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External Evaluation and Review Report

Aoraki Polytechnic

The enclosed historical external evaluation and review report was carried out by ITP Quality, the body that quality assured Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics prior to NZQA taking over that function.

It forms part of the quality assurance history of Ara Institute of Canterbury. Ara was formed by the merger of Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology and Aoraki Polytechnic in 2016.

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Aoraki Polytechnic

Date of Report: December 2010

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Purpose

The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Institute of Technology or Polytechnic's (ITP) 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 ITP itself for quality improvement purposes.

Aoraki Polytechnic in Context

Location:	Arthur Street, Timaru
Type:	Polytechnic
Size:	2189 EFTS in 2009
Sites:	Aoraki's largest campus is located in Timaru. It has further campuses located in Ashburton, two campuses in Christchurch (one focusing on beauty and media studies and the other a specialist campus for the Diploma in Sport and Fitness), Oamaru, and Dunedin (with programmes in media and beauty studies).

Characteristics of Aoraki Polytechnic

In the 2010 year Aoraki is offering 73 qualifications to a student body of approximately 2185 Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) funded Equivalent Full Time Students (EFTS) as well as approximately 25 International students.

Aoraki has implemented a major restructure over the last 12 months. The focus of the restructure is to lift educational performance, improve the learning outcomes of students, enhance engagement with regional stakeholders and realign with the Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-15 (TES).

As part of the restructure Aoraki has moved from a faculty structure to a school structure for better delivery of programmes and improved consistency and coordination across campuses. There are five Schools under the academic structure of the Polytechnic. The Schools are:

- School of Health and Education;
- School of Agriculture and Technology;
- School of Creative Technology, IT and Journalism;
- School of Adventure Tourism, Sport and Business; and
- School of Hospitality, Hair and Beauty.

Approximately 86% of the total student population is enrolled on programmes at New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) Levels 1 - 4. Levels 5 and 6 programmes account for the remaining 14%. No degree programmes are offered. Overall course completion in 2009 was 76% with course completion rates at NZQF Levels 1 to 2 of 80%, and 75% of students successfully completing courses at Levels 3 and above. This rate of course completion was the second highest in the country. The overall qualification completion rate of 51% was up from 30% in 2008.

Quality Assurance History

A full academic audit was conducted at the Aoraki Polytechnic in October 2006 and resulted in 'Quality Assured Status" being granted by the ITP Quality Board for a period of four years.

General Conclusion

Statement of confidence on educational performance

*ITP Quality is **confident** in the educational performance of Aoraki Polytechnic.*

Overall course completion rates in 2009 were very high with Aoraki achieving the second highest results in the country. The percentage of students completing qualifications (at 51%) was also good and showed significant improvement on 2008 results.

The current portfolio of courses offered by Aoraki Polytechnic is predominantly at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels 4 or below (86% in 2009). It presently sub-contracts over 40% of its learning delivery to providers based nationwide, predominately in land-based training, driver training and foundation learning. The performance in relation to qualification completion of some programmes delivered by these providers has not always matched the results achieved on those programmes that Aoraki delivers itself. This reflects the fact that some students are interested only in completing short-duration courses and have little intention of completing the qualification for which they have enrolled.

Earlier this year Aoraki carried out a comprehensive review of the portfolio of Programmes it offers. As a result it plans to deliver a consolidated portfolio of programmes that will include a greater number of full-time qualifications at higher levels and provide pathways to higher levels of education. There is also a goal to increase student numbers on the programmes offered. All of these objectives are consistent with the Tertiary Education Strategy 2010- 2015.

Aoraki has implemented a substantial number of improvement initiatives in the past 18 months. Many of these changes are targeted toward improving stakeholder outcomes and have occurred as the result of a range of self-assessment activities across the Polytechnic.

