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# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Ara Institute of Canterbury  
trading as Ara

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 13 February 2017

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# Purpose of this Report

*The purpose of this external evaluation and review report is to provide a public statement about the Tertiary Education Organisation's (TEO) educational performance and capability in self-assessment. It forms part of the accountability process required by Government to inform investors, the public, students, prospective students, communities, employers, and other interested parties. It is also intended to be used by the TEO itself for quality improvement purposes.*

## Introduction

### 1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Ara Institute of Canterbury, trading as Ara
Type:	Institute of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP)
First registered:	31 May 2004
Location:	130 Madras Street, Christchurch
Delivery sites:	<p>Ara delivers across a number of campuses. Key delivery sites include:</p> <p><b>Ara City Campus</b> 130 Madras Street, Christchurch</p> <p><b>Woolston Campus</b> 90 Ensors Road, Christchurch</p> <p><b>Timaru Campus</b> 32 Arthur Street, Timaru</p> <p><b>Washdyke Farm Campus</b> 102 Racecourse Road, Washdyke Flat, Timaru</p> <p><b>Ashburton Campus</b> 27 Alford Forest Road, Allenton, Ashburton</p> <p><b>Oamaru Campus</b> 44 Humber Street, Oamaru</p>
Courses currently delivered:	Ara offers approximately 150 programmes from levels 1-9 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. The programmes are offered across 10 departments including Applied Sciences and Allied Health, Business, Computing, Creative Industries, Engineering and Architectural Studies, Hospitality and Service Industries, Humanities, Nursing and Human Services, Primary

Industries and Trades. For a full list of programmes delivered see:

<http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nzqf/search/results.do?org=600627001>

Code of Practice signatory:	Ara is a signatory to the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice. Ara enrolled 760 international EFTS (equivalent full-time students) in 2015, and estimates that the ITP will have 1,700 international students in 2016.
Number of students:	<p>Domestic: it is estimated that Ara will have 7,750 domestic EFTS in 2016; 12.6 per cent of these learners are Māori and 4.4 per cent are Pasifika.</p> <p>International: it is projected that Ara will have approximately 1,000 international EFTS in 2016.</p>
Number of staff:	876 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	<p>The full accreditation for Ara is available at</p> <p><a href="http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=600627001">http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=600627001</a></p>
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Ara is the largest organisation delivering vocational education and training in the Canterbury region. At close to 7,700 EFTS, Ara is one of the largest ITPs in New Zealand.</p> <p>Ara is distinctive in having a significantly large proportion of its delivery at level 7. In 2015, 47 per cent of its delivery was at level 7, compared with an ITP average of 33 per cent. Prior to the recent merger with Aoraki Polytechnic, the then Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) had 33 per cent of its delivery at levels 1-4 compared with a sector average of 46 per cent.</p> <p>Through its links with the TANZ eCampus partnership and increased investment in enabling and optimising digital technologies, Ara is increasing the number of programmes able to be delivered through blended learning.</p>
Recent significant changes:	<p>In January 2016, a new organisation, initially called CPIT Aoraki, was created integrating Aoraki Polytechnic into the legal entity of Christchurch Polytechnic and Institute of Technology. At this time, Aoraki was formally disestablished, and most of the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) funding – along with regional delivery in South Canterbury – was transferred to CPIT</p>

Aoraki.<sup>1</sup> The two organisations had been working towards greater cooperation, but data from 2015 shows they were still quite distinct in both programme mix and performance (see table below).

	Aoraki	CPIT
Net Surplus	-45.7%	19% <sup>2</sup>
SAC <sup>3</sup> EFTS enrolled	875	5220
SAC Successful course completion rates	72%	84%
SAC Delivery at levels 1-4	72%	33%

The new organisation became Ara Institute of Canterbury in March 2016. The Ara Council includes some members of the former CPIT Council, the former Chair of Aoraki Council and a new member who resides in South Canterbury. Key work for 2016 has been the development of a new strategy and direction for the newly formed organisation. For the purposes of this report, the term Ara will be used to refer to the new organisation in 2016, and the term CPIT will be used to refer to the organisation for the 2012 to 2015 period.

