



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

Unitec Institute of Technology

Date of report: 11 April 2019

About Unitec Institute of Technology

Unitec Institute of Technology – Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka (“Unitec”) is a large, Auckland-based institute of technology/polytechnic. Unitec’s purpose statement is: ‘We enable better futures for students, communities and public and private enterprise’. The self-identified critical success factors are: ‘(i) highly employable and enterprising lifelong learners; (ii) a more highly skilled innovative and enterprising New Zealand workforce; (iii) engaged and inspired staff equipped with capability for our future; and (iv) a financially sustainable Unitec’.

Type of organisation:	Institute of technology and polytechnic (ITP)
Location:	Carrington Road, Auckland
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	2018 Domestic: approx. 7,500 equivalent full-time students, around 12,600 students 2018 Māori: approx. 700 equivalent full-time students, around 1,300 students (which equates to around 10 per cent of all students) ¹ 2018 Pacific: approx. 1,000 equivalent full-time students, around 1,700 students (which equates to around 14 per cent of all students) ² 2018 International: approx. 1,600 equivalent full-time students, around 2,100 students (which equates to around 23 per cent of all students)
Number of staff:	Approx. 1,000 full-time equivalents
TEO profile:	See NZQA - Unitec Institute of Technology
Last EER outcome (2016):	Confident in educational performance Confident in capability in self-assessment
Scope of evaluation:	<i>Context:</i> Between 2016 and 2018, concerns around the quality of some educational practices at Unitec were brought to the attention of NZQA. As a result, in January

¹ Percentage of equivalent full-time students

² Percentage of equivalent full-time students

2018 NZQA determined to bring forward the periodic external evaluation and review (EER) for Unitec to November 2018.

In July 2018, the Minister of Education determined to dissolve the Council of Unitec and appoint a Commissioner. This was in response to the poor financial position of Unitec. Subsequently, the Commissioner has assisted Unitec to secure access to a Crown loan facility to maintain its financial viability.

In addition, over the period of educational review for this report (specifically November 2016 to November 2018), there were significant and ongoing management and staff structural changes at Unitec. These had not been completed at the time of the EER on-site visit by NZQA. An interim chief executive is working under the governance of the Commissioner.

Scope: Along with general quality assurance practice in educational leadership and student support, this EER also investigated eight focus areas. The focus areas were selected in order to consider a range of services across Unitec:

1. Delivery and outcomes for Māori learners	2. Delivery and outcomes for Pacific learners
3. Delivery and outcomes to support international learners	4. Delivery and outcomes in the Business Pathway
5. Delivery and outcomes in the Social Practice Pathway	6. Delivery and outcomes in the Building and Construction Pathway
7. Delivery and outcomes in the Creative Industries Pathway	8. Delivery and outcomes in Research and at levels 9 and 10

MoE no: 6004
 NZQA ref: C33060
 Dates of EER visit: 5 November 2018; on-site information and related evidence collected until 28 November 2018

Summary of Results

Following a period of instability, downsizing and restructuring, Unitec is now renewing its focus on quality academic delivery within their community. Progress towards achieving educational goals is being made but needs to be further secured and embedded throughout the organisation.

Not Yet Confident in educational performance

- Overall organisational course completion rates at Unitec were 83 per cent in 2017, consistent with 2015 and 2016. This shift is related to internal institutional changes from 2015.
- Overall organisational qualification completion rates rose to 58 per cent in 2017. However, there is a significant disparity of qualification outcomes between Māori and Pacific learners and others. Unitec leadership has not as yet demonstrated sufficient self-reflection and resolution to address such matters despite Māori and Pacific making up a large part of the student demographic.
- External stakeholders are generally supportive of Unitec's educational offerings, with employers noting the relevance and utility of qualifications. Graduates leave with work-ready qualifications and most are successful in gaining suitable employment. Unitec still has some work to do to restore the confidence of some sector bodies and community groups which were disenfranchised in past years as a result of organisational restructurings (notably Pacific communities).
- Many Unitec programmes are fit for purpose and match the needs of learners and stakeholders. In some areas there are gaps in teaching and assessment processes that need to be addressed. Despite staff losses in recent years, current Unitec staff remain committed and focused on ensuring a quality learning experience for their students. In many areas,

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

staff are well qualified and suited to their delivery areas.

- From 2016, Unitec has not always met external requirements relating to areas such as external moderation and enrolment processes. A renewed focus on ensuring a 'line of sight' from the leadership forum to individual programmes – including renewed policies, risk assessment tools, and quality assurance activity scheduling – is required to prevent further concerns arising.
- Unitec has useful study support services in place to remove barriers to successful learning.
- Unitec has a range of pastoral care and wellbeing initiatives in place to assist in addressing non-classroom issues that may arise for learners. Support services are inclusive of international learners, and Unitec is meeting its specific obligations to international learners.
- A new leadership team was formed in July 2018. At the time of the EER, the team was primarily focused on addressing the financial viability expectations arising from a Crown loan facility. This is appropriate. Educational quality assurance is less well developed. In particular, there remain gaps in the setting of educational goals and targets, and the quality of academic oversight. Although Unitec has addressed a range of compliance breaches since 2016, efforts remain largely reactive. Unitec's leadership now needs to progress from meeting compliance expectations to more consistent and sustainable management of its organisational performance.