While the benefit of these many changes is not immediately apparent, a strong foundation is in place. It is expected that these changes will support Aoraki's transition to higher-level programmes whilst maintaining sound educational performance results.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

*ITP Quality is **confident** in the capability in self-assessment of Aoraki Polytechnic.*

Aoraki has clearly embraced the concept of evaluative assessment and has developed and applied a comprehensive range of self-assessment processes and activities. It must be

acknowledged that tremendous progress has been made in understanding and applying the concept across the organisation in a very short space of time. The evaluative conversations held within clusters (centred around the six KEQs), and the development, implementation and monitoring of resulting action plans have had a unifying effect and refocused staff on the goal of improving learning outcomes for students. Stakeholder Leaders' fora, Principals' fora, numerous well-engaged Advisory committees and frequent feedback from employers as part of programme placements, have also strengthened the relationship between Aoraki and local industry and communities in South Canterbury.

The positive enthusiasm for self-assessment and the rapid progress made to date is encouraging. However, there is still work to do to formalise and apply the mechanisms in a consistent, systematic and universal way. The 2010 Quality Assurance plan includes steps for monitoring pass rates and student survey results, as well as other improvements. These will assist in determining whether the improvement initiatives implemented have improved educational performance.

ITP Response

Aoraki Polytechnic has confirmed the factual accuracy of this report.

Basis for External Evaluation and Review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of course approval and accreditation (under sections 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989) for all Tertiary Education Organisations (TEOs) that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the course approval and accreditation criteria and policies established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Polytechnics of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance of the polytechnic sector, and 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 guidelines approved by the ITP Quality Board.

The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions through the investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the ITP Quality website(www.itpq.ac.nz).

Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.itpq.ac.nz/index.php/external-evaluation-review/eer-guidelines>

Scope of External Evaluation and Review

Identification of Focus Areas

In order to provide a representative cross-section of the Polytechnic's operations and the programmes offered, the focus areas chosen should, where possible comprise:

- courses delivered from each of the Schools and subject areas;
- courses delivered at a number of levels, including certificates, diplomas and degrees;
- a sample from each of the Polytechnic's campuses;
- a significant proportion of the Polytechnic's students and EFTS;
- a range of courses with high and low retention, completion and success rates or concerns;
- a sample of those that have a partnership component;
- a sample of courses that comprise different delivery modes.

The programmes reviewed during the EER and the criteria for their selection are listed in the attached table.

When reviewing focus areas the EER Team met with Directors of Schools / Programme Coordinators, other teaching staff, external Advisory Group members / employers / industry representatives, and students. It was agreed that Support Services would be included as a focus area as it provides service across all Aoraki campuses. Discussions were held with the Academic Director to whom Support Services reports, the Manager and Support Services staff. The EER team also met with staff of the International office and a cohort of international students to determine levels of support and confirm that the obligations under the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students are being met.

In reviewing the Governance and Management function of Aoraki the EER team met with the Senior Management team, the Academic Board and representatives of Aoraki Council.

School	Programme	Type of award	NZQA level	EFTS (2009)	Delivery	Rationale
Health and Education	Certificate in Early Childhood Studies	Certificate	3	14	Timaru campus plus practicum component	High retention and success Many students looking to progress to higher study
School of Adventure Tourism, Sport & Business	New Zealand Diploma in Business Studies	Diploma	5-6	72	Timaru, Ashburton and Oamaru campuses	High community demand Delivered in multiple locations
	Certificate in Outdoor Recreation	Certificate	4	14	Timaru	Flagship programme High retention and success rates Internationally recognised Strong links to other Tertiary Institutions allowing students to pathway
School of Hospitality, Hair & Beauty	Certificate in Beauty Treatments	Certificate	4	49	Timaru, Oamaru, Ashburton, Christchurch	Popular programme Delivered in multiple locations
School of Creative Technology, IT & Journalism	Certificate in Computer Skills	Certificate	2	46	Timaru	Entry programme Some on-line delivery Historically had completion and success issues
School of Agriculture & Technology	Certificate in General Engineering	Certificate	2	22	Timaru	Foundation level programme Entry programme for predominantly young males into vocational training Large component of work-related training (20%) Strong connections to sector
Aoraki External Provider (AEP)	National Certificate in Horticulture	Certificate	4	144	Various (Ashburton)	Delivered by Agribusiness who are also a NZQA accredited PTE. Delivered at numerous locations across the South Island.
	Certificate in Foundation Technology	Certificate	1	81	Manukau, Auckland	Course delivered by MSL, an independent training provider contracted to Aoraki.