Ara has recently been approved to deliver postgraduate programmes. In 2016, Ara was approved to deliver a Master's in Nursing and a Master's in Health Science.

Previous quality assurance history:

CPIT had an external evaluation and review (EER) in May 2012, and NZQA was Highly Confident in the organisation's educational performance and Confident in its capability in self-assessment. A recommendation was made that CPIT enhance their quantitative and qualitative data collection systems and capability in data analysis and interpretation.

For national external moderation results for the New Zealand Diploma in Business, CPIT met moderation requirements for the majority of prescriptions for seven consecutive years. However, in early 2016 NZQA requested that Ara prepare an action plan in response to moderation which showed that a number of areas did not meet requirements. Of the 25 systems sampled for 2015, five did not meet requirements. This was an improvement on 2014, when 11 out of 38 systems sampled did

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<sup>1</sup> Some Dunedin-based funding and delivery went to Otago Polytechnic.

<sup>2</sup> Includes insurance proceeds from quake damaged buildings.

<sup>3</sup> Student Achievement Component. The SAC is the government funding contribution or subsidy to the costs of teaching and learners.

not meet requirements.

CPIT and Ara have participated in 11 consistency reviews and all were found to have provided sufficient evidence of consistency.

Other:

Ara has a significant number of formal stakeholder relationships, including being a member of the Metro Group of ITPs and also a member of Tertiary Alliance New Zealand (TANZ). Regional links include Canterbury Tertiary Alliance and the South Island Tertiary Alliance. Industry affiliations include the Nursing Council of New Zealand, Social Workers Registration Board, Engineers New Zealand, Medical Radiation Technologists Board, Midwifery Council of New Zealand, Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand, New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants, Cisco Network Academies in New Zealand, Project Management Institute, the Institute of Financial Advisors, and the World Association of Chefs.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The following focus areas were agreed by NZQA and Ara ahead of the site visit. The focus areas were chosen to provide a representative sample of the training delivered across the organisation.

- Governance, management and strategy

This was previously mandatory according to NZQA policy and was a focus area in the 2012 EER. This focus area was chosen because of the significant changes that have occurred with the merger of the two organisations to form Ara, and the organisation's new strategy.

- Māori participation, achievement and support

This area is of particular interest to NZQA, and a focus area provides the opportunity to look deeply into this area of enquiry; 12.6 per cent of Ara's students are Māori, reflecting an ongoing increase in participation.

- International student support, wellbeing, and achievement

NZQA is committed to ensuring quality education delivery for international students, and this focus area has become standard for all tertiary education organisations with international students. Ara has enrolled an increasing number of international students, with approximately 1,000 EFTS predicted for 2016. This focus area also includes compliance with the Education Code of Practice which NZQA is responsible for. This was a focus area in the 2012 EER.

Programme focus areas were chosen to represent a mix of provision including Student Achievement Component (SAC) funded, Youth Guarantee-funded and international students. They were also chosen to sample across the different departments, campuses levels and rates of performance as determined by the programmes' own self-assessment and educational performance indicator<sup>4</sup> data. Programmes chosen included the following.

