need to provide accurate data at programme level for entering into the student management system. A series of controls need to be developed to ensure programme data is being reported systematically and then verified by Faculty managers.
- All programme and Faculty monitoring systems throughout Unitec need to be reviewed to ensure systems are robust and relevant controls are producing effective and accurate data for the student management system.

(These two final points were based on best-practice recommendations and not adverse findings. The work could not commence until the new leadership structure and student services provision was in place. A pan-institute working group has now been established, under the guidance of a project manager. The review and commencement of any recommendations will be complete by December 2016 and reported to the TEC.)

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The seven focus areas (and their associated sample programmes) were selected for evaluation in consultation with Unitec. They reflect the most significant areas of strategy, public investment and associated self-assessment. They also include mandatory focus areas. The programmes sampled range from certificates to a doctoral programme. They cover all faculties and numerous vocational areas, as well as large programmes, niche programmes, subcontracts and programmes approved since the 2012 EER. This sample size significantly exceeds 6,000 enrolled students and 4,000 EFTS based on 2015 enrolments.

Performance of these programmes, according to Unitec's own self-assessment activities and TEC educational performance indicator reporting, has varied on a continuum of performance. Some have performed more strongly than others according to Unitec's ongoing analysis.

The scope provided a broad overview of the ITP, congruent with its scale. It allowed for in-depth evaluative investigation of academic processes, learner experience and achievement, and outcomes across diverse programmes.

Final Report

Focus areas and rationale for selection (see Appendix for sample programme titles and 2015 student numbers)		
1.	Governance, management and strategy	This focus area is mandatory in all EERs because of its importance for the quality of the educational experience for students, the employment experience of staff, and the stewardship of publicly owned funds and resources.
2.	Curriculum Renewal (Sample programme areas: Sport, Construction, Computing, Electrical: certificate to Doctorate)	Over recent years, Unitec has been implementing an institution-wide curriculum renewal project (the Living Curriculum) which is intended to radically reshape programme design and teaching and learning. It proposes more intentional use of learning technologies, different forms of classroom delivery, and closer reflection of industry in terms of both course content and graduate skill sets. It has direct implications in terms of both educational inputs and desirable outcomes. This project has been researched, piloted and monitored. Programmes are at various points on a continuum of development according to documented self-assessment, and a selection was reviewed more closely by the EER team.
3.	Integration with Industry (Sample programme areas: Computing, Natural Sciences, Accounting, Finance, Health, Performing Arts – certificate to Doctorate)	This focus area, although related to Focus Area 2.2, reflects the strategic intent of Unitec to closely match the skill requirements of the Auckland region in particular, and to further develop ongoing and in-depth educational partnerships with industry. It was explored directly through a sample of programmes.
4.	Partnerships and Collaboration (Sample programme areas: Accounting, Māori and Pasifika Trades Training, Digital and Collaborative, Retail)	Unitec has strategic relationships with a diverse range of partners in New Zealand and off-shore. This focus area explores the extent to which these relationships add value and contribute to both programme inputs and to outcomes for students and other stakeholders. It was explored directly through a sample of programmes.

5.	<p>Research and Enterprise</p> <p>(Sample programme areas: Sport, Construction, Computing, Applied Science – diploma to Doctorate)</p>	<p>Unitec delivers degree and postgraduate programmes that as a condition of approval require research-active teaching staff. This focus area explores the links between research, teaching and the outcomes for students and other stakeholders. It was explored directly through a sample of programmes.</p>
6.	<p>Māori and Pasifika learner achievement and support</p> <p>(Sample programme areas: Sport, Bachelor of Computing, Natural Sciences, New Zealand Diploma in Business, Performing and Screen Arts, Applied Science)</p>	<p>A significant proportion of students enrolled are Māori and/or Pasifika, and performance in this area is now more directly reported in EER reports. This is a mandatory focus area in an EER of this scale. It was measured at the institutional level and further explored through a sample of programmes and targeted interviews with staff having direct responsibility for supporting Māori and Pasifika learner achievement.</p>
7.	<p>International student achievement and support</p> <p>(Sample programme areas: Construction, Bachelor of Computing, Accounting/Finance)</p>	<p>This is a mandatory focus area in an EER of this scale: Unitec enrolled over 3,000 international students in 2015. This focus area was measured at the institutional level and further explored through a sample of programmes and targeted interviews with staff who have direct responsibility for supporting international students, as well as with students and graduates.</p>

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Prior to the on-site visit, a series of preliminary meetings were held with Unitec senior staff. Staff agreed with the approach to this evaluation – in particular the enhanced focus on 'enquiry through the ITP's own self-assessment findings' – and also agreed on the selected focus areas and the agenda. Unitec was asked to identify an authentic range of representative programmes for each focus area. The

selection was undertaken accordingly, and the reviewers accepted most of the suggestions made.

Unitec provided access to a SharePoint repository of important self-assessment documentation, including examples of planning, quality assurance processes, and claimed improvements. The evaluators also familiarised themselves with recent TEC performance information and other NZQA reports.

An initial meeting was held with the Unitec Council during their scheduled meeting of 25 January 2016. Six councillors and four NZQA representatives attended. Following a preliminary meeting in Wellington, a team of six conducted the on-site enquiry over five days at the Mt Albert Campus (16-18 and 21-22 March 2016). Two of these evaluators conducted the evaluation at the Waitakere campus on Friday 18 March. An additional evidence-gathering visit occurred on Thursday 7 April in relation to investigating programme delivery against the current NZQA approvals. The evaluation team held a meeting to collate their findings on 11 April, and verbal feedback was provided to Unitec representatives following that process.

During the on-site phase, interviews were held with: Council members, including the chair and deputy chair; the chief executive and executive leadership team and other senior staff; heads of departments and lecturers from the focus area programmes; student support staff; and Fono Fafautua and Rūnanga representatives also knowledgeable about Unitec programmes and graduates. Groups of students and graduates from most of the focus area programmes were interviewed. Graduates and some external stakeholder representatives, including employers, with a knowledge of programmes were also interviewed. During these interviews, a range of supporting documentation was requested and sighted to confirm evidence gathered during the interviews.

Educational performance data appearing in this report is predominantly from two sources: TEC tables (2012-15) for overall educational performance in tertiary education organisations, and data provided by Unitec, including that appearing in annual programme reports (2014) supplied prior to the EER. In some cases, additional or supplementary course cohort data was sampled or provided during the evaluative interviews with staff.

This evaluation took place in the midst of wide-ranging change processes. Staff involved with this evaluation engaged constructively with the evaluation team at an early part of the semester and under challenging personal circumstances for some. The evaluation team are grateful to them – and also to students, graduates and external stakeholders – for their co-operation and assistance.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Unitec Institute of Technology**.

- Unitec is responding proactively to major changes in their operating context, by means of 'the Unitec transformation'. This project, which will continue for some years, encompasses the site and facilities, the organisational model, student support, and teaching and learning viewpoints. It is informed by a rigorous environmental scan of the 'future of education' in a globally connected world, and high-quality analyses of the current campus layout, facilities, staffing model and overall approach to education.
- The Unitec Council membership reflects a good mix of skills particularly important to, for example, managing the financial and legal requirements of the change project. Council members also have experience in supporting change and risk management, also highly relevant to the ITP's transformation.
- Most students who enrol at Unitec pass their courses, and an increasing proportion complete their qualification and graduate. Unitec is a consistent performer according to TEC annual reporting since 2011.
- Qualification completion rates have improved since the previous EER, having increased from 64 per cent in 2012 to 72 per cent in 2015. This is across the government-funded students which covers much of the educational provision. Qualification completion rates still need to improve across most groups of students.
- Achievement by Pasifika and Māori students, who together make up over 20 per cent of enrolments, was rated as only adequate in this EER. While some programmes perform very well, and particular individuals have achieved great success, in relation to these priority groups the overall evidence does not warrant a higher rating. The effectiveness of current strategies are either inconsistent or not yet confirmed by good evidence of improvements in outcomes.
- Annual graduate surveys indicate a consistent pattern of progression to employment at strong rates (a 65 per cent rate in 2012, rising to 71 per cent in 2015).
- Underlying processes for ensuring the currency of educational delivery are sound. Content is updated, teaching is informed by research and professional development, and many students experience some engagement with industry. These factors, along with the range of facilities, equipment and library resources made available to the students, all contribute to a picture of students acquiring useful skills and knowledge which they can apply in the workforce.

- The programme portfolio at Unitec is broad in scope and is relevant – to the regional economy in particular. Organisational change at Unitec to strengthen this alignment is timely and necessary, as has been identified by the ITP’s own review processes.
- Significant investment in reshaping the curriculum to better support student learning across all programmes is in progress. This links to strategic goals, particularly the Living Curriculum initiative³ and the new learning spaces.⁴ Investment in building and evaluatively trialling and developing new approaches to learning and teaching are intended to place Unitec at the cutting edge of tertiary education. The aspirations for a campus rebuild are impressive, are in full swing, and are informed by the learning gained through these trials.
- The strategies in progress in 2011 in relation to technology-enabled learning and improving the related staff capability, have been well implemented.
- The quality of integration with industry by programmes (see focus area definition above) is variable but improving. This too is a strategic goal, and a focus area in this EER. Natural sciences, nursing and performing arts programmes, for example, all have strong connections with industry, which supports student learning and graduate outcomes.
- Unitec demonstrates strong capability and effort in developing new, credible Partnerships and Collaborations (see Focus Area 2.4). The programmes considered under this focus area indicate high capability. Along with Research and Enterprise (Focus Area 2.5), which also has a collaborative theme, Partnerships and Collaborations was the highest rating focus area.
- There is a clear link between Unitec’s research strategy, staff research activities and relevance of research to teaching programmes.
- International students enjoy their studies, find their courses challenging, and achieve well at Unitec. Evidence gathered during this evaluation indicates that their needs are well met, more generally though self-assessment is inconsistent in relation to this group. Qualification completion rates need to improve for this group of students.
- NZQA accepts that Unitec is actively working to strengthen all areas of their performance, including gaps noted under TEO in Context. Unitec has performed well since the last EER. There are areas of exemplary performance and some weaker areas. The ITP is now advancing along a pathway of significant change, and the impacts and anticipated improvements should be evident at the next EER in four years’ time.

³ http://www.unitec.ac.nz/ahimura/pages/living_curriculum.php

⁴ New spaces will allow for flexible, collaborative and technology-enabled education.

Based on all these key factors, NZQA can express confidence in the educational performance of Unitec.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

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

The comprehensive set of documents relating to strategy, performance and self-review provided by Unitec were actively used during this evaluation. These provided many examples of good self-assessment.

Close monitoring and investigation of educational performance (in the widest sense) is clearly evident by programme committees, faculty academic committees, the academic board and the Council. Additional capability and staffing in relation to projects, and in particular monitoring the various change projects, was also evident and important in relation to establishing confidence in ongoing self-assessment capability.

Unitec's central tools and methods for self-assessment are embedded and in use on an ongoing basis. Changes to the centrally directed annual programme review approach are welcomed by academic staff and are reportedly in progress. The first reporting cycle for all programmes occurred in April 2016. The evaluators agreed that a change in methodology was warranted here; there was a certain routineness in the existing system. There was understandable variability in the 'self-critical' aspects of evaluation, although the reviews were useful for information capture and monitoring. It was not evident that they had a strong correlation with driving improvement or contributing to speedy rectification of poorly performing areas.

Monitoring and review was also observed through the focus areas, and is occurring across library, the Maia Māori Centre and Pasifika activity centres. Various high-level reviews are occurring, and elements of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students have been considered since the previous EER. However, the review process seems somewhat fragmented in relation to code requirements; and out of scale with the high number of internationals at Unitec and the risks involved in this area.

While the alignment and interconnectedness of multiple and overlapping strategic initiatives in Curriculum Renewal (Focus Area 2.2) and Māori and Pasifika Learner Achievement and Support (Focus Area 2.6) were well understood at management level, this was not consistently reflected across sample programmes. In some important policy areas – integrating programmes with industry, for example – the evaluation confirmed Unitec's own self-assessment that performance and progress is variable in what is a challenging aspect of programme development.

Some specific issues and/or identified weaknesses in performance had been noted by those closely monitoring programme performance externally, as indicated under TEO in Context. Overall, these affect a relatively small proportion of total

enrolments. Unitec has worked constructively with stakeholders and students to mitigate the performance aspects. These issues do, however, underscore some weaknesses in using self-assessment findings as a management tool and/or a means of resolving issues and making improvements within a reasonable timeframe.

Overall, there are active processes occurring across Unitec designed to plan, set policy or guide investment decisions; review progress and initiate change; catalyse reflection and instigate improvements. Evidence reflected both within Unitec's own reporting or otherwise observed as part of the evaluation process indicated that many worthwhile improvements have occurred across the organisation since the previous EER, and these are elaborated in this report.