Findings

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

1.0 Key Evaluation Questions

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**.

Explanation

Student achievement rates across Aoraki are generally high with course completions one of the highest in the sector. In some cases this result is not reflected in the qualification completion statistics as many learners complete specific modules of interest and enrol with no intention of completing the entire qualification. Where educational performance issues have been identified, these are being actively managed.

For those graduates who complete their qualification, there are good pathways to progress to higher levels of study or directly into employment.

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

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

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

Explanation

In our conversations with members of advisory committees and sector representatives, it was apparent that they value the opportunity to interact with staff of the Polytechnic and see the relationship as critical to their own workforce development. Industry stakeholders have relished the opportunity to work collaboratively with Aoraki to the ultimate benefit of the region. Employers consider the programmes offered are industry focussed and their commitment to accept students on placement attests to their confidence in the quality of the programmes offered and the "work-readiness" of students.

Students also consider that Aoraki programmes meet their needs from both educational and personal growth perspectives. Many valued the emphasis on practical skill development and the placement component of the programmes that prepared them for employment.

Aoraki is to be commended for its outreach to the communities it serves through its annual Leaders' fora, 'Adopt-an-employer' programme, Open Day and its close liaison with

secondary schools. Plans to enhance liaison with iwi are being considered, with the objective of encouraging greater participation by Maori at Aoraki.

Of the programmes reviewed, there was evidence of a real commitment from staff to provide learners with the skills and knowledge that they require to gain employment in their chosen field. Some graduate destination tracking does occur although it is not always systematic or consistent across qualifications.

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 **Good**.

Explanation

The portfolio programme review conducted by Aoraki earlier this year is now complete. It has resulted in a more balanced portfolio targeted at meeting the needs of both students and employers, whilst also delivering economic benefit to the communities that Aoraki serves. The development of new programmes and modifications to existing programmes (particularly around placement) reflect this demand.

Aoraki has been placing particular emphasis on developing close relationships with High Schools in the region and this is reflected in the Gateway programme.

In most cases programmes are meeting student expectations and this was reflected in high levels of satisfaction. In part this can be attributed to clarity about programme requirements and assessment methods, as well as the formal relationships that Aoraki has with other tertiary institutions that allow students to staircase to higher levels of study.

Aoraki has an ambitious programme to embed Numeracy and Literacy elements within all programmes by 2011 and has already made considerable progress in achieving this objective. Targets to embed literacy and numeracy in all Level 1-3 programmes are currently being met.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Explanation

The quality and effectiveness of teaching across Aoraki are excellent. Tutors demonstrate a focus on student learning that is typically contextualised to assimilate a vocational environment with a good balance between practical and theory. Both students and employers valued this approach.

The excellent course completion results also reflects low student:tutor ratios and highly effective teaching practice, delivered in most cases by well-engaged and responsive Tutors. The drive to lift standards by requiring all Tutors to attain formal teaching qualifications by 2013 is also insightful. Good reporting systems provide statistics on the number of support interactions with students.

A number of survey instruments to determine student satisfaction are used and have recently been updated and modified. From 2011 student satisfaction will be visible at the programme, campus, cluster and School levels. However, at present the use and analysis of student satisfaction data to facilitate improved practice is not universal and the current approach does not allow systemic issues across programmes and Schools to be identified.

Tutor appraisals commonly occur within, and across, qualification teams and Schools but are also not universal. This is an important element of the self-assessment process and a broader use could be expected to enhance the learning environment for students. Students are generally positive about assessment and feedback mechanisms. Where issues have been identified, they have been or are being adequately addressed.

Many courses have implemented the use of diagnostic tools, but their use could be more widespread and in some instances introduced earlier within the course.

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**.

Explanation

A broad and comprehensive array of support mechanisms for students is accessible across Aoraki campuses.

Most students are aware and complimentary of the support services available and felt they received good guidance and support regardless of the campus they may be studying at.