Programme focus areas	
Certificate in Pre-Health and Science (Level 3)	This programme is situated in the Applied Science and Allied Health Department and had 166.8 SAC-funded EFTS, and 4.1 international EFTS in 2015. This programme is taught on campus and through blended learning options. The programme was a focus area in the previous EER and received ratings of Good for educational performance and Adequate for capability in self-assessment.
Bachelor of Medical Imaging (Level 7)	This degree programme is part of the Applied Science Department and in 2015 had 102 EFTS.
Bachelor of Information and Communication Technologies (Level 7), and Graduate Diploma in Information and Communication Technology (Level 7)	In the Department of Computing the Bachelor's programme had 156 SAC-funded EFTS in 2015 and 15 international EFTS. The Graduate Diploma has 10 SAC-funded EFTS and 42 international EFTS. This programme has an internship component.
Bachelor of Māori Language and Indigenous Studies (Level 7)	This programme is based in the Humanities Department. In 2015 it had 25.4 EFTS. A pathway programme is linked to this degree.
General Engineering programmes including the Certificate in Engineering (Fabrication) (Level 2), and the Certificate in Engineering (Welding and Structural Steel) (Level 3)	These programmes are located within the Trades Department and taught at the Woolston Campus. A total of 41.8 EFTS were enrolled in these programmes in 2015.
Automotive Pathway including the Certificate in Foundation Studies (General Engineering), Youth Guarantee only; the Certificate in Motor Industry (Entry Skills) (Level	These programmes are situated within the Trades Department and taught at the Woolston Campus. In 2015, the level 3 National Certificate had 76 SAC-funded EFTS, some of whom are Managed Apprenticeship students,

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<sup>4</sup> Educational performance indicators are a group of performance indicators used by the TEC to give a view of how well tertiary providers are helping their students to achieve.

2), and the National Certificate in Motor Industry (Automotive) (Level 3)	and the Entry Skills programme had 20.9 EFTS. The Foundation Studies programme had 15 Youth Guarantee <sup>5</sup> funded EFTS and 28.8 Trades Academy EFTS.  The National Certificate was a focus area in the previous EER.  Other automotive programmes are taught in Timaru, and links with this campus were explored through this focus area.
New Zealand Certificate in Cookery (Level 3 and 4)	These programmes, in the second year of their delivery, are situated within the Hospitality and Services Industries Department. In 2015 these programmes had 41 SAC-funded EFTS, 31 Youth Guarantee-funded EFTS and 46.8 international EFTS. This programme is delivered in Christchurch and Timaru.
New Zealand Diploma in Agribusiness Management (Level 5)	This programme is delivered from the Timaru campus and is part of the new Primary Industries Department. Delivered in collaboration with the Primary Industry Training Organisation, it uses a blended delivery model. This programme was previously only offered by Aoraki and in 2015 had 30 EFTS enrolled.
New Zealand Diploma in Engineering (Level 6)	This programme is part of the Department of Engineering and Architectural Studies. In 2015 the programme had 99 SAC-funded EFTS and 58.4 international EFTS.
Bachelor of Broadcasting Communications (Level 7)	Located in the Department of Creative Industries, this programme had 188.3 EFTS in 2015.

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<sup>5</sup> The Youth Guarantee fund provides fees-free tertiary places for eligible domestic students aged 16 to 19 years who are studying towards qualifications at levels 1, 2 or 3 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.

### 3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

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

Prior to the EER, Ara submitted a self-assessment document and compliance declaration. The Ara chief executive, the academic director, and the manager academic quality then met with the lead evaluator and another member of the EER team to discuss possible focus areas, timeframes and processes to guide the EER. In advance of the EER, Ara supplied the evaluation team with key documents relating to governance, management and strategy, self-assessment and documents relevant to each of the focus areas.

An evaluation team of six visited Ara over seven days across two weeks. During the visit, the evaluators interviewed the senior management team, the Council, the quality select committee, the academic board, the student council, staff with responsibility for compliance, Māori achievement and international student support. In addition, for each programme focus area the team met with programme management, teaching teams, students and stakeholders. A wide range of documentation was also requested and viewed while on site and made available via the Moodle site to the evaluation team.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Ara Institute of Canterbury trading as Ara**.