Key evaluation question findings³

1.1 How well do students achieve?	
Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>In 2017, the overall course completion rate at Unitec was 83 per cent, which is consistent with 2015 and 2016 rates, at 83 per cent for both years. The course completion success rate for both Māori and Pacific learners remained significantly lower for 2017, at 74 per cent and 71 per cent respectively. Unitec self-assessment and interview comments indicate that internal institutional changes in 2016 and 2017 have negatively impacted course completions. NZQA agrees with this observation. Further data on course completions is provided in Appendix 1, Table 1.</p> <p>In 2017, the overall qualification completion rate increased to 58 per cent, from 54 and 53 per cent in 2015 and 2016 respectively. The overall result is positive, and it is noteworthy that these results are higher than the ITP sector median.⁴ Further data on qualification completions is provided in Appendix 1, Table 2.</p> <p>The qualification success rate for both Māori and Pacific learners remained lower than other students, at 47 per cent and 52 per cent respectively (11 and 6 percentage points lower than the overall Unitec average). Most Māori learners who enrol with Unitec appear not to gain the qualification they seek. Despite Unitec leaders and senior staff having some level of awareness of these disparities, and a desire to make changes, at this time no clear targets are set to improve qualification (or course) outcomes, to reduce disparities and/or improve overall performance. Unitec needs to address this matter with urgency.</p> <p>In addition to the above, student numbers have fallen rapidly, declining by 1,500 equivalent full-time students from 2015.</p>

³ The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

⁴ The sector median for 2017 was 53 per cent.

	<p>The newly formed Unitec leadership team (July 2018 onwards) acknowledges that this rapid decline in student numbers is a result of a previous lack of focus by Unitec on ‘core business’, and in particular on student success. Twenty-three programmes are being closed at the end of 2018. Although there was a robust organisational assessment of the mix of provision to identify which programmes would cease, there was insufficient evidence to clearly demonstrate that the qualification completion needs of learners had been given sufficient priority.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, the new leadership team is making progress towards refocusing the organisation on its core business of ensuring learner achievement. There is evidence the team is rebuilding organisation-wide staff confidence. The leadership team’s next actions for learner achievement should be to improve reporting to governance on academic matters, set explicit achievement targets for academic teams, and develop more robust interventions and monitoring to ensure academic course and qualification targets can be met.</p> <p>Programmes of interest within the focus areas generally show good practices, which give validity to the overall quantitative data drawn upon for this key evaluation question (KEQ). However, there are concerns about the strength of learner outcomes in social practice (see Focus Area 2.5), and on the reporting of learner outcomes in plumbing (see Focus Area 2.6), which reduces confidence in reported outcomes.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Unitec’s educational performance and capability in self-assessment of learner achievement is marginal at this time. This is because overall performance is variable, with unexplained and unaddressed outcome disparities for some groups. There are some gaps in practice which have impacted learners since the last EER, as described above.</p>

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Unitec stakeholders are (in broad terms): students (and their families), employers and industry, sector bodies, and community linkages and entities.</p> <p><i>Students and their families/whānau</i></p> <p>Unitec is aware of the need to ensure its programmes advance life prospects for its students, with improved employment and other life opportunities. To this end, Unitec undertakes an annual graduate destination survey. This survey, which demonstrates good self-assessment practice, shows that over the last three years at least 74 per cent of graduates entered into paid employment after their studies. Of these, around 80 per cent were in employment in an area related to their qualification. This is a good outcome for those students who successfully complete their studies.</p> <p>Notwithstanding, Unitec should undertake more analysis to better understand factors that prevent some students from completing qualifications. At the moment, while there is some understanding at programme level – and some support interventions for at-risk learners (see KEQ 1.4) – this data is sporadic and not systematically assessed. This means Unitec has a gap in understanding where and when programmes may have less value to students.</p> <p><i>Employers and industry</i></p> <p>Unitec commissioned a third party to undertake an employer satisfaction survey in 2017.⁵ This survey – which is evidence of good self-assessment practice – shows that most surveyed employers either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements: ‘Unitec qualifications enable employees to meet the requirements of their main job’; ‘employees have skills relevant to the real world’; and ‘[there is] overall satisfaction with employee knowledge and skills’. Such findings generally align with comments received directly from employers, although there may be an opportunity to further engage employers in</p>

⁵ A similar survey was also commissioned in 2015.

	<p>programme advisory committees (see focus areas for further comment).</p> <p>For this EER, Unitec was able to demonstrate linkages between its educational delivery and research activities and industry, with strong examples presented within the creative industries area (for example glass bottle design work) and the construction area (for example, the building of community housing).</p> <p><i>Sector bodies</i></p> <p>Unitec works directly with 11 regulatory and/or professional bodies. NZQA notes that four bodies had raised practice concerns in 2016 and 2017. These concerns typically centred on a lack of quality or robustness in educational performance. For this EER, Unitec provided clear evidence to demonstrate how it had responded to these concerns. NZQA was contacted by two regulatory entities indicating that Unitec still needed to address some matters to improve educational quality in relation to Unitec’s delivery. The issues included recognition of prior learning practices, and assessment design and moderation.</p> <p><i>Community entities and linkages</i></p> <p>Unitec seeks to actively maintain community relationships, including with Māori and Pacific communities, to guide and improve its services to these communities. In general terms, this is positive and NZQA acknowledges the leadership team’s new emphasis in this area. However, there is scope for practice improvements to increase the voice of these communities (see Focus Areas 2.1 and 2.2). For this EER, examples of Unitec facilities being used for community or wider educational outcomes, and of broader relationships, were provided in self-assessment materials. These endeavours add value to Unitec’s stakeholder relationships, but they need to be translated into better educational achievement for these groups.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Unitec’s educational performance and capability in self-assessment of the value of its offer to stakeholders is good. Performance with regulatory entities has improved and is now generally strong, and graduates, employers and community entities are generally positive about the value of Unitec. There is evidence that self-reflective practices have led to worthwhile improvements.</p>