There has been a significant increase in the use of diagnostic tools to ascertain students' learning needs early on. Greater use of the tools could be made by learning support staff to assess the effectiveness of the interaction following support.

Many students at the Timaru, Ashburton and Oamaru campuses commented positively on the introduction of free bus services between campuses that will be introduced in 2011. This initiative is in direct response to stakeholder feedback. Students generally, including

those attending satellite campuses, were complimentary of the library and on-line resources available to support their study.

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**.

Explanation

Considerable focus on improving educational outcomes has occurred in recent times. This focus has occurred as the result of increased governance and management attention arising from Council's desire to lift educational standards. Council are kept informed of progress against performance criteria and receive Academic Board minutes. Many significant changes have arisen from self-assessment activities. Restructuring from multiple campus-based Faculties to five discipline-based Schools is a notable example. Heads of Schools, Programme Managers and staff all commented positively on the outcome of the new structure, citing clearer lines of responsibility, greater accountability, a unified vision, greater collegiality, and a focus on outcomes at the programme level. The comprehensive Programme Portfolio Review carried out earlier this year is another good example of Aoraki validating the quality and value of the education it delivers to stakeholders. Aoraki management has also placed particular emphasis on Tutor development and introduced a requirement to have all teaching staff hold a Level 5 teaching qualification by May 2013. The improved monitoring and management of subcontracted providers, which has previously been inconsistent, is another necessary and positive outcome.

Aoraki Senior Management demonstrates strong leadership and clearly articulates the strategic direction and approach to be taken.

The many initiatives implemented are expected to improve the educational performance of students and qualification completion rates in particular, however it is too early to confirm their effect.

2.0 Focus Areas

2.1 Focus Area 1: Certificate in Outdoor Recreation (Level 4)

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

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

Educational Performance

Learner achievement is high, evidenced by strong retention rates, course and qualification completion rates; and the provision of learning opportunities that ensure new and useful skills are developed which are a dual focus of improving personal well-being, and work readiness.

The level 4 outdoor recreation programme attracts learners from all around New Zealand, which reflects its reputation with industry, as a high quality programme. Within the programme students experience a range of quality learner experiences, they are well supported and guided by professional educators. These factors ensure that there are good outcomes results for learners, making this a flagship programme for Aoraki.

Capability in Self-Assessment

Outdoor education tends to have its own culture of self-review, and going forward, integrating review practices with the broader educational approach of Aoraki will be advantageous.

There is an embedded culture of self-review which has not yet been linked to educational outcomes. Staff have gone through the motion of the self assessment evaluative conversation exercise and have found it useful but have not fully understood its true purpose or the rationale for self-assessment itself. A method for systematically collecting and analysing destination data has not yet been formulated.

2.2 Focus Area 2: Certificate in Beauty Treatments (Level 4)

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

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

Educational Performance

The Certificate in Beauty Treatments was evaluated at the Christchurch, Oamaru and Ashburton campuses. There is a high degree of consistency across sites, with the recent

restructuring into Schools providing additional coherence and opportunities for staff interactions. Course and qualification completions are consistently high (87% and 85% respectively in 2009), attributable partly to the careful attention prospective students are given prior to enrolment, as well as the value of the internationally recognised City & Guilds qualification outcome. Staff are proactive in identifying reasons for withdrawal or poor attendance and offer additional support/assistance if needed.

Stakeholders are actively involved in several meaningful ways, including delivery, and confirm that graduates are work-ready, valued employees. Stakeholders also are appreciative of Aoraki's contribution to the respective local region.

Staff at all campuses are held in high regard by students and stakeholders. They are seen as 'really on the ball' and 'just as eager to learn as the students are'. As a group, they are proactive, competent, dedicated and involved.

Capability in Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is taken seriously by staff and management. Many examples were provided of how the approach has been used to build an effective team, identify patterns within and across campuses, make decisions and track outcomes. Of particular note is how the decision to shift from City & Guilds to ITEC examinations was made, including formal consultation with external stakeholders and students.