- A key feature of Ara has been the ability to successfully manage change over the past five years. Governance and management have shown strong ability to consult and plan and adapt to ensure resilience and sustainability. This includes rebuilding following the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes, sustaining and increasing enrolments, reviewing and refreshing the portfolio of programmes, and bringing together of Aoraki and CPIT into the new organisation that is Ara.
- Ara has adopted a range of approaches to understand the value that it gives to its key stakeholders. This includes a range of commissioned surveys and studies and systematic face-to-face engagement with key industry and regional and community organisations. This evidence shows strong value for graduates and their employers. For example, an employers' survey shows Ara's graduates are meeting the expectations of their employers 89 per cent of the time, with 65 per cent rated high or very high in the most important attributes looked for. Across the focus areas, the evaluation team saw a clear intent to develop skills for industry and useful employment.
- Achievement is strong at Ara, with course completion rates sitting steadily, at 84 per cent from 2013 to 2015. In this area, Ara has performed in the top three ITPs since 2012. Using the TEC's educational performance indicator data, Ara monitors achievement at the department and programme levels, and this is analysed by priority-learner cohort groups over time and against Ara targets. There was a notable consistency in the use and interpretation of achievement data across the programme focus areas. Therefore, Ara has a good understanding of where the achievement challenges are, in particular with Māori and Youth Guarantee students. While indications are that the course completion rates have lifted for Youth Guarantee students in 2016, the same cannot be said for Māori.
- Ara has for two years running exceeded its own targets in terms of the proportion of research aligned to industry. While the number of quality outputs dropped in 2015, 2016 has seen a significant improvement in the number of degree programmes, with 50 per cent or more of staff engaged in research. Research across Ara has been strengthened with the appointment of an independent chair to the research and knowledge transfer committee and a revised terms of reference. This committee has a strategic overview with an eye to improving the quality of research outputs and their links to key industry and regional partners. A research development forum works with departmental research chairs to share good practice in building a research culture. There are indications that this is improving, with a significant reduction in programmes

with less than 50 per cent of staff engaged in research. Vulnerable programme areas are being supported.

- Notable across most of the programmes reviewed as part of the EER was the work done to ensure learning is integrated with work-based or simulated opportunities to apply learning in practice. This has been part of a deliberate strategy at Ara in response to employer and student feedback. Results in the student survey are promising, with a marked increase from 79.9 per cent in 2014 to 85.1 per cent in 2015 of students who responded positively to the question, 'How well is your study at CPIT preparing you for industry relevant work?'
- Industry and community engagement is strong at all levels of the organisation. At the programme level, industry engagement groups reported regular meetings and authentic opportunities to give input into programme development. A 2015 reputation survey showed a significant lift in the number of employers who would be likely to recommend CPIT graduates to other businesses.
- There are strong processes in place at Ara to ensure the student voice is heard. This includes course surveys, the student experience survey, focus groups and a well-functioning student council. There was good evidence that feedback from students was being used to improve performance, including adjustments to timetables, after-hours access to facilities, and timeframes for returning assessments.
- The evaluation team saw some innovative approaches to teaching and the use of real-world contexts to develop knowledge and skills. Ara has a teaching and learning work plan which includes an Academic Capability Framework, and a formal teacher observation process has been piloted as part of this project. This work plan shows promise to further strengthen teaching and learning at Ara, although it was noted that Māori pedagogies and learning needs could be better integrated into this plan.
- The evaluation team heard that internal and external moderation is occurring regularly across the programmes areas, and an internal audit of the degree programmes confirmed this. There is room to strengthen the systematic coordination, tracking and documenting of moderation and subsequent improvements. Ara has met national external moderation requirements for the New Zealand Diploma in Business for the vast majority of units over consecutive years. However, for other standards reported and moderated, Ara had to submit an action plan to strengthen moderation practices across the departments. Progress against this plan is being monitored and reported to the academic board.
- Across the focus areas, the evaluators noted a student-centred approach and a clear understanding of the range of academic and pastoral care services available to support learners to achieve. Students were clear about where they could go to for support and were positive about the support they received. The

evaluation team noted the increasing use of the Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) system across the organisation.