NZQA can express confidence in Unitec's capability in self-assessment.

Findings⁵

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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**.

Most students who enrol at Unitec complete their courses, and an increasing proportion complete their qualification and go on to graduate, according to TEC published data (Table 2).

EPI by Year	2012	2013	2014	2015 (*International students)	2015 Māori students	2015 Pasifika students	2015 Students under 25
Course completion	79%	82%	82%	81% (87%)	75%	72%	78%
ITP sector median	79%	80%	80%	80%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Qualification completion	64%	65%	71%	72% (66%)	63%	56%	64%
ITP sector median	69%	74%	72%	72%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Progression	41%	38%	34%	37% (73%)	43%	52%	49%
ITP sector median	38%	37%	37%	37%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Retention	69%	72%	73%	74% (76%)	67%	72%	75%
ITP sector median	66%	68%	69%	69%	n/a	n/a	n/a

Sources: TEC The Performance of Tertiary Education Organisations tables (2012-2014), and TEC supplied data for 2015; data for international students as supplied by Unitec.

Priority group performance is weaker than that of other groups, and improvements there are modest since the previous EER (Table 4). The large number of international students achieve well, as discussed under Focus Area 2.7. Unitec

⁵ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

compares reasonably well using the wider ITP sector median as a comparator, which Unitec has used as a benchmark in their self-assessment. Unitec provided data comparing their course completion rates for programmes at levels 4-7 with the other 'Metro group' ITPs from 2012-2015, and this also indicates steadily improving performance. Unitec is a consistent performer year on year and shows overall improvement in the key course and qualification completion measures since the previous EER.

Within focus area programmes, there was strong evidence of achievement of relevant skills and knowledge. Generally speaking, course delivery reflects good programme planning and resourcing, effective teaching practices, and overall institutional support and resourcing. These factors help students to achieve their educational goals. Recent (and historical) graduate survey feedback indicates that Unitec programmes prepare students for the world of work. This is perhaps the most important strategic intent of the ITP, and is central to the current change initiatives and the philosophy underpinning them. Unitec's strategies relating to research, integration with industry by programme, and collaborating with other organisations enhance the quality of learner achievement.

Qualification completion rates are lower than course completions (Tables 2, 3 and 4). It is not entirely clear why this is the case, with internal comment stating 'there is a significant lag in registering a completed qualification'⁶ echoing TEC Audit findings⁷ on timeliness of results reporting. It is noted that the required contingency and back-up for key central Business Analyst-Decision Support role has occurred. Considerable attention had been made to improving data quality and reporting timeliness overall. The low 2015 international student interim qualification achievement rate also seems to reflect reporting issues. Unitec qualification completion rates in trades programmes are reportedly undermined by strong employment demand for tradespeople in Auckland, and some students leave before completing.

The academic board led and monitored an in-depth investigation of qualification completion rates from late 2013. The board reports that 'subsequent stronger monitoring of resulting, and changes in processes led to improvement as evidenced in upwards movement in [the] ITP qualification completions metric'. Unitec moved from seventeenth place among ITPs in 2013 to eleventh in 2014 for qualification completions, and there is evident improvement across all levels of study since the previous EER (Table 3). From very uneven performance in 2012, there has been a positive trend, and self-assessment has led to improvement in the outcomes now being recorded.

⁶ 2014 Education Performance Indicators report document (Unitec).

⁷ As noted under the TEC Audit (2015) requirements and recommendations listed above – TEO in Context section.

Table 3. Qualification completion rate by level of study; 2012-2015 (SAC-funded) (% proportion of enrolments shown in brackets; international students are excluded)**

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Level 1-2	35% (6%)*	60% (3%)	60% (3%)	63% (2%)
Level 3-4	58% (29%)	61% (32%)	69% (30%)	62% (29%)
Level 5-6	60% (18%)	51% (16%)	56% (14%)	55% (15%)
Level 7-8	75% (44%)	73% (46%)	76% (50%)	84% (53%)
Level 9-10	48% (3%)	73% (3%)	57% (3%)	37% (2%)

Sources: TEC The Performance of Tertiary Education Organisations tables (2012-2014) and Unitec-supplied data for 2015

Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) priority groups – students under 25, Pasifika and Māori

Course and qualification completion rates for TES priority groups are generally lower with that of non-priority group students, but have improved for all groups since 2012 (Table 4).

Table 4. Trends in course (and qualification) completion rates – priority groups 2012-2015 (SAC-funded)

Group	2012	2013	2014	2015
Students under 25	76% (55%)	79% (57%)	80% (63%)	78% (62%)
Pasifika students	68% (49%)	72% (47%)	74% (56%)	72% (56%)
Māori students	73% (54%)	76% (56%)	75% (58%)	75% (62%)
*Other students	83% (68%)	85% (70%)	85% (75%)	84% (73%)

*All other students not indicating Māori and/or Pasifika ethnicity upon enrolment.

Sources: TEC The Performance of Tertiary Education Organisations tables (2012-2014) and TEC supplied data for 2015

Pasifika course completion rates have improved from 68 per cent to 75 per cent in 2014, but their qualification completion rates are still below both their Unitec peers and ITP sector medians. Māori students' achievement – using educational performance data as a measure in this context – is, at best, consistent or possibly stationary given that participation rates are reasonably consistent (see also Focus Area 2.6).

As a group, students under 25 years of age, who proportionally represent over half of Unitec's enrolments, have steadily improved their course and qualification achievement rates since 2012. Final results for 2015 are required to establish whether that trend has continued. An important Tertiary Education Strategy-related key performance indicator⁸ monitored by Unitec shows that an increasing number of young people not in employment education or training (NEETs) are enrolling in Unitec: 1,038 in 2014, with a plan to increase that to over 1,500 by 2019. Unitec's

⁸ Priority 2: Getting at-risk young people into a career.

'refreshed' secondary school course alignment work and the relaunched Māori and Pasifika Trades Training project are contributing to this increase in participation. This also connects to the Auckland Council's 'Auckland Plan' strategy.⁹ No specific data was noted in Unitec's self-assessment regarding how this particular sub-group of enrolled students (NEETs) progress, and there is an opportunity for deeper analysis by Unitec.

For the small proportion of Youth Guarantee-funded provision (147 students¹⁰ in 2015) course completion rates have improved: 70 per cent in 2013, 81 per cent in 2014, and 64 per cent in 2015. Completion of qualifications has risen from 49 per cent in 2013 to 76 per cent in 2014, but dropped to 50 per cent in 2015. In 2014, Unitec ranked among the top performers for Youth Guarantee students in terms of course and qualification completions and was well above all other ITPs in student progression to higher levels of study. Not discounting some variability, these are excellent results overall, with many Youth Guarantee students achieving a qualification at level 3.

Approaches to ensuring the validity of assessment and the associated overall quality assurance of results processes seem generally sound across programmes sampled. They provide assurance of the validity and reliability of achievement data. Information was presented about how teaching staff engage in internal moderation, use anti-plagiarism software to vet assessments, and manage different cultural expectations and assumptions about assessment. Some cases of plagiarism are detected and, according to a sample of records provided, appropriate sanctions are applied. Nevertheless, weaknesses in assessment practices identified by NZQA external moderation reduce confidence in the validity of student results in those programme areas (see Findings 1.3).

Educational achievement monitoring and analysis of cohort, programme and learner groups (for example international students and priority groups) does occur at Unitec. Within departments – at programme delivery level – the annual reporting process has been the key vehicle for local analysis of programme performance. The Council is provided with summary information through the academic board. This includes ratings and ranks performance of programmes over time, as well as performance against a list of key targets which are set and tracked over time. Management believes that this had grown less effective as an approach. For their part, the evaluators found it somewhat challenging from a process point of view that no 2015 annual programme review material was available at the point in the

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<http://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/EN/planspoliciesprojects/plansstrategies/Councilstrategies/Documents/mayorsyouthemploymenttractionplan.pdf>

¹⁰ 2015 89 EFTS

process change cycle in which the EER occurred.¹¹ Specifically requested sample programme data supplied by Unitec before the on-site visit did mitigate this, so far as key evaluation question 1 is concerned.

Overall, the evaluators believe that a step-change in programme reporting and the methodology of analysing and summarising the findings¹² is definitely required. The historical process was in some respects unwieldy and certainly not delivering a good return in terms of clearly evidenced improvements in relation to the staff time and effort involved. In addition, timeliness and accuracy of data for analysis had been – according to academic staff – inconsistent, and efforts to strengthen centralised data reporting were widely welcomed.

1.2 What are the value of the outcomes for learners and other stakeholders?

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**.

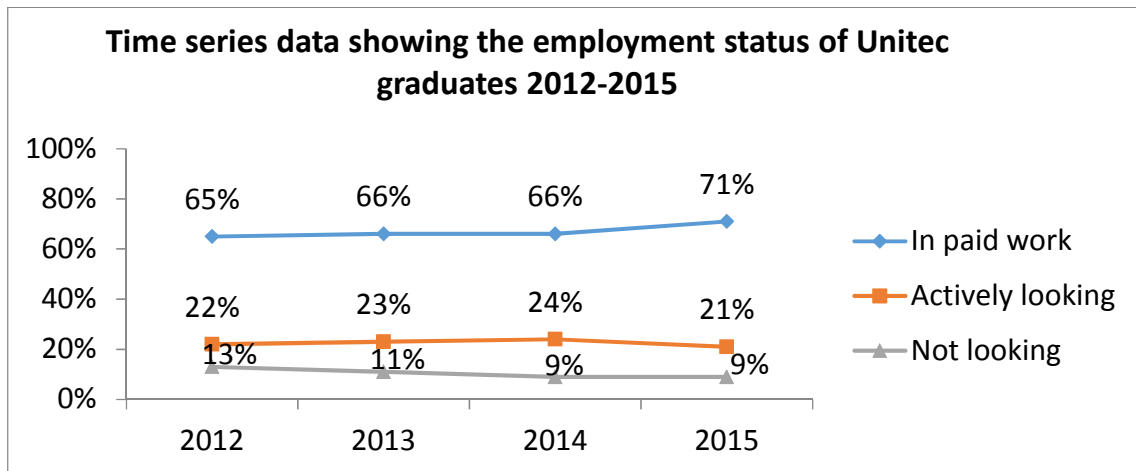
Unitec's annual report for 2014 states that 75 per cent of employed graduates found employment in jobs related to their areas of study. Although reflecting a self-reporting sample of total graduates¹³, the underlying data is reliable and well analysed. When read in conjunction with year-on-year survey findings, this shows a consistent pattern of strong and relevant employment outcomes over time (see Table below). The findings may be subject to the most common distortions of this type of survey, in particular the possibility that those reporting may have had a more positive experience or outcome.¹⁴ That aside, this survey is used to determine useful outcomes information which is disseminated across Unitec and also made available to the public. It also offers an opportunity to identify trends over time. Most students seem to have a clear vocational goal when enrolling at Unitec, and this information provides solid evidence that many achieve their goal.

¹¹ The evaluators noted that the transition to the new system had 'disrupted' the annual cycle and it was unlikely that evaluations of the 2015 academic year would occur as part of the ongoing evaluation throughout 2016.

¹² The PER summary 'matrix'.

¹³ Methodology: an online survey conducted with 2014 September and 2015 April graduates. Of the total 3,041 graduates, 1,175 completed the 2015 survey. A response rate of 39 per cent. Results were weighted by age and gender to match the demographic profile of graduates (source: Unitec).

¹⁴ For example: Herzog, S. & Bowman, N. (editors). (2011). *Validity and Limitations of College Student Self-Report Data: New Directions for Institutional Research*. John Wiley & Sons; Frawley, D. & Harvey, V. (2015) *Graduate Surveys. Review of International Practice*. Higher Education Authority – Ireland (chapter 5).