Although student achievement is consistently high, the School still actively seeks ways to improve. The self-assessment tools, particularly the Key Evaluation Questions, are used as a framework for identifying patterns. The Head of School is to be commended for the development and use of the Stakeholder Contact Matrix tool.

2.3 Focus Area 3: National Certificate in Horticulture (Level 4)

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

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

Educational Performance

This qualification is delivered via a subcontracting arrangement with a registered private provider. The (amended) course completion result is good at 76%, but this figure is yet to

be reconciled with data submitted to the funding agency (TEC), indicating 35% completion. The Qualification completion rate is very low at 3%¹.

In part, low completion is due to students being interested in only selected modules. However, another contributing factor is the use of this 140-credit Level 4 qualification as an entry-level programme, without sufficient attention given to entry criteria or students' intentions. There also appears to have been a significant mismatch between the amount of tuition available for a qualification of this length and level. These issues do not give justice, however, to the high quality of teaching delivery and the expertise of the tutors involved.

Capability in Self-Assessment

In 2009, Aoraki commissioned an independent report as part of the three-yearly review of the Memorandum of Agreement, with a specific focus on matters related to student achievement. Aoraki management is now more cognisant of the issues that have affected performance and has put in place a series of actions to rectify the situation. This has included new personnel to manage the subcontract. Key aspects of the strategy are the withdrawal of the Level 4 qualification as an entry point, the establishment of clear performance targets and a more engaged management relationship between Aoraki and the subcontractor.

Self-assessment activities have been introduced and/or formalised, including more regular student evaluations, teaching observations and stakeholder engagement. It is expected that these changes will lead to continued improvement in performance and more effective engagement between Aoraki and the subcontracting partner.

2.4 Focus Area 4: Certificate in Early Childhood Studies (Level 3)

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

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

Educational Performance

Following a review of the Early Childhood Studies programme in 2008 changes to the assessment regime and in-class support has contributed to an increase in the achievement rates for the programme for 2009. Students are highly complimentary of tutors teaching style and the support offered to facilitate their learning in the classroom.

¹ During, and subsequent to, the EER the team received two sets of course completion data for the National Certificate in Horticulture delivered for Aoraki by its subcontractor Agribusiness Training Limited (ABT). The two sets of reported results varied markedly. Irrespective of which of the data sets is correct, the fact that there is no single source of Horticulture student course and qualification success data signifies systemic issues. This issue should have been identified earlier if effective management practices were in place. Resolving the issue of correctly reporting student success rates must be an immediate priority for Aoraki management.

The programme receives good support from an active and engaged advisory group whereby any changes to industry practice and feedback from practicum placements is shared and discussed. Tutors involved in the programme are active in the community to ensure currency for their teaching practice.

Students consider the programme offers value from an educational and personal growth perspective and many plan to continue on to degree level study in early childhood education.

Capability in Self-Assessment

The outcomes from cluster evaluation conversations are being implemented and new initiatives including revised entry criteria are being introduced for 2011.

Student placement during their practicum within the community is a significant component of the programme and for 2011 the format is to be changed to reflect a 'real life' relevance to the student learning experience. Members of the Advisory Group consider that Aoraki is demonstrating a commitment to the community and is constantly listening and modifying the content and format of the programme to respond to industry needs.

2.5 Focus Area 5: New Zealand Diploma in Business Studies (Levels 5 –6)

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

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

Educational Performance

The NZ Diploma in Business Studies (NZ Dip Bus) was evaluated at the Timaru and Ashburton campuses. Course completion and retention rates are good (77% and 54% respectively in 2009). Students and stakeholders value the embedded qualifications and staircasing opportunities more than the NZ Dip Bus outcome, however, as reflected in the low qualification completion data (30%).

Student feedback about Aoraki, the staff and the courses offered indicates delivery is meeting their needs at both campuses. Staff are seen as 'on the ball' and supportive. External stakeholders say they feel valued and involved, and that Aoraki makes a valuable contribution to their work and the region.

Capability in Self-Assessment

Results from formal student surveys are consistently positive, particularly regarding quality of teaching and support from Access Aoraki. Specific examples from students at both campuses indicate that staff respond quickly and appropriately and keep students informed of outcomes.