- There is a multifaceted approach to supporting international students, and this is well coordinated across departments and central services. There is a whole-of-journey approach from first enrolment to graduation. The Education Code of Practice is well implemented, with effective review and work plans to ensure that the new outcomes are able to be met. The Tribal database is being used effectively to monitor agents and student success.
- The purpose and direction for Ara are clearly set by strategy documents and goals monitored through key performance indicators and reports to the academic board and Council. The evaluation team visited Ara during a particularly complex time, with the Better Business Case<sup>6</sup> for combining the two organisations still being implemented and a new strategy in development. The combining of the two organisations has been well managed, with most staff in Timaru saying they have been supported through the change.
- There is a multi-pronged approach to managing risk and compliance at Ara, including internal and external audits, self-review and commissioned external reviews. With a range of approaches, issues are self-identified and reported and plans put in place to address any gaps.

Ara operates with a high level of integrity and commitment to the organisation's strategic direction and role in vocational education in Canterbury. There is strong engagement with key stakeholders including industry, the community, staff and students, and clear evidence that feedback is responded to, to better match needs and strengthen valued outcomes. Ara has self-identified issues and is working to strengthen its performance, particularly with respect to building academic capability among staff and lifting the achievement of Māori, Pasifika and youth. With good evidence of planning and evidence-based decision-making, NZQA is highly confident in the educational performance of Ara and its continued ability to make enhancements and perform strongly.

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<sup>6</sup> The Better Business Case was a planning document, developed in consultation with stakeholders, for the establishment of a new tertiary organisation to service the Canterbury region.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Ara Institute of Canterbury trading as Ara**.

As noted above, Ara makes evidence-based decisions and works hard to ensure that key stakeholder views and perspectives are identified and understood. Key reasons for NZQA's high confidence in Ara's self-assessment include:

- Strategic goals are aligned to performance indicators and monitored by a range of quantitative and qualitative indicators. Reports to the Council monitor these indicators, and analysis reflects a good understanding of the range of factors that affect performance.
- The introduction of a quality select committee, which is made up of members of Te Kāhui Manukura (the senior leadership team), provides a forum for programme teams to report on their self-assessment, presenting their evidence and answering questions to support their evaluative conclusions. This has resulted in opening up the evaluative conversations across all levels of the organisation, greater shared understanding, and strengthening the value of the findings and improvements.
- Improvements to the collection and reporting of achievement data has resulted in the processes for collecting and reporting being clear and consistent across the organisation. Generally, programme areas showed a good understanding of their achievement data. Most programme review reports showed achievement data was being analysed by priority learners and benchmarked across time, against targets and at times with other tertiary education organisations.
- Programme and departmental reports are evidence-based and generally evaluative with an improvement focus. Board of studies' reports are aligned to the strategic goals of the organisation and report activity and progress. Programme reports generally review previous action points, and new actions are decided on. There could be an opportunity to align boards of studies' reports to the academic board with the reports written for the quality select committee.
- A range of data collection is used to inform review. This includes surveys of graduates, staff, current students and employers, reputation surveys, environment scans and course surveys. In addition, ongoing qualitative feedback is also collected from industry advisory groups, the student council, and focus groups. Programmes are provided with useful summaries of the quantitative data. There was good evidence that this feedback and evidence is used to inform portfolio and programme reviews.
- Student feedback through surveys and focus groups is used to understand the quality of teaching. A formal observation process is being trialled, and this,

alongside the academic capability framework, will support the organisation to increase understanding of the quality of teaching and provide information to inform staff capability development.

- Non-academic areas also review their performance and reflect on their contribution to matching student and other stakeholder needs. A positive shift in approach was noted when the manager of information technology reframed what had previously been termed an 'equipment failure' to a 'teaching event interrupted'. The self-assessment reports from the International Services and the Centre for Māori and Pasifika Achievement were evidence-based and reflective.
- Ara can demonstrate ongoing review and enhancements across the organisation in a number of key areas. Examples include a review of stakeholder engagement, an audit of moderation in degree-level programmes, and a review of evaluative quality assurance which has resulted in a Next Steps Plan to fully integrate processes into business as usual.
- The organisation relies heavily on the TEC educational performance indicators of course completions to understand achievement. A more nuanced range of achievement indicators could provide the organisation with a deeper understanding. The new TEC educational performance indicators were still being analysed and understood by Ara at the time of the EER.