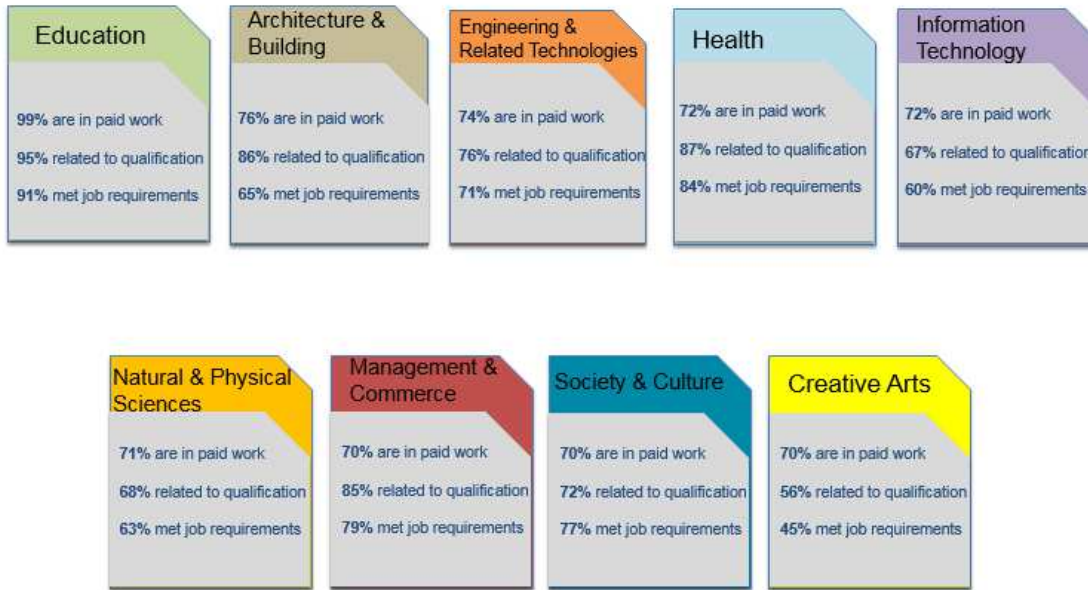


(Source: 2015 Graduate Destination Reporting, Unitec Insights and Planning Team)

Important findings from the annual graduate surveys include:

- The 2015 survey indicated a 5 per cent increase in graduate employment in comparison with the preceding year's survey. Unitec is realistic that employment uptake will be affected by economic cycles, but these are very good outcomes.
- Sixty-eight per cent of those in paid work felt that their qualification allowed them to meet the requirements of their main job 'extremely or very well'. This echoes the 2014 positive finding.
- Of those responding 'not yet in paid work', 41 per cent are enrolled in further study, and the majority of these are enrolled at Unitec. A good proportion of graduates also pathway to one or other of the universities in Auckland or elsewhere.
- Eighty-seven per cent of the respondents indicated the programme they graduated from met their learning needs; 82 per cent felt well supported by the programme; 88 per cent thought the teaching in the programme was effective. These are very positive findings.
- Pathways and patterns of transition from specific qualifications into the workforce are derived from the survey data and are presented graphically.

How are they doing in the real world?



In paid work = 'I am in paid work or have recently accepted an offer of paid work' & 'I am self-employed'
 Q. How related is your main job to your Unitec qualification? Those who selected 'highly related' and 'moderately related'
 Q. How well does Unitec qualification enable you to meet the requirements of your main job? Those who selected 'extremely well' and 'very well'

(Source: 2015 Graduate Destination Reporting, Unitec Insights and Planning Team¹⁵)

The graduate survey also elicits a significant amount of qualitative comment from graduates. While much of this comment is highly positive, some comment is also quite negative and suggests required improvements in consistency around the important themes of 'course content and structures' and 'teaching and learning'. The evaluators believe that more can be done with this rich, critical data, and the linkage to use of the data was not strongly evidenced across departments. Like numerous other Unitec surveys, the graduate survey is used to derive a Net Promoter Score.¹⁶ The 2014 graduates provided a score of 22, which improved by 4 points in 2015.

The recently commissioned employer survey indicates employer satisfaction with Unitec programmes, with employers rating them highly in each of four areas. Well over 80 per cent of employers gave 'somewhat good' or 'very good' ratings for each area of: provision of practical skills (83 per cent), technical skills (85 per cent), people skills (88 per cent), and technology skills (91 per cent). These are very positive indicators.

¹⁵ Within the survey, field of study and work uses New Zealand Standard Classification of Education (NZSCED) definitions, as depicted in this Unitec infographic.

¹⁶ (Net Promoter Score = % Promoters - % Detractors). Graduate NPS - Would you recommend Unitec to others? Where 0 = not at all likely and 10 = extremely likely

Around 50 percent of Unitec graduates have achieved a degree or postgraduate qualification, producing potential employees for critical skill areas within the Auckland economy, for example across the creative sector, business, building and construction, education, health and information technologies. These patterns also relate to ongoing needs analysis by Unitec (see Focus Area 2.3). New Zealand research shows graduate-level qualifications lead to higher earnings in the long term. In general, higher-level qualifications result in higher annual incomes.¹⁷ Unitec is making an important social and economic contribution, in particular to Auckland.

Unitec demonstrates strong capability and puts real energy into developing new and credible partnerships, and exploring innovative areas of delivery. A notable recent partnership is with Mind Lab, reaching teachers (including into provincial New Zealand) with ICT skills and knowledge directly transferable to teaching, and noted as 'transformative' by participants. This has links to Ministry of Education professional development expectations around teachers being well prepared to use new 'learning spaces'. These are being centrally funded and rolled out. Linkages with overseas universities and other tertiary education organisations and research groups add value to student pathways as well as the opportunities for some staff to gain relevant professional development.

Notable partnerships at various points on the continuum of maturity but indicating valued outcomes for stakeholder included: the NIWA/Wuhan University partnership; the Centre for Computational Intelligence for Environmental Engineering; Henderson Youth Arts Project (with Auckland Council and the Kakano Youth Arts Collective); Te Whare Oranga o Parakai (House of Wellbeing, Kaipara). The dissemination of knowledge of research outcomes and activities is well documented and presented in the Advance publication. This summarises high-value outcomes where research has led to positive social and economic outcomes. (See also Focus Area 2.3 Integration with Industry, Focus Area 2.4 Partnerships and Collaboration, and Focus Area 2.5 Research and Enterprise)

It is difficult to gauge at an organisational level how well Unitec understands the value of outcomes for Māori and Pasifika key stakeholders. The Māori Success Strategy document has a specific objective around engaging Māori communities in decision-making. However, progress against actions have been variable across the different departments and programmes. Stakeholders were consulted on specific issues, but regular and meaningful engagement of iwi and Māori stakeholders in programme delivery, content and graduate outcomes could be improved.

¹⁷ 'Five years after finishing study, the median earnings of young people who complete a...degree is 53 percent above the national median earnings, and 46 percent above the median for young people who gain a certificate at levels 1-3.' Mahoney, P. Park, Z. & Smyth, R. (2013). [Moving on up: What young people earn after their tertiary education](#). Tertiary Sector Performance Analysis, Ministry of Education.

Stakeholders also commented on a potentially related lack of current visibility of Māori in executive positions. This is being attended to with the process underway to appoint an executive director, Transformation Māori.

There is limited programme-level information on valued outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students in particular. In addition, their qualification completion rates, although improving, are persistently lower than the general population of Unitec students. More broadly though, Unitec's performance around achieving the key outcome goal of a qualification as a pathway to employment has now reached the ITP sector median.

Across all programmes, personal professional development events, workshops and business forums are scheduled on campus and provide students with the ability to develop 'soft skills' and to network with industry people. An evaluation of these events shows that they are valued by students for reasons such as acquisition of new skills and practical experience in engaging with business. These and similar events add value by further connecting programmes and students with industry, and provide stakeholders with potential recruits.

Unitec has strong in-house capability in self-assessment, including through survey activities such as those referenced above. Enhancements to this work is reportedly in progress, in particular harmonising it with the functions of staff working with the student management system, and related data reporting to the TEC and internal stakeholders. These changes have particular significance for further developing the current work around graduate destinations, enhancements to annual programme review processes, and the timely presentation of accurate data to teaching staff. As noted elsewhere in this report, these latter aspects are necessary improvements.

The sector alignment proposal for change (August 2015) is a recent, far-reaching proposal based on strategic review. This review includes the effectiveness and fitness for purpose of current faculty and department structures. Although not uncontested, major changes are well underway which will lead to organisational redesign, with flow-on implications for programme design, teaching and learning. In particular, these changes are related to the alignment of the academic portfolio into 'practice pathway groups' to better meet the needs of students, industries and communities.¹⁸ This has implications for Unitec's ability to provide ongoing evidence relating to matching stakeholder needs and the value of outcomes, and is in the early stages of implementation.

¹⁸ <http://www.unitec.ac.nz/about-us/welcoming-new-leaders-to-unitec>

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 **Good**.

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

Performance in determining and meeting learner and stakeholder needs is good. Unitec's engagement with industry stakeholders was found to be more robust and consistent at the strategic level than the programme level, which is not to say that those relationships are absent at that level. Ongoing work to ensure programming and teaching matches learner needs is well resourced and convincing in its intent. Self-assessment in relation to this key evaluation question does, however, reflect high variability in performance, ranging from highly effective in some areas of operation such as campus redevelopment planning and organisational change, to quite weak in addressing gaps and making improvements important to matching stakeholder needs and requirements in other areas.

Strategically, Unitec's involvement with leading industry players or consortiums reflects the high-level outcomes being sought and is guided by a very comprehensive stakeholder relationship strategic framework (2015-2017). This clearly responds to the government's Tertiary Education Strategy, and includes key objectives and targets as well as a monitoring strategy. Stakeholders are clearly identified in this framework. Alignment between Unitec's offerings and community requirements, and better outcomes for students, employers and the TEC are explicit, and implementation is in progress. The claim of 'supporting thought leadership' in industry engagement seems a reasonable one, and is reflected in the highly collaborative approach taken. Engagement with industry networks in health, architecture, construction and performing arts, among recent examples provided, supports alignment between the qualifications offered by Unitec and the volume of enrolments into programmes.

A comprehensive Unitec Stakeholder Relationship Mapping Toolkit is now in place, and is increasingly focusing the quality of engagement. It includes tools and templates to help shape consistent practice and reporting. This work looks both necessary and promising.

The evaluators were somewhat challenged in obtaining evidence as to whether industry believes Unitec responds effectively to their perspectives, but the ITP certainly attempts to engage and that effort is documented and shared. For example, the development of the personal professional development programme was created in response to industry feedback regarding enhancing graduates' 'soft skills'. The applied digital practice programme illustrates a nimble approach to working with schools and clusters of schools, and making adaptations to delivery based on feedback. A detailed, comprehensive study relating to performing and screen arts provided a clear picture of industry and training needs (including a

surplus of graduates in some skill areas). This study identified recommendations which are being implemented by Unitec.

Some examples or indicators of self-assessment and performance relating to matching and meeting needs, and their relative performance, include:

- A programme portfolio which shows a shift from lower-level to higher-level programmes which reflect not only the Tertiary Education Strategy but also responds well to the mix of tertiary provision in Auckland more generally, as well as industry skill needs.
- The new pathways groups mentioned in Findings 1.2 reflects Unitec's ongoing self-assessment of their structure, with new positions and roles established.
- All aspects of the curriculum renewal work reflect significant ongoing investment in shaping curriculum to better support student learning and programme quality. Unitec has a specific strategy around Māori stakeholder consultation as part of the Living Curriculum work, but this appears very specific and one-off. It potentially meets a Unitec need, as opposed to being an ongoing, relational approach to Māori and Pasifika communities and stakeholders. Faculties submit a self-assessment against the success strategy objectives. The most recent review was in relation to the first objective. Te Kāhui¹⁹ found that many faculties did not understand the intent of this objective relating to stakeholder engagement, and as a consequence had not responded well.
- Consolidated and embedded use of e-learning and online access points allows increasing 24/7 access to course and student-related information. These services have become reliable and are actively used. Relatedly, the library services have increased online journal and texts holdings.
- Student and graduate surveys, and the subsequent Net Promoter Score are carried out regularly, with online surveys having the standard response rate limitations. These provide timely monitoring and reliable information which is shared across Unitec in relevant ways. Consideration of these indicates matched need, with some gaps mentioned by students or graduates, as stated under Findings 1.2.
- Both the Unitec Council and the chief executive receive direct and ongoing qualitative feedback from the Unitec Student Council, the elected representatives of all students at Unitec.
- An IBM/Concentrix partnership adds value and meets a student aspiration for earning as they learn. Over 400 students gained practical experience working part-time in call centre operations in 2015. For a few, this leads to employment after graduation.

¹⁹ Te Kāhui comprises faculty representation and senior leadership positions. It monitors the implementation of the Māori Success Strategy.

In terms of self-assessment capability and matching the requirements of NZQA as a key stakeholder and the primary compliance body in respect to overall academic quality, Unitec has had some quite serious deficiencies identified since the previous EER. Specifically these relate to:

- A pattern of weak performance in external moderation findings (for both NZQA unit standards and New Zealand Diploma in Business papers). Although use of unit standards has declined dramatically since 2012²⁰ and the diploma is a 'sunset qualification', these gaps in assessment quality are concerning.
- Concerns raised by a professional registration body.²¹
- Issues identified by Unitec, NZQA, the TEC and Skills ITO in relation to the quality of the plumbing and gas fitting programme (which as a focus area rated Adequate/Poor in the previous EER).

Unitec provided the evaluators with additional information where either they disputed the process or findings, or agreed but had put in place strategies to strengthen performance and assurances that any deficiencies had been managed to a satisfactory conclusion. These responses have been duly considered. Nevertheless, the number and range of issues – more than their scale in terms of the total number of Unitec students directly affected – influences the rating for self-assessment under this evaluation question.