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

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p><i>Mix of provision – match to needs</i></p> <p>As noted (see KEQ 1.2), Unitec has reviewed its mix of provision, and that process has helped ensure its programmes are of ongoing relevance and match the needs of students and other stakeholders. Programmes offered are suitable for a large metropolitan ITP, and are in areas where there are ongoing needs and employment opportunities. For example, Unitec is maintaining provision in areas such as construction and social work where there are high needs within the Auckland region. Unitec is also undertaking a managed exit away from both level 10 qualifications and off-shore delivery, to focus on what it considers are the core vocational qualifications required from an ITP. NZQA is satisfied that these changes are being made with the needs of current and future students in mind.</p> <p><i>Programme planning – match to needs</i></p> <p>Unitec uses a programme evaluation plan to evaluate the quality of its delivery. These plans include student, stakeholder and educator inputs (such as monitors' reports), student survey data, and assessment and moderation information. This is good practice. There was evidence of the application of improvements from these reports at the pathway level by senior academic staff. For example, the plans are linked to the development of 37 new programmes arising from the mandatory review of qualifications.</p> <p><i>Quality oversight – match to needs</i></p> <p>The leadership team, the academic board, and the smaller Category One Rōpū⁶ have not yet demonstrated sufficient understanding of relevant programme outcomes and related quality assurance matters. These groups struggled to articulate key quality assurance policies or risks, and did not clearly describe how the quality assurance of all programmes was routinely monitored and safeguarded. Responsibilities and</p>

⁶ Unitec advises that Category One Rōpū is a Unitec project group with the mandate from the academic board to coordinate improvement actions to achieve progress toward Category One status'.

	<p>delegations in this area were unclear. Gaps in the quality assurance of programmes remain. This may be the result of restructuring, but Unitec must urgently address this area.</p> <p>In one programme of interest for this EER, there was insufficient evidence of clear programme delivery and satisfactory assessment of outcomes (refer Focus Area 2.5). Of equal importance, there was no clear means for the academic board or other group to have a line of sight to such matters in order to evaluate and rectify issues. In this instance, and with other quality matters brought to the attention of NZQA, Unitec appears to be largely reactive rather than proactive through self-assessment to prevent concerns from arising. As a result of these findings, Unitec has significant work to do to strengthen its oversight of academic quality matters.</p> <p><i>Assessment and moderation – match to needs</i></p> <p>In all other programme interest areas, sampling indicates that current delivery is in accordance with approved programme expectations, and that assessment practices are fair, valid and transparent. Suitable internal and external pre- and post-moderation practices are in place for current provision.</p> <p>NZQA imposed a statutory action on Unitec in May 2016 for failure to meet external moderation requirements in two moderation systems at that time (as reported in the November 2016 EER report). In response to this, and its own self-review processes, Unitec consequently chose to withdraw their consent to assess for 86 unit standards and the matter is now closed.⁷</p> <p>In a previous level 4 plumbing qualification, some external moderation concerns had arisen with the standard-setting body; however, overall these were not considered to be compromising learner outcomes.⁸</p> <p><i>Teacher engagement – match to needs</i></p> <p>Through its self-assessment activity, Unitec is aware that the quality of teaching has a significant impact on whether learner needs are met. In their words, ‘high quality teaching’ and ‘poor quality teaching’ are key variables as to whether learners would recommend Unitec to others. To improve consistency of</p>
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⁷ For clarity, not all 86 unit standards were found to have failed moderation requirements, as moderation is a sampling process.

⁸ Students are also now transitioning to a different qualification in this area.

	<p>practice, Unitec has developed a Teacher Capability Framework through which all teaching staff will seek to develop 'badges' to demonstrate required components.</p> <p>This a positive action but the framework is still emerging and there is no evidence of student benefits as yet. Notwithstanding, in all programmes of interest, learners interviewed typically expressed high satisfaction with the quality of their teachers in terms of their professional knowledge, teaching rapport and general support. On balance, teaching staff have sufficient background knowledge and/or experience in their teaching area, sufficient adult education qualifications, and appropriate professional qualifications.</p> <p><i>Research engagement – match to needs</i></p> <p>Unitec is aware that many of its teaching staff delivering higher-level programmes (degree and above) ought to also be engaged in related research. To monitor this, Unitec produces a Research Productivity Traffic Light Report. This self-assessment activity is undertaken annually and shows a long-term trend of increased engagement in research, albeit tapering off slightly in 2017 and 2018.</p> <p>Presently, Unitec considers it is meeting its own research goals for 68 per cent of degree provision.⁹ On balance, while noting that a higher proportion of research-active staff is required to meet the future targets that Unitec has established for itself, NZQA is satisfied that Unitec has maintained appropriate research outcomes despite overarching organisational difficulties since 2015. As the leadership team and new quality assurance processes bed in, there are opportunities to achieve strong research engagement with a goal of research-active staff in all degree programmes by 2020. This should be one of the incoming targets for the academic board and its subcommittees.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Unitec's educational performance in ensuring programme design and delivery match needs is generally strong, and there are few gaps or weaknesses. However, Unitec's capability in self-assessment in this area is marginal. Self-assessment is being undertaken, but the leadership team and academic board need to actively set and monitor quality expectations in this area, and ensure organisational practices allow for a clear line of sight to</p>