Ara has a principles-based quality charter which guides self-assessment and improvement across the organisation. The evaluation team heard about enhancements that had been made or were being made to programmes and services and processes and practices to better match the needs of students and other key stakeholders. The comprehensive range of data that is used effectively to promote understanding meant that the organisation has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Key areas of enhancement include the ongoing shift to blended and online delivery, the appointment of a student voice coordinator, the review of industry advisory committees to move them from being information-sharing to collaborative groups, and the deliberate strategy to ensure work-integrated learning opportunities are provided within programme delivery.

# Findings<sup>7</sup>

## 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**.

Achievement is strong at Ara, with overall course completion rates sitting steadily at 84 per cent from 2013 to 2015. Benchmarked against the sector, Ara has consistently performed strongly, particularly in terms of successful course completions and student progression to higher-level study.

**Table 1. Educational performance indicator data as supplied by Ara (ranking in performance against all ITPs)**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016 <sup>8</sup>
Course completions					
SAC, all students, all levels	83.2% (1)	84.0% (2)	84.0% (2)	83.9% (3)	84.6%
SAC, Māori students, all levels	76.0%	75.0%	77.0%	74.5%	75.3%
SAC, Pasifika students, all levels	79.0%	70.2%	73.0%	73.5%	74.8%
SAC, students aged under 25, all levels	82.9%	83.2%	82.8%	82.8%	83.9%
Youth Guarantee, all students, all levels	52.3%	55.6%	61.7%	67.2%	79.4%
International students, all levels	80.0%	86.5%	88.5%	90.0%	92.5%
Qualification completions					
SAC, all students, all levels	75.7%	74.4%	69.1%	75.5%	-
SAC, Māori students, all levels	70.1%	65.7%	49.9%	60.7%	-
SAC, Pasifika students, all levels	78.0%	66.8%	44.3%	61.1%	-
SAC, students aged under 25, all levels	67.6%	67.9%	66.0%	68.8%	-
Youth Guarantee, all students, all levels	43.0%	39.0%	44.7%	52.4%	-
International students, all levels	71.7%	79.30%	70.38%	79.4%	-

Using the TEC's educational performance indicator data, Ara monitors achievement at the organisation, department and programme levels, and the data is analysed by priority learner cohort groups and against organisation-wide targets. This analysis

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

<sup>8</sup> The 2016 results reflect finalised results for 2016 course occurrences finishing before 2 August 2016, and include approximately 33 per cent of the expected 2016 full year enrolments.

has been used to identify gaps in achievement for Māori and Pasifika students. This disparity in achievement is most obvious at levels 2 and 3 compared with Māori studying at degree level, where the gap narrows considerably to 4 percentage points. Ara has implemented a number of initiatives to support Māori and Pasifika learners, including establishing the Centre for Māori and Pasifika Achievement and the E Amo E Rere Māori exemplar tool for academic staff. However, to date these initiatives have not been successful at lifting achievement and meeting Ara's targets.

Achievement for internationals shows significant improvement, with course completion rates of 80 per cent in 2012, rising steadily to 90 per cent in 2015. Ara attributes this rise to more robust recruitment processes, aligning programmes to better match the needs of international students, and improved teaching and support. Also notable is the increase in course completions for the Youth Guarantee students, from 52.3 per cent in 2012 to 67.8 per cent in 2015. Results for 2016 look to be better again. Ara reports these gains, noting better school to tertiary support and targeted support. The failure to meet qualification completion targets is explained in the context of high employment in Canterbury resulting in low numbers of NEETs (youth not in employment, education or training) in the region. Those NEETs who choose to take up Youth Guarantee places, as opposed to moving straight into work, often have complex needs. It is positive that the new investment plan intends to better match the needs of youth.