Effective self-assessment and performance management processes should routinely identify and rectify the types of performance gaps cited above. There is evident variability shown in Unitec's effectiveness to deal with slow responsiveness within the organisation to resolving important gaps. As part of its own evaluative reflection, Unitec's academic board has had wide-ranging and critical discussions on this topic which parallel critical review occurring at the executive level in relation to stakeholder management. More work is needed here to improve performance and show evidence of effective self-assessment.

²⁰ Credits reported: 2012, 32,242; 2013, 20,347; 2014, 18,915; 2015, 16,576) (source: NZQA TAM)

²¹ Osteopathy Council of New Zealand.

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**.

The Unitec Teaching and Learning Framework 2015-2020²² articulates the learning and teaching vision as 'a dynamic community of learners engaged in a culture of open enquiry', with comprehensive goals and key initiatives specified. As a result of extensive research in new and emerging global trends in learning and teaching, a range of structured support strategies are available to staff through the phases of the Living Curriculum. These include engagement with the Waka and Te Puna Ako stakeholder journey for programme development/renewal and course development processes; annual programme evaluation reporting; the Learning and Teaching at Unitec publication. At organisational level, there is constant analysis and monitoring of trends and their impact on current and future students. Staff are encouraged to use ongoing evaluation and professional development to develop engaging and effective learning and teaching for all students. Staffing ratios and demographics are made public in the Unitec annual report.

There is good evidence that where programme areas have fully engaged with the learning and teaching vision, students and graduates highly value the relevance of the learning and teaching models, which provide engaging and supportive learning environments. These are effectively centred on learner achievement and success toward their individual goals and aspirations for career pathways. In most programme areas, there are elements of engagement. However, there is not consistent understanding and engagement with the vision and interconnectedness of the goals, key initiatives and support strategies across the organisation. For example, most programme areas are keeping track of staff participation and completion of the Practice Passport for professional development, but there is limited evidence of how the effectiveness of this strategy will be measured.

A review of the embedding of Mātauranga Māori in the curriculum has identified a number of challenges and improvement initiatives – these are gradually being implemented across Unitec, but this is taking some time. A range of useful activities support teaching staff in their professional development and facilitate ongoing review:

- Staff allocation for relevant professional development is ongoing for 0.5 FTE and above. For example, staff in trades undertake annual professional development which is well supported by Unitec and relevant.
- Practice Passport is a tool to guide teacher development towards consistent outcomes, and provides support for staff implementing strategic initiatives such as engagement with industry. It uses the Living Curriculum poutama as a

²² This builds on the 2010-2015 strategy, retains the same vision and develops further the goals and key initiatives (Unitec).

mandatory Mātauranga Māori course component. The Living Curriculum implementation feedback is a key aspect of self-assessment here.

- Kaihautu and management support poutama²³ implementation through poutama training. Staff interviewed referred to these offerings, but evidence is fairly limited as to their effectiveness. Te Rito Māori language courses are also available. Closer monitoring is warranted here.
- Trialling and monitoring of new collaborative teaching spaces and their use includes self-assessment and actions focused on improvements in teaching.
- The learning and teaching sub-committee of the academic board, includes student representation/voice.

While teacher observation is not mandatory across the institution, Unitec provides guidelines for its use as a development tool. Peer observation of teaching is being effectively used to support improvements in practice in a number of programmes, and others (particularly the trades staff) have development plans and report involvement with the Practice Passport.

Across three very different types of programme (levels, target groups, international students, Māori and Pasifika youth, secondary school teachers) in the partnerships and collaboration focus area, Unitec is able to deploy suitably trained and experienced teaching staff who deliver in a range of modes and ways to meet student needs in programmes with good achievement rates. The evaluators were provided with rich descriptions of teaching and support interventions by teachers as evidence of strategies being deployed to support student learning. They pointed to pass rates higher than the norm as evidence of the impact of these strategies. Maia Māori Centre and Pasifika Centre are critical to Māori and Pasifika learner success, with many students attesting to the support and guidance they received alongside the teaching within programmes that helped them to achieve.

Moodle platform and information/interaction with teachers through this technology is very good. Students and graduates commented on improvements here. This reflects investment, staff effort and related self-assessment. The interrelated IT system, e-learning platform and information interaction by students with Unitec is now quite effective, according to students and staff interviewed.

Workplace components integrate classroom or institution-based learning with skill development within work or practice environments (see Focus Areas 2.3 and 2.4 for more detail). Integrated learning is a strategic theme of programme development, curriculum renewal and teaching development. Students commented on the value of having industry experts engaged as lecturers for specialist subject

²³ Poutama – Mātauranga Maori in the Living Curriculum – ‘the intent is to propose a three stage progression for the alignment of MM within all programmes delivered at Unitec’.

areas. There was some dissatisfaction that these teachers may not always have had sufficient orientation and training in teaching prior to the start of classes.

International students detailed a range of experiences of teaching, but described most teachers as credible, knowledgeable and helpful. Targeted tutorials and online videos of teaching provide additional support, very helpful in particular to students whose home language is not English. These also reportedly balance the needs of other students, allowing mixed groups to proceed at a good pace during class time. Some students felt frustrated that concerns they raised about instances of poor teaching were not always acted upon promptly in their view.

Teachers use a variety of means to elicit feedback from students apart from central online surveys. There was some evidence of responsiveness to this feedback and changes to practice as a result. Small group student feedback sessions are occurring, facilitated by Te Puna Ako staff. Examples of gaps in teaching quality, as noted above, somewhat undermine the value of the central online surveys, and the overall performance management linkage to these surveys.

Unitec teachers clearly consider and manage different cultural expectations and assumptions about assessment. As stated under Findings 1.1, information was presented about how teaching staff use anti-plagiarism software and apply appropriate sanctions as required. Two working parties on assessment occurred in 2014 and 2015. Claimed outcomes included plausible reductions in over-assessment, standardised assessment regulations, and better resourcing of moderation work.

As noted under Findings 1.3, moderation findings have not been convincing for some unit standards and New Zealand Diploma in Business papers. Unitec points to an improvement in agreement rates over time. ITO external moderation relating to trades programmes has been more acceptable. Examples of moderation and/or moderation activity records were sampled for, among others, construction and applied practice. In the latter programme, good coverage on a plan was noted, moderation was focused on student understanding, correct grades and assessor decisions. This should develop to have a stronger focus on the quality of student work moving forward. This also provided an example of policy being followed and activity reported through a graduation committee and reporting to the academic board. Not so much moderation, but appeals and control of grades were seen in good examples sourced from Business programmes.

A strong consensus emerged across interviews that clear guidance around assessment is given and is in use by students. There were also good indications that assessment supports learning, for example the challenge of assessing within a work-integrated model in event management. This was responded to by co-constructing assessment around professional competencies to better reflect changes in the learner, and the development of professional capabilities as an evidential outcome. In addition, good examples of assessment strategies being implemented were seen in larger classes of 60-90 students.

Staff acknowledged there were some teething problems with the introduction of a common semester²⁴ across a number of programmes. There was evidence that at programme level staff were putting in place changes to improve student engagement and achievement in the common semester. Social practice staff provided data showing the lower pass rate for their students in the common papers, and said the blended learning model of the common semester did not work well for their cohort. As a result of this analysis, additional tutorials were put in place for the students to support the online style of learning, and a graduate was appointed as a part-time lecturer in the common semester programme. Other examples of responses to the issues included medical imaging introducing workshops for students studying on the common semester and communicating that to potential students so their expectations are correct. Although the common semester has been subject to a lot of self-assessment and scrutiny, the issues identified in these areas are not yet fully addressed and evidence of success is yet to be seen through self-assessment.

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**.

Aside from the important support and guidance offered by teaching and departmental administrative staff, students have a diverse range of services available to them which lead to good outcomes as reflected in retention and success on programmes. Key examples are:

- Student services including Student Central Services play a part in active guidance and support of students – numerous students commented favourably on these services, and they use them. Low-cost food options as well as microwave and recreational facilities are provided. Services are subject to survey and review processes.
- Te Puna Ako Learning Centre offices on each campus are open every week day. Services include statistics and numeracy classes targeted to business and international students and tailored for nursing students. Various other free workshops on successful studying are advertised. Students using these services reported benefits.
- Maia Māori Centre Māori and Pasifika Centre. This includes the impressive Te Noho Kotahitanga Marae where most students gain some exposure to reo Māori and tikanga during pōwhiri. All Māori and Pasifika Trades Training

²⁴ Common semester sees students from a range of health, education and social science programmes studying together during their first semester, introducing them to a range of subjects and allowing greater flexibility in their studies (source: Unitec).

(MPTT) students are interviewed as part of selection and guidance. The in-class '3-5 year Goal Setting exercise' was valued and links clearly to programme purpose. These trades students referenced their connections with Maia Māori Centre and Pasifika Centre staff, with numerous positive references to activities and people who have supported their progress. Change initiatives have had an impact on these centres, which was an expressed concern of some students and stakeholders.

- Library services at Unitec have bolstered their online journal and text holdings. There is good evidence that the library is well used and matches student and course needs. Physically, the Mt Albert building seems small in relation to student numbers, but provision of online offerings mitigates this. Some business students reported that they do not need to access the physical library as 'we get it all online [through the Unitec library]'. Quiet study areas as well as (limited) group meeting rooms, students report, are actively used. Self-assessment at the library is very effective.
- Scholarships, awards and grants – an area of support that has fed into the relaunched MPTT initiative – and an on-site budgeting advisor effectively support the students.
- Sports facilities (both indoor and outdoor) are available, as well as healthcare, counselling and careers and employment services. A team of student advisers provide proactive links for students and staff to engage students in opportunities and to ensure issues are resolved early with appropriate referrals to other specialist services. A multifaith chaplaincy co-ordinator leads a team of volunteer chaplains and oversees access to a chapel and prayer room facilities (e.g. Salaat Hall for Muslim students). Students are also supported through aspects of the wider Unitec Wellbeing programme.
- Organisational support for students with disabilities has been well resourced and effective in supporting students based on a sample of evidence. For example, a third-year Bachelor of Business student who is deaf has been supported with signers throughout her studies. The one-year Certificate in Employment and Community Skills is also relevant and notable. The provision of a New Zealand Sign Language signer at graduation ceremonies is another indicator of Unitec's commitment.
- Free shuttle buses connect Mt Albert and Waitakere campuses.
- International student exchange arrangements are available with Unitec partner institutions through the Unijet programme.
- High-quality web and hard-copy programme related guidance have been recently thoroughly reviewed for accuracy.

All international students are interviewed soon after arrival to confirm programme expectations and for general orientation, advice, etc. All are offered the opportunity to participate in a structured orientation programme (and most do) where they are

provided with introductions to the various support services available to all students at Unitec. These include social clubs, international experience programme (local visits and trips around New Zealand) and other services provided by EdCollective.²⁵ The International Centre plays an important part in active guidance and support of these students, and provides links to other services including the Health Centre, counselling and mental health advisers. Students and graduates interviewed by the evaluators commented on the different experiences and challenges faced with regard to homesickness, culture shock and their coping strategies and how they used Unitec support. A student described effective and timely support by Unitec in the case of a recent medical emergency.

Outside of course-related support, other development opportunities are numerous. A personal and professional development booklet maps out workshops and events (often aligned to the level of programme being studied). 'Connect to Success' and similar free events are scheduled to provide an opportunity for students to meet and network with industry and prospective employers, and put into practice the skills learnt in other workshops. A language learning centre with extensive resources is available at Mt Albert campus. Students and graduates also have the opportunity to learn te Reo Māori fee-free through Kura Pō, or as part of Mātauranga Māori electives for various levels of competency. Free beginner computing classes are available at the Waitakere and Albany Campuses.

Orientation visits to classes and/or workshops connect students with support services and are supplemented by documents online and in prospectuses or elsewhere; Student Central Services provides navigation to all services. A Pasifika graduate who was studying at the time of the previous EER, and who left and returned in 2015, described improvements in the e-learning platform and other aspects of the online interface with students as a huge change. Other students expressed satisfaction with these services, and further change is planned. The Pasifika graduate came through a Unitec foundation programme, then completed a trades qualification, and is now in the second year of a degree at Auckland University of Technology. He acknowledged valuable career guidance received from trades tutors.

Despite the diverse range of quality services available, and their impact as above, the timely uptake of services was not always strongly evident across sample programmes or in the self-assessment material provided. The Net Promoter Score, for example, derived from the central student satisfaction survey, is used to gauge the value of student support to students, which is useful. Some students said they

²⁵ EdCollective is a charitable trust established in 2013 by the USU (student association). They provide services under contract to Unitec, including support for student representation (Student Council and class/programme representatives), advocacy services, student media, student engagement events including the international experience programme, clubs and societies and Student Job Search. The Student Council is a separate entity elected by all students, and provides a vehicle for governance and management to hear the student voice in both planning and operational decisions.

believed some student services were 'too far away', or available at times which did not match those in part-time employment. The streamlining or consolidation of potentially overlapping services is a perennial issue. Unitec management has a view on this and a plan going forward. A very significant aspect of the transformation is the reconfiguration of staffing and in particular the approach to student services and the future role of departments in the provision or orientation to those services. Currently there is a strong organisation-wide commitment to guiding and supporting all students and improving these mechanisms where warranted. The linkage between guidance and support, a positive student experience and further lifting course or qualification completion rates for all groups is implicit here.