⁹ Unitec's goal is that 75 per cent of degree or above teaching staff will be engaged in research. Approval requirements for these programmes are that they be taught by staff mainly engaged in research.

	programmes. This is so that any emerging issues can be addressed early, without negative consequences for students or other stakeholders.
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1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p><i>Enrolment and orientation</i></p> <p>Since 2016, Unitec has made significant changes to its enrolment practices and orientation approach to ensure the individual needs of students are understood and can be met at the outset. This has included bringing enrolment processes back in-house (previously outsourced to a third party); amalgamating international and domestic enrolment offices to better ensure international learners have the same access to services; and refocusing orientation from social activities towards an ‘on-boarding’ process designed to ensure all students are aware of the services and support available at Unitec. Current enrolment practices are now generally satisfactory, notwithstanding that at the time of the EER (November 2018) Unitec had reported to NZQA enrolment errors regarding a small group of international students, which required rectifying.</p> <p><i>Study support services</i></p> <p>Unitec has established extensive study support services for learners, many of which are located within its new Te Puna centre (a library/study hub). Study support includes assistance for students in understanding educational processes (for example, academic referencing) and support to overcome barriers to learning (for example, learning disabilities). Teaching staff in the focus areas demonstrated an awareness of potential learning barriers and teaching strategies to support positive outcomes (for example, use of formative assessment, a variety of assessment practices, and use of reader-writers if required). Literacy and numeracy assessments are also in place in relevant programmes.</p> <p>At an organisational level, Unitec has not developed a learner-centric database of the needs of students, meaning there is a risk of losing ‘student need’ knowledge in classroom transitions,</p>

	<p>and that the leadership team/quality assurance teams will not have a complete picture of learner outcomes. For example, reports by Unitec’s leadership do not yet identify how many students have low literacy and/or numeracy, or present with some type of specific learning need.</p> <p>Unitec is tracking first-year retention rates (for students in multi-year programmes). While the data shows a 71 per cent return rate, there is no clear information as to why some students exit early, or an established plan (or target) in place by the leadership to increase the rate of return. Data analysis should also focus on understanding any differences between priority groupings, including Māori and Pacific students.</p> <p><i>Pastoral and general support</i></p> <p>Unitec has an extensive network of pastoral support services, which are designed to increase students’ chances of success. This includes a range of health services, such as on-site counselling and medical services.</p> <p>Unitec is aware that some students are in difficult socio-economic circumstances. Therefore, Unitec has a small grant available for students to reduce material hardship (for example, to assist with food, rent, etc).</p> <p>Unitec has an extensive on-campus library and many quality learning facilities. The trade learning facility, Mataaho, is a new facility and is an exemplary learning environment. There is a free student shuttle between the two main campuses. Unitec’s leadership is aware that students at the second (Waitakere) campus sometimes feel underserved. However, there is good access to support services regardless of the students’ study locality.</p> <p>There are specific support interventions for Māori and (separately) Pacific learners. At the time of the EER these services were being re-established, having been previously downgraded throughout 2016 and 2017 (refer Focus Areas 2.1 and 2.2).</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Unitec’s educational performance in ensuring students are supported and involved in their learning is generally strong. However, Unitec’s capability in self-assessment in this area is marginal, and outcomes are not demonstrably the result of comprehensive self-assessment of student needs. Information on barriers to learning, and issues that prevent over a quarter of</p>

	students from returning to complete their studies, ought to be considered in a systematic way to ensure useful interventions.
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1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Poor
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>From July 2018, Unitec established a new senior leadership team. The academic board remains in place, but its desired composition, and reporting, was unclear at the time of the EER on-site visit. A supplementary new quality assurance project team (Category One Rōpū) has also been established.</p> <p>The leadership indicated that they have been primarily focused on meeting the financial viability expectations arising from the Crown loan. Evidence indicates that good progress has been made with addressing these concerns, and in renewing the organisation overall (in collaboration with the appointed Commissioner), by means of a ‘ground-up’ rebuild.</p> <p>Further restructuring, along with a reduced mix of provision, is currently in progress. In these initiatives, the leadership team has a much-increased level of support from staff.</p> <p>Notwithstanding these gains, for the period of this evaluation (November 2016 to late 2018), governance and leadership at Unitec has not been consistently effective in supporting educational achievement. There have been significant failures in academic oversight. Educational goals and targets, for example (beyond the purpose statement), could not be articulated by senior staff, and their understanding of academic data was poor. A complete academic risk register could not be identified; and there is no academic schedule/calendar of events for the academic board.</p> <p>Unitec has placed a heavy reliance on one person, the interim chief executive/academic dean, to address all such matters. This burden may not be sustainable in the long term. Unitec needs to consider the possibility of additional human resource, with the appropriate competencies, to embed robust educational practices, including improved organisational self-assessment.</p>

Conclusion:	Unitec's governance and management, for the period 2016 to early 2018, failed to support educational achievement to minimum standards. The new leadership team has had some success making Unitec a more viable entity. But improvements have only been partial, especially in matters of academic quality assurance and systematic, self-reflective practice.
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1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p><i>Education issues – effectiveness in managing compliance</i></p> <p>Since the last EER report in 2016, there have been a range of educational compliance matters arising at Unitec. This includes external moderation (in trades and generic areas), credit reporting (in trades), English language testing (confirmed breaches of NZQA Rule 18), and approval and accreditation compliance expectations not being met in both nursing and osteopathy. As noted, the current Unitec leadership has provided information to demonstrate how they have sought to address such matters. In their words, 'there were many breaches'; and they acknowledge a current focus on meeting expectations and rectifying any residual issues.</p> <p>Based on this performance history since the last EER report, only marginal improvements have occurred in this area. Self-reflective strategies and actions to prevent further breaches are still at an early stage of development and implementation.</p> <p>Unitec's compliance with the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice (the Code) was reviewed and checked. Despite past breaches in enrolment processes and English language testing, Unitec is aware of the extent of its compliance requirements under the Code, and has an effective team in place to manage and monitor the wellbeing of international students. At the time of the on-site visit the only significant issue was the incorrect enrolment of a small cohort of learners. The attestation provided for the Code demonstrates clear self-reflection practices. (Further details on services for international students are provided in Focus Area 2.3.)</p>