The key recommendation from the previous EER was that Ara enhance its quantitative and qualitative data collection systems and the capability of staff in data analysis and interpretation. It is clear that this recommendation was accepted by Ara and significant work has gone into ensuring the consistency and quality of the data used by programme teams to understand their performance. For example, in advance of their programme review, all programme teams are supplied with a data summary sheet which includes the educational performance indicators compared across years and by priority learner groups. Professional development has occurred to support programme leaders to understand and make best use of this data. However, the EER identified some programme areas where student achievement data and understanding of the factors that contributed to it were not as strong. Ara has identified that this work needs to continue to enable staff to have the confidence to monitor this data throughout the year.

Ara students are gaining a range of skills and knowledge from their study, and this is indicated by the significantly increased numbers of students who responded positively to the student experience survey question with respect to 'How well is your study at CPIT preparing you for industry relevant work?' from 79.9 per cent in 2014 to 85.1 per cent in 2015. In addition, 87.5 per cent of graduates who responded said they were using the skills and knowledge they had gained from their qualification. Across the focus areas the evaluation team heard from learners who felt they were gaining useful skills and knowledge. Employers have told Ara that they place a high priority on soft skills, including communication skills, working in teams, and the ability to think critically and solve problems. While Ara has

embedded some of these skills into programme learning outcomes, it is not measuring them systematically. Currently, Ara places a heavy reliance on educational performance indicator data, and on course completion data in particular. An expanded range of indicators has the potential to give a more nuanced understanding of how well learners are achieving.

## 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 **Excellent**.

Successful graduate outcomes has been a key strategic goal for Ara since 2011. To this end, the Council and Te Kāhui Manukura (the senior leadership team), have monitored relevant key indicators to determine effectiveness. This evidence is used to inform plans and goals. For example, in response to employer and student feedback, Ara proactively sought to build work-integrated learning into programme delivery. There is evidence that this has been of value, with a marked increase from 79.9 per cent in 2014 to 85.1 per cent in 2015 in students who responded positively to the question 'How well is your study at CPIT preparing you for industry relevant work?' In addition, a reputation research report involving employers of Ara graduates indicates that since 2012 there has been an increase in those who would recommend graduates, and a steady decline in detractors.

There is good value for the graduates of Ara and their employers, in that Ara has been proactive in seeking to ensure that programmes are well aligned with industry needs. With few exceptions, employers and industry representatives spoken to during the EER confirmed that they had been well consulted on programme developments and changes. For some programmes, the industry advisory committee was highly invested in the quality of graduates, as they were monitoring the pipeline of potential employees.

Other indications of high value come from graduate and employer surveys. For example, 85.7 per cent of the respondents to the 2015 graduate survey were satisfied that Ara had met their needs and 87 per cent were satisfied that they had achieved their main purpose of study. Interestingly, fewer respondents were employed in 2015, at 74.3 per cent compared with 81 per cent in 2014, although a greater number were currently enrolled or intended to enrol in further study in the following 12 months. Of those employed, 87.5 per cent believed that they used the skills and knowledge that they had gained from their qualification.

An employers' survey shows 65 per cent of Ara's graduates are rated high or very high in the important attributes looked for, with most meeting expectations of their employers 89 per cent of the time. These findings were supported by the employers and industry representatives spoken to during the course of the

evaluation. Across the focus areas, the evaluation team saw a strong focus on developing skills for industry and useful employment. This included programmes with work experience components, capstone events, internships, and learning environments that simulate industry. The evidence also indicates that employers highly value soft or work-ready skills and that these could be better developed in Ara's graduates. To address this, Ara has begun work on a framework of employability competencies to help inform programme design and delivery.

Improving the value of research at Ara has also been a key goal. One performance indicator, measured across time, shows that for three years, 60 per cent of Ara's research has been aligned and relevant to industry or regional needs. Since 2013, the number of quality assured research outputs has dropped, although this is partly due to key research-active staff leaving. To counter this, a number of research-active appointments were made in 2016, and an independent chair with strategic oversight was appointed to Ara's research and knowledge transfer committee. Results for 2016 show a significant drop – from nine to three – in the number of degree programmes with less than 50 per cent of staff actively engaged in research.