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

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**.

As reported under Findings 1.1 and 1.2 in particular, and elaborated under the focus area reporting below, Unitec students achieve well. The provision of appropriate programmes, staff to teach and support students, and the infrastructure and resources required reflect the proven capability by governance and management to support educational achievement. Unitec has continued to invest in upgrading services to students since the previous EER. Examples include the Student Central area, continued improvements in IT services and library online holdings, and some new classrooms. In addition, there has been ongoing investment in scholarships and research funding.

The property-related aspects of the change process, in particular vacating buildings deemed no longer fit for use, and creating new learning spaces and workshops, are currently underway. Additional expertise has been contracted to effectively manage these processes in order to minimise disruption to current students and to maintain a safe work and study environment.

Sector workforce planning activities which link to key performance indicators in Unitec's strategic plan are the key vehicle for industry engagement. For example, high-level engagement with specific industry sectors provides Unitec with a 'big picture' approach to inform programme planning and related investment. This strategy is relevant to the intended 'outside in' programme development strategy, in which industry is intended to have far more impact on programme design and content than in the past. It is also relevant to the Living Curriculum goals around moving from institution-based to increased work-integrated learning. This reflects innovative, or at least proactive approaches to ensuring vocational programmes are fit for purpose.

Monitoring of educational performance is a standing item on the Council agenda. Reporting from departments through the academic board informs this area of self-assessment. A 'matrix' of programme performance provides a graphical summary. In addition, specific reviews or investigations occur from time to time to understand educational performance or manage risks – these include compliance audits. Student representative presence at, for example, Council and academic board meetings, as well as the regular student surveys, provide a voice to management which is responsive. The president of the Student Council also has direct contact with the chief executive, who acts promptly to address any issues of concern.

Programme reviews have occurred on a regular basis for all programmes, according to records provided. Those examined in depth relating to the focus areas were often extremely thorough and insightful in their content. They have provided a vehicle for review and improvement on an ongoing basis. The academic board is effective in its role. Following the board's review of current programme evaluation reporting, it is intended that the overall number of annual reports be reduced, with targeted submissions throughout the year followed by an external assessment of evidence-based action planning and completion. This has not yet been implemented.

At management level there is clear evidence of the interrelationship of numerous high-level strategies and projects. However, this understanding and inter-connectedness was not consistently evident across programme areas.

Within an organisation of this scale, it would be reasonable to expect that programme and educational performance more generally would vary across programmes. This evaluation found some areas of exceptional performance, and most programmes seem to be performing well. In a few areas, performance was only acceptable. To some extent this reflects management's overall view gained from their self-own assessment. Overall self-assessment of programme and educational performance (or at least the actions taken in response to findings) is clearly effective in developing and fine-tuning many areas. However, it has had only a limited effect in identifying how successful actions have been and/or in convincingly rectifying some gaps in important areas highlighted elsewhere in this report.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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 context to this EER is one of large-scale, multi-dimensional change initiatives relating to property, the campus and aspects of the organisational model. In addition, major internal initiatives are occurring, such as the curriculum renewal work and related changes in the mode of teacher engagement with students. The planning for change is based on a high-level business case and close consultation with the TEC – it has credibility, is needed, and is arguably overdue in some aspects. The most recent strategic plan aligns well with ensuring a focus on the current and continuing aspects of tertiary education delivery as well as the desired future.

Ongoing monitoring is a strong feature of self-assessment within this focus area. A 'Transformation Dashboard' is used to provide monitoring of progress on the various strands of change, and is formally reported to each Council meeting by the chief executive. The '10 Key Risks' pertaining to occupational safety and health and the 'One Planet' strategy have indicators which are also being monitored at Council level.

Two important examples of high-level reviews considered as self-assessment within this evaluation are the Sector Alignment Proposal for Change, and the Student Services Proposal for Change (aka *Blueprint*). These are professionally produced and provide a reasonable level of detail for readers needing to understand the change process.

The key mechanisms for communicating programme-level performance to Council through the academic board are the performance matrix and a programme health check. This includes matrix content as well as ratings for student and graduate satisfaction, and research productivity, which has been in place since the previous EER. The evaluators agree that it is timely that the annual programme review process be upgraded, and this is reportedly occurring. While the matrix has been a useful monitoring tool, it is not clearly evident that areas of weak performance are promptly strengthened or that areas of excellent performance are 'leveraged' to share practice in meaningful ways. With those important goals in mind, the process seems to have become somewhat ineffective. Teaching staff had frustrations with the timeliness and quality of central data and the outcomes of the reporting were not always timely. The change and progress to date is hence seen as both worthwhile and necessary.

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On the other hand, the programme evaluation reports have provided a useful vehicle for gathering consolidated information, reflecting on progress and barriers to progress, monitoring initiatives (such as the Living Curriculum implementation) and planning for improvements such as at the delivery/departmental level. In that light, they are an important and useful component of an overall quality assurance process.

The Council also used the graduate survey findings and the staff and student survey results (in particular the Net Promoter Scores) to monitor educational performance. The quality of these surveys is good, although the response rates give some caution as to how representative they are of the experiences of the larger group (as per Findings 1.2, for example). Again, they are a useful component of an overall quality assurance process.

Timeliness of results reporting has been a matter of concern and interest to both Unitec and the TEC. Resolution of this concern is still ongoing. A significant change to the leadership model for programme areas is the ongoing appointment of heads of practice pathways and deans. One goal of these changes is to reportedly relieve the pressures of business management processes, and to strengthen an 'educational quality focus'. It will be some time before the intended overall improvements can be measured.

The transformation report to Council is presented at a time open to the public. The Council undertakes a review every two years – the next will occur in 2017. Management faces challenges in effectively communicating so many inter-related, large-scale change initiatives. New and more personalised approaches to this communication flow were being used at the time of the EER. Discussions with staff and stakeholders by the evaluators revealed a communications gap, and a quote from a late 2015 staff engagement survey summarises this theme: 'To me, the discussions around change/transformation in the Institution have been on-going for some time without a clear understanding of what it all means – the proposal for change has been good for firming some things up although there are still some unknowns. I appreciate hearing about possible changes but would prefer to know more definite details.' Noting that the implementation and management of major change is usually difficult, the most recent staff survey provided a low Net Promoter Score which must be of some concern to governance and management. Openness by management regarding the change processes is certainly apparent.

Responsiveness to biculturalism at the strategic and operational level at Unitec is reflected by Te Noho Kotahitanga: The Partnership and Māori Cultural and Ethical Values, and realised in the design, development and ongoing operation of Te Noho Kotahitanga marae; the Māori Success Strategy (including a commitment to embedding Mātauranga Māori perspectives into programmes and practices; the appointment of a Dean Mātauranga Maori, and the development of the Poutama guidelines); and operationally by elements such as Guidelines for Researchers Regarding Māori Social and Cultural Responsiveness. Again, Unitec demonstrates genuine commitment at a strategic level.

Improvements pointed to by Unitec and confirmed during this evaluation include:

- A well-informed and clearer vision and strategy for Unitec. Unitec was involved in the Auckland unitary plan, and the proposed property redevelopment and the release of land for housing has positive implications in relation to the current city-wide housing crisis.
- Unitec has deliberately engaged with industry leaders over recent years, for example the health sector, construction and engineering. This consultation has been reflected in the programme portfolio offered to students and Unitec's knowledge of labour force needs looking forward.
- Unitec has also re-engaged with the local secondary school community with the intention of providing clearer pathways for potential students. In addition, it shares resources with schools, addressing the NEETs phenomenon and the revitalisation of Māori and Pasifika Trades Training Auckland (with Unitec a key player in the Auckland consortium). These initiatives are showing fruit in terms of student numbers, qualification completions, and strengthened collaborations including Vocational Pathways at level 3 and trades qualifications.
- New partnerships and collaborations include: with Mind Lab; an online learning course developed for the New Zealand Police; Cyber Research and other important research connections which have direct links to programme content and student learning.
- 2015 set a new benchmark for international enrolments (matching government strategy²⁶ – Export Education is an important revenue source for Unitec).
- Governance has provided leadership in addressing the property and facilities issues faced by Unitec, which include fitness for purpose, potential earthquake risk and viability of the scale of the Mt Albert site in its current configuration. The formation of the Wairaka Land Company, and moving through planning processes with Auckland Council, and potential funding for a campus rebuild have required considerable skill.
- Occupational safety and health processes and One Planet overarching initiatives have some inherent connections to 'working with communities', 'valuing staff', and sustainability more generally. The Wellbeing programme and the 'Zero Harm' pledge are certainly very notable.

Unitec has been challenged in convincingly meeting some important areas of academic quality assurance and compliance. These have been reported in the TEC 2015 audit and through NZQA by means of its routine quality assurance processes (external moderation, degree monitoring, and through information communicated from other stakeholders with an interest in particular programmes).

²⁶ As a key pillar of New Zealand's export economy, international education is fully integrated in to the Government's NZ Inc. strategies and Business Growth Agenda (source: ENZ).

This raises questions regarding confidence in the extent to which full and effective quality assurance is occurring across all programmes, and this responsibility rests directly with senior management. Although there is management of gaps occurring, these matters have had an impact on ratings assigned within this focus area.

2.2 Focus area: Curriculum Renewal

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

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

Curriculum renewal at Unitec and its impact on educational performance is explored through the Living Curriculum strategy. This has three phases – phase one has been completed, and phase two is currently in progress. At management level, Unitec has been active in providing leadership in the curriculum renewal processes through their design and implementation. Notably, this has included resourcing for the Te Waka Urungi specialist curriculum developers, who provide centralised programme and course development support and guidance. This has a lifespan that will bridge the current change initiatives and ensure continuity of work as other changes occur.

Phase one has been subject to rigorous review, which was reported both to staff and the academic board which has monitoring oversight of the strategy through its learning and teaching sub-committee. This review led to a renewed focus for phases two and three and the finalisation of the Learning and Teaching Framework 2015-2020. Phase two requires gap analysis and comprehensive, targeted capability development to prepare for the completion of the phase three programme relook.

Programmes evaluated in this focus area are at varying stages of meeting the requirements of phase two. While there is a comprehensive monitoring system proposed at organisational level, the evaluators' interviews with staff indicated that there is a lack of clarity across the schools as to how the effectiveness of this phase will be evaluated. There is informal feedback that phase two is having an impact on increased engagement and is encouraging richer conversations on teaching and learning across the organisation.

While most staff are aware of the requirements and time allocations for completing the Practice Passport to build staff capability (as mentioned under Findings 1.4), this is not consistently implemented across programmes. Some areas have a plan in place for all staff to have completed in the required timeframes, and other programme areas appear to encourage individual responsibility with different understandings of the outcomes.

Outcomes for programmes that have engaged with the curriculum renewal strategies and the related Te Waka Urungi and Te Puna Ako 'Stakeholder Journey', include:

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- Students highly value learning experiences and feel strongly supported
- Engagement with professional development opportunities to embed both work-based learning and e-learning into programmes
- High levels of community and industry/professional involvement within the programme
- Recognition of the quality of the graduates from the relevant profession and industry groups
- Outcomes for students that are highly valued, exceed expectations and align with career pathways and aspirations where courses have been through the Te Waka Urungi and Te Puna Ako process. There is evidence of creative and innovative teaching and learning strategies being put in place.

This external evaluation also identified some areas where more work is required:

- The integration and connectedness of the key components of the Living Curriculum, the learning and teaching strategy and framework and programme evaluation reporting is not yet fully engaged with across all programmes
- While programme areas are following the key requirements for engaging with key stakeholders, there is a variability and inconsistency of practice
- Transformed assessment: all programmes have made some progress towards improving assessments in alignment with the goals of the Living Curriculum initiative. However, while assessment and moderation is strong in some areas, there are inconsistent practices across programmes
- More consistent engagement with Mātauranga Māori approaches will be required to build capability.

In terms of other curriculum and programme work more generally:

- Qualifications reviewed under the Tertiary Review of Qualifications (TRoQ) have undergone major needs analysis nationally, and Unitec has been fully involved in this national work. Unitec is progressively transitioning to the new qualifications, with programme approvals proceeding well. It is acknowledged that the TRoQ somewhat slowed the progress of Unitec's curriculum initiatives overall.
- Some programme areas have undertaken major reviews and re-organisation of the learning environment to provide more authentic workplace experiences aligned with innovative learning and teaching strategies. This includes models for work-integrated learning to ensure that students gain valuable experience in real-world situations. This emphasis on the workplace has been complemented by a stronger focus on using industry experts as tutors to ensure industry relevance and currency. There is a need to ensure that these new staff are supported with relevant learning and teaching capability development, as noted under Findings 1.4.