As a result of consultation with industry and students, from 2011 Aoraki plans to offer shorter, more focussed qualifications that articulate to NZ Dip Bus, in anticipation of similar changes being made at a national level. The institution expects this to improve qualification completion, although explicit tracking of current students at embedded qualification level has not been done as a comparative baseline.

Although staff keep in contact with many of the graduates and have ongoing contact with employers and business firms, a system for systematically collecting / collating destination data to provide an overall picture at programme level has not yet been devised.

Initial steps of self-assessment and team building across the campuses have been taken, but still need to be implemented in a more systematic way. The dedication and proactive approach of both Programme Coordinators give confidence that it will be achieved in the near future.

2.6 Focus Area 6: Certificate in Foundation Technology (Level 1)

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

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

Educational Performance

Student achievement in the Certificate in Foundation Technology is of a high standard, not only because of the high course and qualification completion figures, but also because of the more informal gains made by students with respect to their personal confidence and their acquisition of more general employment related skills. The programme is clearly meeting the needs of learners and other stakeholders and is being effectively delivered by well qualified tutors.

Students are well supported both during the course and subsequently in their moves towards further training or employment. Delivery by MSL Training is subject to a Memorandum of Agreement that has been approved by the TEC and the joint management of the programme is effective in maintaining quality.

Capability in Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is based on good information, although much is anecdotal, and processes are in place which ensure a continuous process of evaluation and improvement. It is noted that in the future Aoraki Polytechnic will be more directly involved in the delivery of the programme through the secondment to them of the MSL tutors. It is expected that this will lead to a more formal appraisal of tutors and enhance the opportunities and support for their professional development.

2.7 Focus Area 7: Certificate in Computer Skills (Level 2)

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

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

Educational Performance

Aoraki has recognised that the delivery of this qualification has, in the past, had significant flaws that have negatively undermined educational outcomes. Results have not been satisfactory to Aoraki, and the evaluation also reaches this conclusion, with only a small percentage of learners completing the qualification. The arrangements between Aoraki and the contracted sub-provider have not been sufficiently focussed on educational performance. Managerial oversight from Aoraki has also not been adequate and levels of tutor support have also been too low.

Aoraki has now recognised that this qualification is an entry-point to tertiary study, and needs to deliver on learning and life skills, perhaps as much as technical computer skills. Learners were also typically ill-prepared for study, with this qualification frequently being selected due to a shortage of Adult Education learning opportunities in general computing.

For the reasons noted here, Aoraki is now in the process of withdrawing delivery of this programme, and has developed an alternative which is considered more appropriate.

Capability in Self Assessment

As a result of its evaluation activities Aoraki identified a range of issues associated with the delivery of this programme. It has put in place a new management team tasked with rectifying the situation.

The new manager has commissioned a full review that identified a number of barriers to learning inherent in the programme. Management also drew upon expert advice, and further consultation with key stakeholders was carried out. This evaluation finds that the 'free and

frank' self-assessment which has occurred demonstrates a renewed commitment to learners with an interest in this area².

2.8 Focus Area 8: Certificate in General Engineering (Level 2)

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

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

Educational Performance

In this qualification Aoraki demonstrates effective teaching practices, which are complemented with good resources and personalised guidance and support for each learner. The resulting outcome is highly engaged students who generally achieve well, and highly satisfied external stakeholders, including employers.

The qualification performance is assessed effectively through good use of the Advisory Committee and input from other industry stakeholders, as well as frequent on-going conversations amongst staff. The programme is highly valued by the community and is well known. Employers were very satisfied with the two days work experience and the associated support offered to students on-site. As a result they are fully supportive of the programme and of the Polytechnic.

Learners are also very satisfied with the content and delivery of the programme, the skills learnt and the workplace component of the course. In their view it provides them with the skills to secure employment, and there is evidence this occurs. Learners also enjoy a strong rapport with educators, which was beneficial to their learning outcomes.