	<p><i>Financial stewardship – effectiveness in managing compliance</i></p> <p>Since the last EER, Unitec has not demonstrably managed its public finances and related duties in a satisfactory manner. The resulting financial deficits have placed the learning of the entire student body at risk. However, NZQA is confident that the Commissioner (with his special advisors) is now appropriately focused on a financial recovery plan which will better safeguard learner outcomes and ensure compliance with the Education Act 1989 Section 181(e) and other relevant legislation.</p> <p><i>General – effective management of compliance</i></p> <p>Unitec’s overall management of its compliance responsibilities was discussed at the EER. The interim chief executive stated that, other than the educational and financial matters noted above, no other significant legal or ethical issues had arisen. Unitec’s document on health and safety management demonstrates ongoing reflective practice. Given the organisational structural changes being made, the focus on staff wellbeing is appropriate.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Unitec’s performance in managing key accountabilities has been, on balance, marginal, taking into account issues from 2016 and also recent improvements by the leadership team. Some gaps and weaknesses have had a negative impact on services. Unitec’s capability in self-assessment in this area is also marginal. There is limited evidence that improved outcomes have been brought about by robust self-reflection.</p>

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Delivery and outcomes for Māori learners

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Poor
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Overall, Unitec course completions for Māori learners were 76 and 74 per cent for 2016 and 2017 respectively. This is below other learners.</p> <p>Overall, Unitec qualification completions for Māori learners were 46 and 47 per cent respectively for 2016 and 2017. This is significantly below other learners. NZQA is not convinced that Unitec has taken responsibility for low outcomes for Māori learners – with more than half of Māori students who study not completing the qualification they sought. There was no agreed measurement system or outcome targets for Māori. This is not satisfactory.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, Māori learners who completed their studies said they acquired useful skills and knowledge.</p> <p>Despite past internal difficulties with Unitec management, Māori staff said the organisation is now increasing its focus on Māori outcomes. A Māori staff grouping (Te Rōpū Mataara) has been formed (Unitec has 29 permanent Māori academic staff and 25 permanent allied Māori staff). A senior Māori staffing role has been created (Te Tumu). There is a Te Rito training programme in place for all staff to better understand Māori perspectives.</p> <p>A rūnanga of Māori stakeholders has been renewed to ensure engagement with iwi and other key Māori stakeholders. However, there is insufficient evidence to date to demonstrate how this group can have influence over management decisions impacting on Māori learning outcomes.</p> <p>There is a new Māori strategy (2018). However, its status at the time of the EER was as an emerging item. It had yet to be widely promulgated throughout the organisation and there is no clear implementation plan or associated budget as yet.</p>

Conclusion:	Unitec’s performance in meeting the needs of Māori students has weaknesses in terms of the quality of delivery and ensuring learning outcomes are met. Although there are pockets of good practice, and a number of committed and passionate staff, at the time of the EER Unitec had yet to develop an organisation-wide culture of responsiveness to Māori. Self-assessment was found to be poor, with no clear ownership by key bodies – including the academic board – of academic outcomes for Māori. Self-assessment in this regard does not meet NZQA’s quality expectations. Going forward, Unitec will need to focus on developing a realistic operational plan to enact its Māori strategy.
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2.2 Focus area: Delivery and outcomes for Pacific learners

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Poor
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Overall, Unitec course completions for Pacific learners were 73 and 71 per cent respectively for 2016 and 2017. This is below the Unitec median.</p> <p>Overall, Unitec qualification completions for Pacific learners were 47 and 52 per cent respectively for 2016 and 2017. This is below the Unitec median. This is a poor result given that Pacific peoples comprise around 14 per cent of all enrolments.</p> <p>Unitec leadership acknowledged that there had been a previous downgrading of Pacific initiatives, including significant staffing cuts. At present, this situation is being reversed and there is now a director Pacific. This position, however, is not on the senior leadership team, and it was unclear to stakeholders how the Pacific voice was being represented and taken into account throughout the organisation, including by senior management.</p> <p>In rebuilding services orientated towards ensuring Pacific student success, Unitec has re-established the Fono Faufautua. The frequency of their meetings, terms of reference and mandate to seek changes all require greater self-reflection by Unitec to ensure they are fit for purpose and genuinely empowering for Pacific communities.</p> <p>Unitec has established a Pacific Success Strategy, but there was not sufficient evidence that it was understood and reflected</p>