- Assessment regulations were reviewed in 2014 and 2015 through working parties co-ordinated by the academic board. The report outcomes are now embedded in a renewed programme of work covering academic issues: standardising weighting, loads, different types of assessment, re-sits, and producing significant resources for staff. Further work is being done on moderation and mapping assessments. Overall though, the impact of these working party outcomes on improving assessment and moderation across the organisation is unclear.

The Learning and Teaching strategy has been consistently applied since 2009 with a strongly integrated partnership between the central programme development support resource, Te Puna Ako, and the intensive course development resource, Te Waka Urungi. New learning and teaching models and renewed Living Curriculum processes are the result of effective self-assessment practices regularly reported to academic board. The programmes in this focus area provided an insight into how the organisation's initiatives in curriculum renewal are being operationalised. Across these programmes there is a strong focus on ensuring that students are supported to achieve industry-relevant qualifications that meet their goals and aspirations for employment. There is an emerging coherence of purpose for the curriculum renewal strategies. However, there is also variability and inconsistency of implementation and emphasis across these programme areas.

2.3 Focus area: Integration with Industry

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's 2015 Strategy Map sets the following goals relevant to integration with industry:

- 'Our students, graduates, and employment pathways will meet skill requirements in the Auckland and New Zealand economies.
- Our rich relationships with industry groups will facilitate ongoing relationships of mutual benefit.
- Our partnerships with stakeholders will enable seamless transitions into career focused learning, and into employment and entrepreneurship.
- Our programs will be distinctively technology enabled and work integrated, we will champion innovation and will be sought after locally and internationally.'

At the strategic level, Unitec has given good effect to these goals. Work with the Auckland construction sector, other industry groups or vocations, ITOs and Manukau Institute of Technology to forecast workforce requirements are positive examples of active industry engagement. These are informing programming and investment decisions. As observed by a member of the executive: 'integration with

industry is about a line of sight to employment and weaving connectivity with industry throughout the programme’.

The degree of integration and maturity of these arrangements varies, as is reasonable. Many arrangements and initiatives are determined by programme requirements for workplace experience such as clinical placements. Unitec’s assessment is that integration with industry is variable across programmes but is improving. The impact of improving engagement with industry is not yet strongly confirmed by the graduate employment data, which was relatively static for 2012-2014. However, data for 2015 shows improvement, with 71 per cent of graduates in employment. Similarly, the proportion of graduates indicating that their employment was ‘moderately’ or ‘highly’ related to the qualification has also remained relatively static over the last seven years.

A variety of methods are used to integrate programme delivery with industry. Examples are: industry-based learning; industry projects; clinical experience; project-based learning; guest lecturers. A diverse range of settings and modes and industries were noted across programmes during this evaluation and include:

- Links on-campus with IBM and Concentrix which allow students to gain industry experience while studying in the Bachelor of Computer Science, and the potential to gain credits for negotiated study papers.
- An on-campus employment opportunity is also provided by the relationship Unitec has with Connexis. Students ‘earn as they learn’ and they seem to gain employability skills and build confidence more generally.
- Applied Science programmes provide good examples of integration with industry through work placements and research. These were supported by robust processes. It was clear that both students and employers valued these opportunities.
- The Bachelor of Nursing and the Bachelor of Health Science (Medical Imaging) both have clinical placements, strong engagement with industry and good employment outcomes for students. Ninety-six per cent of Nursing graduates and 100 per cent of Medical Imaging graduates gaining employment within six months of graduation. However, there is variability in the quality of the implementation of placements.
- Placement processes in the Bachelor of Social Practice have improved with a more co-ordinated approach to identifying placements and matching students to them.

There were also clear examples of Unitec responding to external feedback in order to enhance programmes and increase their value to students and industry. For example, in the Business faculty a professional development programme aims to improve graduate communication and work skills in response to industry feedback.

Performing and Screen Arts undertook a comprehensive review of the Screen Arts pathway in the second half of 2015. This identified current trends, and changes were made as a result. Students recognised the value of the industry engagement they undertook during their study. In particular, they valued gaining employability skills, building valuable industry networks, and understanding the value of these networks when looking for jobs.

It was evident that Nursing has a well-planned, collaborative and co-ordinated process for placements that meets student and industry needs. Students are well prepared for their placements. However, some concerns were noted by both industry and students in the clinical support/supervision provided by Unitec in the Medical Imaging degree. The concerns were focused around the continuity and quantity of clinical supervision.

For the relatively new Bachelor of Health and Social Development, a strategy and process for work placements have been developed; however, a plan for student placements was not available. Staff indicated that they were only planning this a semester ahead. Also, staff indicated that placements were largely reliant on their personal relationships and they questioned the sustainability of this given that the number of placements required was projected to almost double over the next two years. More work is needed here to match the quality of some other placement models.

Appropriate development opportunities, relevant to integration with industry, are available for teachers. For example, all staff undertake the Practice Passport which includes components of work-based learning. Staff engagement with industry through both professional practice and research is also enhancing programme development and delivery. An excellent example was that of a teacher on the Bachelor of Health and Social Development who has been active in developing health promotion and youth development professional standards/competencies which form the basis of the degree. This means that students and graduates should be well placed within that sector.

External moderation of work/clinical placements generally indicated that appropriate assessment was being undertaken at the appropriate level. However, the Industry Based Learning course in the Bachelor of Business has not been externally moderated since it was developed in 2011. This is despite an external review raising issues with assessment in 2012. This reduces confidence in the assessment of this course, and this is significant because Industry Based Learning is a capstone paper for the degree.

Unitec has rightly identified work-based learning as a 'critical risk', and work is being done on how this is managed to keep students safe. Integration with industry is evident in the institution's self-assessment processes. The investment plan includes key performance indicators related to matching skills supply and demand, graduate paid work, transition to employment and graduates meeting job requirements. Currently, targets and reporting for these key performance indicators are not reported for specific groups of students such as priority groups. However,

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new scorecards are being developed as part of the wider institutional changes. At the programme level, work-integrated learning has been a component of annual programme reports. All programmes are rated on two dimensions related to this, showing a range of performance across the institution. The evaluators noted good examples of self-assessment leading to improvements under this focus area, in particular with those exemplified in the Bachelor of Social Practice.

2.4 Focus area: Partnerships and Collaboration

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

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

Unitec demonstrates strong capability and effort in developing new, credible partnerships and collaborations. The programmes considered under this focus area are at various points on a continuum of complexity and value adding for students and stakeholders, but are nonetheless indicative of high organisational capability in this domain. Crucially, Unitec actively explores new and innovative areas of delivery. These include a willingness to think in different ways about programme design, teaching and assessment, and to learn from and with other organisations. Unitec in this context is highly innovative and responsive to change.

National Certificate in Retail (Level 3) – Skills Update Training Institute

The retail training linkage with Skills Update Training Institute²⁷ is one of the products of in-depth sector training needs analysis commissioned by Unitec in 2009. The programme is at an appropriate level to provide entry-level training for those seeking to enter retail, or (more commonly) to credential those with current experience. The programme is offered free to New Zealand citizens and permanent residents aged 16 and over and involves part-time study over a six-month period, with monthly starts at various sites. The mode of delivery allows for a close connection with students' employment. Classes are held on evenings two nights per week, and the tutors visit students in workplaces to encourage and observe their practice and/or gather assessment evidence. The programme model is sound.

Course pass rates are high, over 90 per cent year on year, and qualification completion rates have improved from 32 per cent in 2012 to 74 per cent in 2014. Māori learner success rates are now on a par with non-Māori, but Pasifika qualification achievement rates were weaker at 57 per cent for 2012-2014. The quality of the delivery is also good, as evidenced by recent student surveys and learner comment to the evaluators. There have been a few challenges meeting the requirements of external moderation, but these gaps are being well managed and do not seriously undermine the credibility of the results.

²⁷ A Category 1 private training establishment. EER in 2014.

This programme is a useful sub-contracting arrangement between Unitec and a solidly performing private training establishment. There has been an arguably appropriate reduction in the number of enrolments (262 in 2012, reducing to 155 in 2015), and the current discussion on a higher-level programme has merit. This may improve the interrelationship between this programming and the higher-level Business programmes available at Unitec, the pathways into which are not currently operating strongly according to staff interviewed. The reduction in enrolment may also add value to the outcomes of the programme, which at present seem to most directly only serve the needs of those already working in retail and, by implication, their employers.

The annual programme review covers the ground adequately, while not being highly interrogative in relation to the scale of the programme (hundreds of students). The data use is good, and there are improvements noted, curriculum changes have been made, and plans with clear goals area set. The 'template' approach used captures information appropriately, but does not seem to catalyse highly effective, collaborative review. More could be done here.

Bachelor of Business (Level 7) – Shandong, China

For international students, two years of study in China at Shandong University of Finance and Economics²⁸ then one in Auckland to complete the Bachelor's degree has provided a valuable pathway for those who may not have had the opportunity to complete such a degree because of local constraints. Approximately 50 students annually have chosen this option. The programme has now ended as a result of policy changes within the Chinese university education system. This will affect Unitec's international student numbers in the short term, but Unitec is pursuing other initiatives with this partner as well as others.

This evaluation found highly valued outcomes from the partnership, including transnational teaching experience by both Unitec and Shandong lecturers on an ongoing and extensive basis. Unitec lecturers have been challenged by very large numbers of students in Chinese lectures, and different learning styles and academic or institutional expectations. The partnership has also provided an opportunity to expose students in China to New Zealand pedagogies. There has been reported transfer of learning to Unitec's diverse domestic and international student population. The dean of school Shandong said that Unitec teachers are very professional, and students enjoy and benefit from their teaching. She would like to adopt many of the Unitec teaching practices at Shandong.

Students said the skills learnt in using MYOB software, knowledge of the New Zealand tax system, and experience in accounting were of high value. Suggested improvements included putting theory into practice: more practical opportunities in class including drawing up and using balance sheets and accounts, advanced Excel, and more work experience. Graduates interviewed had recently begun

²⁸ <http://en.sdufe.edu.cn/view.php?id=14659>

Master's programmes at universities within Auckland. One had obtained a year of related work experience post-graduation prior to taking up Master's-level study. There have been valuable outcomes from the programme both for New Zealand and Chinese students.

A well-qualified Shandong lecturer is employed at Unitec, who teaches, liaises and offers orientation and ongoing first-culture pastoral support to students. Shandong students' course pass rates have reportedly improved from below 50 per cent to 60-70 per cent as a consequence of review and improved support. This academic had not seen the (most recently published) 2014 annual programme review report. This review document is, however, richly detailed and covers delivery with some data analysis. Aspects of it were sampled in the evaluative conversations, and the lecturer and student graduates were able to convincingly describe what changes or improvements had occurred in relation to certain aspects since.

In summary, the partnership and programme has been effective, well-supported and has benefited from review.

Certificates in Applied Technology (Level 4) and other trades programmes – Māori and Pasifika Trades Training: Auckland (MPTT)²⁹

This is a reasonably new initiative, providing a good linkage to Unitec's strategic consultation work in construction and infrastructure skill needs and employment pathways. It is important to multiple stakeholders when seen as a key bridge to level 4 or higher qualifications, and sustainable employment for priority groups. Although still maturing in terms of fully effective processes, the programme is showing good outcomes and impacts already.

Data for 2014 indicated that of 101 (36 Māori and 65 Pasifika) enrolments in the various certificates available, the net retention rate was 92 per cent. Successful completion of programmes was 86 per cent for Māori and 89 per cent for Pasifika, exceeding institutional targets. In 2015, four months after exiting the programme – some having obtained their qualification and some not – around 60 per cent were in employment (including apprenticeship arrangements) or further education. These results seem reasonably congruent with performance shown within annual programme reviews relating to the variety of trades qualifications MPTT students have the opportunity to select from. Students are achieving a range of relevant trades qualifications which provide apprenticeship or higher-level study pathways.

A consortium of three tertiary education organisations provides the education under the focal leadership of the independent co-ordinating office. This external partner reported favourably on the contribution of Unitec. Linkage to the historical Department of Māori Affairs-run trades training programmes of the 1970s was intentional. This included a relaunch reunion dinner at Unitec, reconnection of graduates of the former scheme, and use of the 'brand' to communicate with and

²⁹ <http://www.maoripasifikatrades.co.nz/courses/unitec>

mobilise communities of interest. Unitec staff have been involved in these aspects also, which included appropriate tikanga.