Capability in Self-Assessment

This programme has an excellent relationship with the Engineering industry in South Canterbury. The substantial placement component and the weekly contact by Tutors with students and employers in the workplace provide frequent opportunity to assess content relevancy and effectiveness of delivery.

While there were examples of reflective self-assessment practice occurring, it does so in an unstructured and typically informal way. For example, Student evaluations are used but it is unclear how they are integrated with programme reviews or changes to delivery and content. The programme would be improved by more structure and the ability to demonstrate the effectiveness of modifications made.

² Aoraki has decided to exit this programme and has developed an alternative. It has maintained an adequate level of support for those learners still enrolled. New learners may not enroll on the discontinued programme and the alternative qualification is now being trialed to ensure better provision of entry-level computing studies are offered. Aoraki may need to consider further 'grandparenting' current learners to the new qualification to ensure they are offered the best learning opportunity.

2.9 Focus Area 9: Support Services

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

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

Educational Performance

A benchmark comparison against the Support Services provided by other ITPs has been carried out (Tribal, 2009 results data). This comparison identified that while Aoraki's cost of delivering Support Services were lower than the sector average, it achieved the highest course completion rates across the sector for those students considered to be "at risk".

More resources are being put into support services across the Institute and in particular to support students attending satellite campuses.

Students and Tutors are aware of the range of support services available. The high profile, accessibility and quality of services across campuses are strengths.

While many initiatives are being, or have been, implemented the effect on learning outcomes has yet to be confirmed.

Capability in Self-Assessment

Analysis of the support data has identified which programmes and student profiles are the greatest users of support services. A review of student support services is about to be completed which will provide a stock-take of the services currently delivered and assess effectiveness.

Actions occurring as a direct result of the evaluative conversations held have been viewed positively. Self-assessment has unified support staff with the result that culture is changing and is now more open and collaborative. Support services are now more integrated in their delivery with the objective of improving educational outcomes for students.

No formal assessment of the impact or effectiveness of the interaction is made following support.

2.10 Focus Area 10: Governance and Management

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

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

Educational Performance

Aoraki is well served by a Chief Executive who demonstrates strong leadership and who has provided greater clarity on strategic direction, approach and accountabilities. Numerous initiatives have been implemented in a very short space of time. These initiatives respond to a challenging set of key performance indicators set by Council which reflect an emphasis on lifting educational performance and maintaining the long-term viability of the Polytechnic.

The changes implemented are significant and wide-ranging across the Polytechnic. Restructuring from three campus-based Faculties to five discipline-based Schools is but one example. Processes and systems have been improved. It is expected that in time, these initiatives will lift the educational performance of students and ultimately contribute to the regional economy as Aoraki transitions to delivering higher-level programmes of a longer duration. However, at this point it is not possible to confirm the effect of these initiatives.

Capability in Self-Assessment

Many of the improvement initiatives identified have occurred as a direct result of self-assessment activities.

Aoraki's engagement with industry and community Leaders through the fora held is an excellent example of strengthening this important relationship. The follow-up activity such as the resulting action plans, feedback on resulting improvements, Council members participating on Advisory Committees, and the Adopt-an-Employer initiative combine to represent a best-practice example of community engagement.

A comprehensive self-assessment programme has been developed and implemented in a very short space of time. In addition to the anticipated improvement in educational performance expected, the programme has united staff within programmes, Schools, and campuses to focus on actions that will improve educational and economic outcomes for all stakeholders.

2.11 Pastoral Care of International Students

While Aoraki currently has a very low number of international students enrolled (approximately 25 students in the 2009 year) it has plans to grow this number in the near future. The support structures provided to international students within the Polytechnic and to assist with integrating to the Timaru community are satisfactory.

Tutors are developing a greater awareness of the different teaching and support requirements of this cohort. The International students spoken to were complimentary of the quality of education received and of their Aoraki experience overall.

Aoraki provided evidence that it is meeting its obligations under the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students and has submitted annual statements to the Ministry of Education as required.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.

Further Actions

The next external evaluation and review will take place in accordance with ITP Quality's regular scheduling policy and is likely to occur within four years of the date of this report.