	<p>throughout the organisation. For example, goals set around achievement outcomes appear to be unfamiliar to many.</p> <p>Unitec data and understandings of Pacific peoples remain relatively unsophisticated, with limited breakdown of various Pacific nationalities and their community aspirations. There is also no linkage between domestic Pacific learners and international Pacific learners in data analysis.</p> <p>Generally, Pacific learners said they have high regard for the quality of the course they are taking, including the approachability of teaching staff. Internal Unitec surveying also showed high levels of satisfaction by Pacific learners. There is also ready access to the Pacific Learning Centre, which is a hub for Unitec and wider Pacific education initiatives.</p> <p>Pacific staff demonstrated both a high degree of care and support for Pacific students, and organisational loyalty. A number noted that they work within the organisation to ensure all staff can better understand the needs of Pacific learners. Given past circumstances (insufficient focus on Pacific), many Pacific staff go 'over and above' to meet their students' needs, such as extra teaching and pastoral support, plus strategic advice, in order to serve Pacific communities. Interviews and meeting notes suggest Unitec's leadership may not yet be aware of the extent of such services.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Unitec's performance in meeting the needs of Pacific students has weaknesses. About half of all Unitec's Pacific learners achieve a qualification. Although there are passionate staff and a new Pacific education strategy, at the time of EER Unitec had yet to develop an organisation-wide culture of responsiveness to Pacific learners. Unitec leadership may in fact be unaware of the level of support offered by programme and Pacific leaders and staff to Pacific learners. There is a need for Pacific outcomes to be a regular standing item on management and academic meeting agendas.</p> <p>Self-assessment was found to be poor, with no clear ownership by key bodies, including the academic board, of academic outcomes for Pacific learners. Self-assessment in this regard does not meet NZQA's quality expectations. Going forward, Unitec will need to focus on developing and implementing a realistic plan to enact its Pacific Success Strategy.</p>

2.3 Focus area: Delivery and outcomes to support international students (including international student support)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Successful course completions for international students have been consistently at 88-89 per cent over the past three years, and exceed those of domestic students. Qualification completion rates have increased to 62 per cent in 2017 (from 50 per cent in 2016).</p> <p>Since 2016 there have been significant challenges in the provision of education for international students, including declining numbers, a reduction of institutional knowledge through staff losses, and changes to the programme portfolios. These matters have had a negative impact on enrolment practices and processes. However, there is evidence that in 2018 Unitec has implemented strategies to mitigate the impact of these changes on international students' experience. In particular, a review of services has been completed, resulting in revised marketing material, process improvements, and a new enrolment management 'dashboard'. International student support staff are now integrated into the student success team to co-locate all student services. Management now regularly checks and audits enrolments to monitor accuracy and compliance. This is good practice.</p> <p>Development activities are available for all Unitec staff to better understand Code of Practice requirements and the needs of international students. Members of the international team also partner with specific practice pathways to provide additional support to both staff and students. Although this work is still in progress, the recent review of offshore partnerships has resulted in a reduction in the number of contracts and a more accurate master register of agents.</p>
Conclusion:	NZQA is confident that Unitec's educational performance in delivery and outcome achievement for international students is generally strong, and that gaps are being effectively managed. Self-assessment, including against Code of Practice requirements, is good and has led to recent improvements in practice.

2.4 Focus area: Delivery and outcomes in the Business Pathway

Performance:	Marginal
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>In this focus area, student achievement outcomes have been negatively impacted by a past ‘transformational’ project undertaken by Unitec.</p> <p>Qualification completion rates are significantly lower than course completions, although analysis of the reasons for this gap have not yet been convincingly presented to NZQA.</p> <p>Of the three business programmes of interest being considered, in 2017 the qualification completion rate was 53 per cent for the Master of Business and 36 per cent for the Bachelor of Business.¹⁰ These outcomes show further work is required to ensure suitable students are being enrolled who have a reasonable chance of success, given the provision of quality support and tuition.</p> <p>There is limited knowledge of employment outcomes. However, there are appropriate linkages with an industry body, and Unitec has also re-established its industry advisory committee.</p> <p>Programme review is overdue for both the Master’s and undergraduate degree programmes. Concerns presented during on-site interviews covered the lack of currency of some course materials; over-assessment; delivery not matching the needs of the courses; and that the qualifications themselves are not well regarded in industry. Recommendations in monitors’ reports consistently indicate that the qualifications need to be reviewed.</p> <p>Staff are engaged with professional development opportunities through the Teacher Capability Framework. Current organisational changes have resulted in renewed enthusiasm and support for Unitec’s strategic direction.</p>
Conclusion:	Educational performance is variable, and gaps in practices had an impact on outcomes between 2016 and 2018. Self-assessment has been suboptimal, with gaps in programme review and industry inputs, allowing weaknesses to go unchecked.

¹⁰ No achievement figures were available for the newer New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 5).

2.5 Focus area: Delivery and outcomes in the Social Practice Pathways

Performance:	Poor
Self-assessment:	Poor
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>There have been poor outcomes for the Master of Social Practice, with a significant gap between course completions (100 per cent for both 2016 and 2017) and qualification completions (13 per cent and 6 per cent for 2016 and 2017 respectively). However, the programme is being taught out, and a new Master of Applied Practice has been introduced. Four students have transferred to the new programme – two have successfully completed the qualification. This mitigates, in part, the low qualification outcomes.</p> <p>There have been moderate outcomes in the Bachelor of Social Practice, with qualification completion rates of 54 per cent and 63 per cent in 2016 and 2017.¹¹</p> <p>The Master’s and Bachelor’s programmes were found to be delivered as approved. However, external moderation was irregular and appeared not to have been competed for over two years.</p> <p>For the Bachelor’s programme, Unitec data indicates a high level of employment outcomes; with 113 of 135 graduates surveyed having relevant employment in the sector.</p> <p>NZQA has significant concerns about the delivery structure of the National Certificate in Mental Health and Addiction Support.¹² That is, Unitec could not demonstrate that a full-time programme of study had been appropriately delivered, with a range of suitable teaching and assessment methodologies. For this reason, results from this programme have not been provided in this summary. NZQA recommends that Unitec ensure a clear match between delivery and credit value for programmes in this area. In addition, NZQA also has concerns around the nature of assessments used, the breadth of practicum learning experiences for individual students, and the</p>

¹¹ For clarity, these statistics relate to the three-year Bachelor of Social Practice, which is being replaced with a new four-year Bachelor of Social Practice.