The co-ordinating office has 'navigator' positions that play a crucial role linking the overall programme, students and families to prospective employers. While the Māori taura navigator seemed over-stretched but succeeding, the other navigator did not meet key goals, leading to a reported 33 Pasifika trainees falling into the 'don't know where they are now category' in 2015 (across all institutions involved, it must be stressed). To be clear, these roles are external to Unitec although they are an MPTT programme-wide gap. The Māori taura navigator produced a useful, brief monitoring report indicating that self-assessment is occurring at both levels. The consortium has documented ambitious goals for evaluating programme effectiveness, but it was not entirely evident how these would be achieved.

Teaching quality, as reported by trainees interviewed, varied from excellent to poor. Most students, and the small sample of graduates interviewed, were satisfied or highly satisfied (these included Automotive, Autotronics, Carpentry, Electrical and Welding students). One graduate described a very poor experience on her programme, although she did pass and was assisted into a work placement and gained employment as an outcome. More generally, the Unitec trades department is reportedly challenged by the strong labour market and demand for trades-staffing as reflected by both staff turnover and students being recruited before completing their qualification.³⁰ This last point will continue to have an impact on qualification completion rates. These factors may have resulted in some less than ideal experiences for students in term of continuity of relationships with tutors, as reported by them. Overall, students were very satisfied with the facilities, resources and the skills they had developed.

The programme has solid interrelationships with industry; industry actively recruits staff from the student pool, with apprenticeship arrangements becoming the norm. This includes females into traditionally male-dominated trades areas. The MPTT programme is provided free using a scholarship mechanism. The Work Readiness Passport provides an important valued outcome alongside the specific trade qualification. It was designed with industry, and includes the portable SiteSafe ticket. Students are also assisted to buy tools.

As processes and relationships are fine-tuned, the overall goals to assist large numbers of Māori and Pasifika youth into sustainable employment look highly likely to be realised. As indicated, this is a very good example of Unitec's partnership approach.

³⁰ Unitec says this is an example of an external force effecting Unitec's qualification completion rate, and this is accepted by the evaluators.

Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Practice (Digital and Collaborative Learning) (Level 8)

Offered in partnership with the educational company Mind Lab, the first graduates completed this qualification in 2014. Course pass rates recorded were variable for 2015: 100 per cent for the small proportion of under 25s; 77 per cent for Māori (approximately 10 per cent of the cohort); 63 per cent Pasifika (6 per cent of the cohort); and 81 per cent for all other groups. The initial approach to assessment extension has had an impact on qualification completion rates, which are not the most reliable indicator of performance currently. Programme self-assessment identified this as an issue and policy has been strengthened. The programme is growing rapidly (204 enrolments 2014, 948 in 2015). New sites have been implemented successfully, and the quality of staffing and resources at these sites is high. The programme is suitably positioned for growth.

The weight of evidence supports a view that this is a high-level, challenging theoretical and applied programme which challenges or shifts established thinking. It requires new or enhanced collaborative learning and teaching practices by participants, and develops their technical skills (in the use of a wide range of digital tools in particular) as an embedded part of the learning model. It matches schools' and teachers' professional development needs and requirements very closely. This programme has very evident connections to the New Zealand Curriculum and Pond³¹, is having an impact on schooling already, and has the potential to do so on a large scale. The latter point is subject to adequate funding and teacher release policy, as emphasised by school leaders interviewed during this evaluation. Assessment in te reo has been implemented, and Mātauranga Māori expertise has been added to the staffing to better match the needs and aspirations of kura kaupapa staff in particular. This needs to continue.

The quality of materials, the technical interface, and the responsiveness of staff were invariably commented on favourably by participants. Where there have been technical glitches or gaps, these have been well managed by the partnership. The programme design may continue to challenge traditional paradigms and measures of 'teacher contact' and 'student learning' hours, but there was no evidence to indicate that the programme is being delivered in conflict with the NZQA approval. There have been data-sharing issues between the two partners' student management systems, and non-policy compliant use of some assessment protocols and codes. These issues are being worked through with Unitec guidance.

Ongoing monitoring of the quality of delivery and other forms of self-assessment are deeply embedded within the overall management and delivery of the programme, and changes and improvements occur regularly. Graduates confirmed these claims and cited examples of changes occurring. The annual programme

³¹ 'Pond network for learning is an online community connecting and empowering educators.'
<http://www.n4i.co.nz/pond/>

review is rich and reflective, based on NZQA's six key evaluation questions, but not particularly user-friendly for a wider audience. A useful and critical external monitor's report was also sighted. These are examples of reflective practices, using good data and student feedback, and involving students and other stakeholders.

As this is a level 8 programme, staff need to be research-active. According to the most recent programme review, 'the initial traffic lighting exercise, covering 2013-2014, revealed that only 6 out of 10 staff were meeting the minimum expectation. The projected outputs are that all staff members have at least 2 publications per two years'. Further, the review states: 'a research culture is being developed through a research group with an online community. As a result, outputs have begun to increase (2 publications since the group was formed). Staff are being mentored and supported by [a staff member who has a doctoral degree]'. The annual review includes at least eight action points pertaining to research, including an intention to hire more research-active staff. The list of research outputs was sighted by the evaluators, and is publicly available on the Mind Lab website.

Among the strongest features described by students and graduates, and intended by the programme design, is the rapid and effective transfer of learning into (and even outside of) classrooms. The description 'transformational learning' was used by numerous respondents, who provided rich examples of new learning and teaching practices which have had highly positive results – in particular with student engagement. Some outcomes have been shared through Pond. Additionally, the programme has links into diploma and Master's-level applied practice qualifications, and some graduates have already progressed to higher-level study.

Other noteworthy areas not specifically sampled but considered during this evaluation were Unitec's new 'Secondary School Engagement Strategy' referenced earlier, and the police pre-entry development. Unitec recently became the sole provider of the distance learning course which is a pathway towards entry to the Royal New Zealand Police College. This national programme has an intake of around 100 students every 12 weeks, and the police are responsible for the recruitment of students.

2.5 Focus area: Research and Enterprise

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

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

There is a clear link between the Unitec 2015-2020 Research Strategy and research activities. The need for research to be practical and impactful, as stated in the strategy, was confirmed by staff, students, graduates and industry stakeholders. These attested to the practical nature and relevance of the research being undertaken at Unitec. Students and graduates talked about how being part of research had linked them to key contacts within the industries they hoped to work in. Examples referenced here included IBM, New Zealand Football and Auckland Council. This reflects the intent that research equips people to realise their aspirations.

Staff noted that there was no division between research, learning and teaching – they were part of the whole educative process (as stated in the strategy). Several examples were given of how research enriched teaching and learning, one being the development of a new course in the Bachelor of Construction based on the research undertaken by a staff member.

The Research Office provided support through mentoring, providing training and keeping records of individual as well as institutional levels of research. Each faculty also developed initiatives for providing support for and fostering research – although there were clearly differences in approach and some inconsistencies in time allocations to support research activities. Research activities in general are well supported.

Monitoring and self-assessment of research

Monitoring and self-assessment occurs around institutional progress and preparedness for the next Performance Based Research Funding round, and progress by individuals or research groups. It was stated that there were a significant number of staff who were almost ready to publish and so a workshop was being held to facilitate progress and mentoring and support had been arranged to 'bring them across the line'. Progress in research is also monitored by programme through the 'traffic light' reporting to the academic board. For 2012-2015, 75 per cent of the programmes recording research activities improved their outputs. There were 10 more programmes recording research activities in 2015 than there were in 2012. This data demonstrates the significant progress made in research engagement since the previous EER.

Another indicator used for assessing research is the growth of research income. The trend is very positive, with four grant applications in 2010, and 70 grant applications processed in 2015. Research income has grown significantly since 2012, particularly in the fields of Computing and Natural Sciences.

An example of specific support provided where research engagement was well below expectation is the area of Sport, which was boosted by the appointment of

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an associate professor who had responsibility for mentoring researchers in that department. This dramatically improved engagement. However, when this position became vacant in 2015, it was not filled and the level of research activity fell away.

Management and support for research

Unitec has a well-established structure for the promotion, administration and support of research activities. The Research and Enterprise Office 'manages and promotes student and staff research at Unitec'. It has reported annually to the academic board since 2012 using the 'Research Productivity Traffic Light Report (Traffic Light) which provides an assessment of staff research engagement for all level 7 and above programmes.

Research committees exist at various levels of the organisation. There is a Unitec research committee, a research ethics committee, faculty research committees and department research committees in a number of departments. There is also a currently an informally constituted Unitec-wide emerging researcher committee which provides support and guidance for those entering into the field of research as novices. Monitoring and staff effort is high, and links to improvements and outputs.

Institutional support for research includes a researcher in residence, research workshops and writing retreats. The two recent appointments of research partners, one for Māori and Public Sector and the second for Enterprise and Commercialisation, will provide additional focus, guidance and support for researchers.

There are some organisation-wide initiatives for spreading best practice. The E:Press and Advance are two publications that document research initiatives. Researchers also receive weekly emails regarding any events that might be of interest. A research symposium is held annually for both students and staff to showcase recent research. In order to bridge the historical faculty 'siloes' approach, the Research and Enterprise Office is establishing a network approach, creating opportunities for joint research. Inter-departmental research is being encouraged with some departments, such as Computing and Construction, planning joint research initiatives. Research activities are recorded on ROM, a central database, which all staff can view. This assists with 'cross-pollination' and seeding ideas for collaborative research.

A Research Voucher scheme has been introduced in partnership with the other five Metro Group ITPs. It aims to provide a professional development and networking framework for staff to respond to community and business needs, while achieving research outputs. Thirty-one organisations or companies are engaged in the scheme, with 21 projects complete or under contract, involving 17 staff from 10 disciplines and growing numbers of students as assistants. Research undertaken under the voucher scheme is jointly funded by Unitec and industry and focuses on areas identified by industry. The success of this scheme is to be evaluated within the next few months.

The library is critical to research at Unitec, providing access to books, journals and electronic databases. The recent purchase of The Sage Research Methods Database is considered to be critical to the promotion of transdisciplinary research. The library provides services away from the main campus, at Waitakere and Albany. Six 'knowledge specialists' teach and support staff and postgraduate student research. In addition to the biannual ASSI survey which rated its services in the top quartile of the 40 institutions surveyed, since its restructure in 2015 the library has maintained statistical data to monitor its service. Issues raised such as quiet spaces and laptop availability have all been addressed to some degree. International students interviewed confirmed the importance and value of library services to their studies, including online services.

Students and graduates appreciated the learning that came as a direct result of staff engagement in research. This brought currency and leading edge information into the learning context, providing it with a richness that could not be achieved without this. They also appreciated the opportunities they had been offered in terms of undertaking research, particularly in an industry context. However, it was noted that only the more motivated student would be offered or would take up these opportunities, and that international students may miss out as they are more hesitant and found it harder to connect with industry. More work is needed here.

With the degree of involvement of students in research and the potential development of intellectual property and commercialisation, it is critical that students are protected. The current policy is being redeveloped. Students are involved in research in biosecurity, cybersecurity, and software development – all areas of significant commercial interest and potential value. Protection for student intellectual property and authorship is important.

Industry representatives were unanimous in their praise for the research work undertaken by Unitec in the areas represented. In particular, they valued the practical nature and real-world application of the research undertaken. Several of the businesses represented involved students in the research they were undertaking. One external stakeholder noted that in terms of industry research activities, Unitec was flexible, fast, collegial, cost-effective and common sense.

2.6 Focus area: Māori and Pasifika learner achievement and support

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

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

Unitec's Māori Success Strategy 2011 and Pacific Strategy (2010-2015) are overarching documents that guide Unitec's responsiveness to supporting and lifting the achievement of these two priority groups of students. Both strategies have adopted a wide lens to view responsiveness to students, and include several goals: improving engagement with Māori and Pasifika communities; increasing the visibility and capability of Māori and Pasifika leadership in governance, management and staffing roles; and in the case of the Māori Success Strategy supporting the organisation to improve Mātauranga Māori practices, knowledge and content within all Unitec's living curricula and environs.

It was evident from the documentation and interviews that both strategies are living documents within the organisation and are based on sound evidence of the levers that contribute to Māori and Pasifika student success. There are systems in place to ensure shared accountability for achieving objectives and regularly monitoring and reporting of progress/issues to senior management and governance (including Fono Faufautua (an advisory sub-committee of Unitec Council) and the Rūnanga).³² Both strategies were formally reviewed in 2013 (Māori Success Strategy) and 2014 (Pasifika Strategy) which acknowledged the traction made across objectives but also the work still to be done.