¹² This programme is being taught out and replaced with the New Zealand Certificate in Health and Wellbeing.

	<p>quality of internal moderation. Internal moderators have failed to identify examples of poor assessment feedback.</p> <p>There has been a degree of ongoing discord among staff in this pathway. Management has not demonstrated a clear understanding of or good practice in assessing the issues (for example, exit interview analysis was not undertaken despite the discord). For this reason, NZQA recommends that an appropriate independent party should help to review the current situation.</p> <p>Unitec engagement with stakeholders in this pathway was of inconsistent quality. Roles and input by others were unclear to some stakeholders. Unitec needs to strengthen engagement with stakeholders in the ongoing development and evaluation of these programmes.</p> <p>The regulatory body has concerns regarding the use of recognition of prior learning practices to award credits. This matter was not directly investigated on site during the EER, but Unitec should work with its industry stakeholders to increase confidence in this provision.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Educational processes and outcomes have not been shown to be satisfactory for this pathway. This is due to ineffective and weak self-assessment practices. There is limited evidence of effective reflection and self-evaluation.</p> <p>There is an urgent need for clear, systematic processes to ensure full and useful review of programmes, teaching and learning, and assessment practices. This is to enable programmes to be responsive to needs and to make visible the impact of changes on learners' achievement and learning experience.</p> <p>There was limited evidence of data analysis being used to understand patterns and trends which would enable responses to be targeted towards improvements and learner success.</p> <p>This pathway needs further internal review as soon as practical.</p>

2.6 Focus area: Delivery and outcomes in the Building and Construction Pathway (including Plumbing)

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Marginal
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>In the Certificate in Applied Technology (Endorsement Carpentry) course completion rates were 82 per cent in both 2016 and 2017. Qualification completion rates were 63 and 69 per cent respectively for 2016 and 2017. NZQA is satisfied that these outcomes, and emerging outcomes in the replacement New Zealand Certificate in Carpentry, are creating valued opportunities for learners.</p> <p>Course completion rates for the Certificate in Plumbing, Drainlaying and Gasfitting were 85 per cent and 84 per cent in 2016 and 2017 respectively. Qualification completion rates were 10 per cent and 24 per cent in 2016 and 2017 respectively. Unitec said the low qualification completion rates were a result of most graduates not completing all three components, but that the new provision disaggregated plumbing, drainlaying and gasfitting and would show better outcomes. NZQA sought further information on how many graduates become registered, to confirm outcomes, but this was not made available.</p> <p>Overall, these programmes meet stakeholder needs and are linked well with industry. Unitec is abreast of qualification changes in the trades sector. However, one standard-setting body had identified assessment and moderation concerns in a past qualification which remained unresolved at the time of the EER visit.</p> <p>Across this pathway, Māori and Pacific outcomes fall below those of other learners; however, there was strong support provided by the Te Puna centre and academic staff for these learners. Unitec has also engaged with the Māori and Pacific Trade Training initiative to improve outcomes in this area.</p> <p>The Mataaho trade training facility provides an exceptionally good learning environment, being well equipped and student orientated. Staff are well qualified and experienced educators, who have a good understanding of the learning needs of their students.</p> <p>Unitec has developed an 'app' to support and guide on-site learning experiences and assessments. This is of high value in trade-based learning and improves Unitec's ability to ensure</p>

	<p>assessments are fair and valid. It is an example of the exemplary initiatives being developed and deployed to improve distance learning.</p> <p>There is scope for this pathway to better track graduate outcomes, such as trade registrations, in a more systematic and comprehensive manner, to improve reflective practices.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Educational processes and outcomes are generally strong in this learning pathway. The learning environment is exceptional and, combined with the competencies of staff, contributes towards positive outcomes for students. Programmes are matched to industry needs and create valued and useful outcomes for graduates.</p> <p>Self-reflective practice within this pathway has been variable. There have been gaps in self-assessment practice, some of which have not met the requirements of a standard-setting body, including in moderation. Unitec has taken too long to understand and respond to these issues. At the time of the EER it was unclear whether senior management and the academic board were sufficiently aware of ongoing concerns in this area.</p>

2.7 Focus area: Delivery and outcomes in the Creative Industries Pathway

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>For two programmes of interest – the Bachelor of Creative Enterprise and the Master of Creative Practice – course completion rates were high, typically over 85 per cent in 2016 and 2017. There was a significantly lower gap in Māori course outcomes in the Master’s programme in 2017, but this was not well explained.¹³</p> <p>The New Zealand Certificate in Study and Career Preparation was also a programme of interest for this EER; however, because it is a new programme, completion data is not available.</p> <p>Unitec demonstrated a range of stakeholder relationships in this pathway. Industry representatives said that graduates had real-</p>

¹³ Qualifications data is not provided as these qualifications are too new to show full outcome results.