The leadership and oversight for the Māori Success Strategy is provided by Te Kāhui, chaired by the director of Māori Student and Community Engagement and the dean Teaching and Learning (Mātauranga Māori). The Pacific Strategy is monitored by the Pacific Centre. The leadership and commitment provided by these groups to keep the strategies at the forefront of the organisation's priorities is pivotal. Both the Maia Māori Centre and the Pacific Centre provide a range of pastoral, cultural and academic supports and services to students and staff. These supports include Whai Ake Māori Mentoring, Kura Pō, kapa haka events, study sessions, information evenings (Maia Māori Centre). Equally, the Pacific Centre hosts orientation events for Pasifika students, fanau evenings; academic supports for postgraduate and nursing students and the Pacific Centre mentoring group 'Tu'u Ke Mau'.

The Pacific Centre has also strategically used its resources to employ/deploy staff who have both the cultural and subject knowledge expertise needed to lift the achievement of Pasifika students in specific programmes. However, through their own self-assessment it has been acknowledged that traction is only possible where decision-makers are involved and accountable for making timely and appropriate

³² A parallel body to Council that acts as a conduit between Unitec and mana whenua, mātāwaka in Tāmaki, and as guardian of Unitec's partnership commitment and response to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Source: Unitec Investment Plan 2015-2016.

improvements that lift student achievement. This is an identified area for improvement that Unitec is addressing as part of its change process, including specific accountability in job descriptions for the new senior management positions and through the appointment of the executive director, Transformation Māori.

As noted in Findings 1.1, at an organisational level Māori and Pasifika achievement (based on course and qualification completions) has remained relatively stable for Māori and increased slightly for Pasifika. Both indicators, however, are still tracking below their Unitec peers, below institutional key performance indicator targets of 80 per cent and at, or slightly above, ITP sector medians.³³

There have been notable successes for students from these priority groups (for example Performing and Screen Arts, and Natural Sciences), and new initiatives such as trades training (reported under 2.4). However, performance indicators show variability in student success at a programme level, with some areas consistently under-performing (as evidenced through the focus areas). For example, the New Zealand Diploma in Business, Bachelor of Computing Systems, and Diploma in Sports and Fitness Education show course completions for Māori and Pasifika as consistently lower than their peers, and in some cases continuing to decline.

These challenges are well known to Unitec and the departments concerned. It was evident through self-assessment documentation and discussions that interventions have been put in place by programme staff to improve Māori success, including one-to-one student/lecturer mentoring support; performance agreements to monitor student attendance and success; monitoring completion of assessments for students who are achieving 50 per cent or less in their papers; Māori champions; tuakana/teina models, where, for example, level 6 students mentor level 5 students; monitoring access to Moodle content; smaller tutorial classes, and so on. However, these interventions have not had the cumulative desired impact on significantly raising Māori student achievement in some areas.

It was evident that those programme areas where there have been success for Māori students have been driven by student and whānau-centred approaches that are genuine, caring, appropriate and culturally responsive. For example, Performing and Screen Arts staff have consciously and thoughtfully embedded Māori champions, te reo Māori and cultural practices (including noho marae, hui and pōwhiri), Māori and Pasifika communities, and Mātauranga Māori in their delivery in ways that enable all students including Māori and Pasifika to:

- see value and strength in their own cultural identity

³³ Course completion ITP sector median 74 per cent for Māori and Pasifika, and qualification completion 66 per cent Māori and 55 per cent Pasifika. Source <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Documents/Publications/The-Tertiary-Education-Performance-Report-2014.pdf>

- see themselves in the learning environment and content, making learning relevant
- develop strengths-based relationships with staff and peers that support them to achieve success.

Sharing knowledge and practices that support Māori and Pasifika achievement is an area that can be improved across Unitec. Capability and success exists in pockets across the organisation. The challenge going forward is to continue to support and build the leadership, strategy, relationships and capability required to realise Māori and Pasifika aspirations.

*Ko te manu ka whai huruhuru, ko te manu ka rere*³⁴

2.7 Focus area: International students achievement and support

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

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

Unitec has a large and growing cohort of international students. Using the global indicators of retention in study and course completions, international students achieve well at Unitec (Table 5).³⁵ Most international students are studying in multi-year programmes, particularly business and IT. A smaller number are enrolled in English programmes, which offer an appropriate preparatory pathway to the range of qualifications on offer at Unitec. International students have a rich variety of choices, and they distribute across vocational areas according to their capability and vocational goals. Aggregated data indicates good pass rates across a range of programmes and levels. Less clear, based on Unitec self-assessment reporting, are the full extent of international students' outcomes into employment, or progression to other levels of study. Graduate surveys indicate that international students were in employment after graduating at consistent rates: 2012, 67 per cent; 2013, 61 per cent; 2014, 62 per cent; 2015, 66 per cent.

³⁴ Literally translated as 'the bird that has feathers, is the bird that will fly'. Cited in the Māori Success Strategy June 2013 evaluation report, which refers to the challenges ahead and the continued support and resources required to ensure success.

Table 5. International students' educational performance data (2014-2015)

	2014	2015
Course completion	84%	87%
Qualification completion	64%	66%
Progression	30%	73%
Retention	94%	76%

Source: supplied by Unitec from their student management system records.

Unitec uses a number of mechanisms to provide support to the significant numbers of international students who chose to enrol there. These include high quality pre-enrolment information and programme advice, and orientation programmes led by the International Student Services group. Guidance processes relating to programme selection and entry are effective. Student interviews confirmed aspects of support including airport pickup on arrival, orientation and assistance with initial homestays.

English language testing, and meeting the requirements of admission to programmes is centrally managed. Formal measures (IELTS (International Language Testing System) test scores and stated entry requirements are used). Where an applicant is seen as 'borderline', departmental teaching staff are invited to contribute their view to the acceptance process. Unitec has the advantage of being able to quickly refer students to the range of English language programming available at Mt Albert. Once enrolled, direct learning support and guidance has been provided predominantly by teaching staff, and Te Pou Aroha Student Support services as required or sought by individual students.³⁶ This sounds reasonable, but mixed student perspectives and experiences indicate that as a support process it warrants review.

Attendance is monitored by individual lecturers and departmental administration services, and where there are lapses the International Student Services staff have followed up directly with the student concerned. A centrally provided success and retention dashboard is used to monitor patterns of student performance, and the responsibility for monitoring this will reportedly move to Te Pou Aroha as part of a 'centralising of student wellbeing services'. Processes seem sound for ensuring visa requirements are met and contact is made with non-attenders.

Some near-campus student housing is used by international students; homestay accommodation is also arranged as an alternative. These operate under a third-party contract with the owner of the properties and the homestay broker, and the

³⁶ In 2015, Te Puna Ako provided free academic support to 53 per cent (over 1,200) of international students across a variety of areas. This included workshops and online study tools. Students who use the facilities have a significantly higher Net Promoter Score than those who do not.

quality is monitored by the international office, with recent higher-level scrutiny occurring, according to the director international. Accommodation arrangements seem suitable.

The most recent management focus has been on the larger structural realignment of business units and staffing in relation to international student recruitment, enrolment and support. The detail of analysis in this particular area of review is strong. Various aspects of the Code of Practice have also been subject to review since the new director assumed responsibility in 2015. Examples include more scrutiny of the arrangements for contracting accommodation assistance for students, assessing the current effectiveness of student contact roles, and ongoing monitoring of overseas recruitment agent performance. Following surveys and student feedback, the orientation process for international students was revised and improved. An after-survey indicated improved satisfaction ratings (80 per cent to 89 per cent) with that process.

An annual comprehensive review of the code requirements, including reflection on the effectiveness of policies and practices aligned to that code, was not evident, and this is an area that will need attention. Current processes do not align with 'good practice' sighted in other tertiary education organisations, and will not comfortably reach the threshold of the new Code of Practice, which will apply from July 2016. It is encouraging to see that each of the new position descriptions within the proposed structure have a specific statement relating to the code. At the time of the on-site visit the 'International Realignment' proposal had been out for consultation with staff. Some changes had been made in response to feedback, and a process of redeployment or redundancy was occurring. A key objective is to improve the 'integration [of the international component] with the wider organisation'. This is a timely and necessary goal.

Awareness of the code was relatively low among teaching staff interviewed. Most often cited were relevant components such as suitability for entry to the programme, attendance requirements, and referral to support services as required. There is sufficient evidence from programme evaluation reports and other programme level self-assessment (surveys and suchlike) that performance monitoring occurs along the lines of the wider cohort of students.

A general theme of only sporadic connectedness and intelligence sharing between central aspects of Unitec's services to international students and departments was noted during this EER. The international team's own self-assessment question, 'How effective are our academic staff in reporting pastoral care issues immediately to pastoral care staff?' and the intended 'development of a [stronger] process to capture pastoral related issues in a centralised repository [in preparation for a new client relationship management system] and [communication of that] to key personnel' are positive indicators that this gap is being addressed. The evaluators were, however, cautious of how soon the effectiveness of these new and extremely important protocols would occur given the current restructuring, particularly given changes within the team most directly accountable for ensuring the code is applied.

Although there is no specific, Unitec-wide survey of International students, their feedback, ratings and perspectives are gathered through the standard cyclical surveys co-ordinated by the Insights and Planning team.

All international students interviewed said they would recommend Unitec to a friend or family member. Students interviewed agreed that the programmes they have experienced at Unitec are 'academically challenging...particularly those above level 5'. Teaching staff were described as readily available and highly supportive in the majority of cases, with a few examples of very poor practice also noted. Students said they had brought these instances to the notice of programme leaders but were not satisfied that their concerns had been acted upon promptly. In the most serious case cited, the academic staff member has since left the employ of Unitec. An area of critique also related to the clarity of spoken English by some lecturers, and how this affected student learning.

In general, international students interviewed by the evaluators did not have high awareness of either complaints procedures or who they would contact in terms of an emergency. Rectifying this gap should be a matter of high priority for Unitec management. There are reportedly few formal complaints from international students reaching director level, who was unsure what the status of concerns or complaints might be at faculty level. This is also an area for improvement, and is noted as such in the international team's review plan.

Students enjoy campus life and the quality of services more generally, although some expressed a desire to see more social clubs and culturally related activities. Additional, cheaper food options introduced at the Mt Albert campus were seen as an improvement and showed responsiveness to feedback from students. Students make use of the extensive range of facilities and services provided for them at the busy Student Central area and elsewhere, including sports facilities and prayer rooms. Unitec has a richly diverse student population, and this clearly adds to the overall quality of the student experience for all students and staff.

An issue identified by Unitec around 16 international students' English capability relating to gaining entry to the teaching profession from a Bachelor's programme is being managed.

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Unitec:

- Governance and management continue to work towards strengthening effectiveness of the communication around transformational change with staff, students and external stakeholders.
- Consider adopting additional or more directly aligned benchmarking apart from the ITP sector median.
- Consider how data on career progress after graduation for international, Pasifika and Māori groups can be strengthened. More knowledge of these outcomes is warranted given the proportion of these students enrolled
- More generally, consider ways of strengthening knowledge on outcomes into employment from each vocational qualification.
- Ensure that Unitec academic policies around moderation, including specific rates of sampling and a more consistent proportion of internal and external post-assessment moderation, are communicated, monitored and actively enforced more generally across the ITP.
- Ensure that processes for student complaints, and who students can contact at Unitec in an emergency, are communicated more effectively to international students. This is a Code of Practice requirement. It is accepted that procedures exist at Unitec, but direct evidence points to further action required here.
- Consider further development of key indicators to measure progress and alignment and the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies and policies at organisational and programme levels.
- Consider the inclusion of indicators to monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of the proposed changes to the annual programme evaluation reporting processes to ensure that the requirements of all stakeholders are met.

It is recognised that changes already underway at Unitec may well be responding to aspects of these recommendations.

Appendix

Appendix 1		
Focus area sample programmes - by enrolments and equivalent full-time students.		
Programme Title	2015 enrolments	2015 EFTS
Bachelor of Business (various majors)	1,231	646
Postgraduate Certificate in Applied Practice (Digital & Collaborative Learning)	948	283
Certificates in Applied Technology (various specialisations) Level 4	587	794
National Diplomas in Construction (Construction Management), (Quantity Surveying), (Architectural Technology) Level 6	546	385
Bachelor of Computing Systems	508	397
Bachelor of Nursing	492	378
Bachelor of Social Practice	371	307
Bachelor of Construction	307	206
Bachelor of Performing & Screen Arts	285	267
New Zealand Diploma in Business Level 6	252	162
Diploma in Vet Nursing	201	133
Bachelor of Sport	158	121
Bachelor of Applied Science (various majors)	158	134
National Certificate in Retail Level 3	155	60
Bachelor of Health and Social Development	121	78
Certificate in Animal Management (Captive Wild Animals, Canine Behaviour and Training) Level 4	110	96
Bachelor of Health Science (Medical Imaging)	110	99
Diploma in Sport and Fitness Education Level 6	93	68
Certificate in Automotive and Mechanical Engineering Level 3	75	112?
Certificate in Electrical and Electronics Engineering Level 3	50	32
Master of Computing	39	13
Certificate in Animal Welfare Investigations Level 4	30	26
Doctor of Computing Systems	16	9

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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