	<p>world skills and current industry knowledge. A programme advisory committee has now been re-established in response to an external monitoring report.</p> <p>Level 3 and 4 students said they considered the programme was preparing them well for future degree study, which would not have been available to them otherwise. They said academic staff were approachable and supportive.</p> <p>Staff are experienced educators with relevant industry and teaching competencies. Higher-level staff engage in research. There is scope to improve feedback to students on learning outcomes and to strengthen self-reflective practices to ensure consistency of quality in the programme and teaching.</p>
Conclusion:	<p>Educational processes and outcomes are generally strong in this learning pathway. The learning environment and linkages to industry, combined with the competencies of staff, contribute to positive outcomes for students. Programmes are matched to industry needs and create valued and useful outcomes for graduates. Greater self-reflective practice is now required, particularly on qualification outcomes and employment.</p>

2.8 Focus area: Delivery and outcomes in Research and levels 9 and 10 delivery

Performance:	Good
Self-assessment:	Good
Findings and supporting evidence:	<p>Unitec has maintained a consistent and useful research strategy throughout its various restructurings. The 'traffic light' monitoring system of research activity is leading to greater staff capability in this area.</p> <p>Unitec has embedded research leaders across its academic pathways to ensure broad coverage of areas, and actively recruits in higher-level programmes for research-active academics.</p> <p>Unitec's Performance-Based Research Funding will decrease in future as a result of organisational downsizing. Unitec is presently focused on more industry-based research initiatives to attract other types of grants and support.</p>

	<p>There is evidence that individual research plans are prepared, monitored and supported with pathways. There has been international recognition of research outcomes in some areas.</p> <p>Unitec has taken a managed approach to exiting from level 10 delivery, and has ensured ongoing, appropriate support for students completing at this level. There have been some concerns about the quality and consistency of delivery at level 9 (for example, refer to Focus Area 2.5).</p> <p>There is evidence of effective reflection and self-evaluation in higher-level delivery and research outcomes. Systems are in place to ensure that meaningful reviews of research activity are undertaken and monitored.</p>
<p>Conclusion:</p>	<p>Educational processes and outcomes are strong in relation to research and higher-level delivery. There are few gaps or weaknesses in research; however, level 9 delivery is not as strong across all focus areas.</p> <p>There has been careful management and maintenance of research outcomes during various transformation and renewal initiatives at Unitec. This self-reflective practice has led to improved practice, as shown in the increased proportion of research-active staff in degree (or higher) programmes, despite overall decreases in academic staffing.</p>

Recommendations

Recommendations are not compulsory but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that Unitec Institute of Technology:

- KEQ 1 – Set both realistic targets and stretch objectives for achievement outcomes, particularly qualification outcomes in consultation with relevant communities of interest (specifically for Māori and Pacific targets). Ensure these are promulgated throughout Unitec.
- KEQ 1 – Improve reporting to senior management and governance on core academic matters, including regular academic progress reporting to allow for early interventions if targets are not on track.
- KEQ 2 – Undertake more detailed study into the reasons that prevent some learners from completing their studies and/or returning after year one. Ensure the academic board actively monitors such matters and works on interventions within the purview of Unitec.
- KEQ 3 – Strengthen the competencies and mandate of the academic board to improve oversight of all matters affecting teaching and delivery quality (this should include setting policies and improving monitoring).
- KEQ 4 – The academic board should consider what actions it can take to record the support needs of individual students, to ensure holistic and ongoing support can be provided to avoid either re-assessments or misdiagnosis of known barriers to learning.
- KEQ 5 – Develop a robust academic risk register and academic schedule/calendar of events to guide quality assurance processes.
- KEQ 6 – Work collaboratively with the Commissioner to advance the 'renewal' work programme in a manner that ensures financial viability and minimises risk and disruption to students.
- FA 1 – Develop an operational plan to implement the Māori Success Strategy. Ensure this includes academic targets to address disparities. Ensure both academic and general management mechanisms are established to monitor progress. Ensure the strategy and planning maintain the support of Māori communities, and that this can be readily demonstrated.
- FA 2 – Develop an operational plan to implement the Pacific Success Strategy. Ensure this includes academic targets to address disparities. Ensure

both academic and general management mechanisms are established to monitor progress. Ensure the strategy and planning maintain the support of Pacific communities, and that this can be readily demonstrated.

- FA 5 – Urgently review provision within the Social Practice Pathway to ensure all programmes can demonstrate delivery and learning options aligned with course approvals. This should also ensure assessment practices are demonstrably fair, valid and transparent, including regular internal and external moderation that is fit for purpose. A review of policies and practices regarding the use of recognition of prior learning is also required.
- FA 6 – Work with the relevant standard-setting body to resolve any outstanding matters regarding assessment and moderation practices.

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

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

Appendix 1

Table 1. Unitec course completions data

Source: Tertiary Education Commission: Ngā Kete Data, as at 18 March 2019

	2016	2017
All learners	83.4%	83.4%
SAC-funded	82.3%	82.1%
Māori	75.8%	74.1%
Pacific	73.2%	71.0%
Under-25	80.5%	80.1%
International	87.9%	88.4%

Table 2. Unitec qualification completions data

Source: Tertiary Education Commission: Ngā Kete Data, as at 18 March 2019

	2016	2017
All learners	54.2%	58.4%
SAC-funded	55.2%	58.2%
Māori	45.5%	47.4%
Pacific	47.4%	52.0%
Under-25	51.3%	57.9%
International	49.9%	62.0%

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

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

Disclaimer

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

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

- *Identify organisational fraud¹⁴*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

¹⁴ NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016, which are made by NZQA under section 253(1)(pa) of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2018, 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 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 Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). The Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2016 are available at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/qa-rules/external-evaluation-rules-2016/1/>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/>.

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