A key goal with respect to improved outcomes for Ara is parity of participation and achievement for Māori and Pasifika. Ara has increased the participation rate for both groups, with Māori participation at Ara increasing from 9.6 per cent in 2012 to 12.6 per cent in 2015, and Pasifika from 3.8 per cent to 4.2 per cent over the same period. These increases can partly be attributed to the work done to increase the participation of youth at Ara through Youth Guarantee programmes and Canterbury Tertiary College. It is notable that the Māori participation rate is higher than the percentage of Māori represented in the population of Canterbury. However, as noted above, progress towards the goal of parity in achievement has not been evident, despite a number of strategies being implemented. While the quantitative evidence shows little progress, an awards project, Eke Takaroa, acknowledged value for Māori, celebrating a number of Māori students' learning journeys, their successes, and the impact on themselves, their whānau, iwi and community. This approach to understanding value could be developed further.

### 1.3 How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?

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

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

Ara actively engages with its stakeholders and has shown a willingness to change and adapt to better match their needs. Examples of this include the post-earthquake emphasis on trades and an increase in the number of managed apprenticeships to support the region's rebuild. In addition, Ara has increased its engagement with Canterbury youth through Canterbury Tertiary College, and has increased Youth Guarantee places and relevant programmes and the implementation of the 2014 youth strategy. Recent portfolio changes include the further development of tourism and hospitality programmes to match the region's growing demand. Another example of matching needs is the participation in He Toki ki Te Rika. This initiative is iwi-led and brings together iwi, industry and Ara with the aim of growing Māori capability in construction and infrastructure industries within the context of the rebuild environment.

Industry and community engagement is strong at all levels of the organisation. At programme level, industry advisory groups report regular meetings and authentic opportunities to give input into programme development. A recent review of Ara's stakeholder engagement has led to a refresh of some advisory groups and a shift in focus for others. The Skills for Canterbury initiative, born out of the earthquakes, has continued to work to engage with industry to understand their needs and find apprenticeship and employment places for Ara students. Te Kāhui Manukura actively participates in a number of forums, including the Te Tapua o Rehua Board and the Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce, and has been a key development partner in the Canterbury Health Precinct project.

Notable across most of the programmes reviewed as part of the EER is the deliberate effort made to ensure learning is integrated with work-based or simulated opportunities to apply learning in practice. For the Broadcasting students, there is a live radio station run by the students, and an internship is a key final project. The Agribusiness diploma is a work-integrated programme delivered in partnership with Primary ITO. For the automotive students, there are opportunities for work experience, and most of their day is spent in well-equipped workshops. Cookery and Hospitality students have a restaurant, open to the public on occasions, where they can apply their skills. These activities are part of a deliberate strategy to embed work-integrated learning in response to employer and student feedback. As noted above, indications are that this initiative is better matching the needs of students and employers. The 2015 strategy once again focused on work-integrated learning, and the annual report noted that Ara was exceeding its own targets with 58 per cent of programmes having some workplace-based learning.

Ara is looking to technology to increase flexible learning opportunities. A significant number of Ara's students are part-time. In addition, stakeholder engagement indicates that future students want to be able to study flexibly, part-time and possibly online. To enable this, Ara has become a lead provider in the TANZ eCampus, and also provides Moodle, tablets, smartboards and Mahara (a web-based learning portfolio tool). Feedback from the student experience survey and the focus area programmes show that this is a work in progress. Students from one of the focus areas commented on the variability of resources and support across online courses, from excellent innovative practice in some to less than satisfactory in others. Ara's self-assessment notes that the organisation is enhancing professional development and resources in this area, noting a shift from working with the willing to becoming more targeted, working to lift capability and capacity for greater impact. The student experience survey shows an increase in positive reviews with respect to Moodle. From 2014 to 2015 there was a significant jump from 71.4 per cent to 82.7 per cent of students who agreed that access to technology met their needs as a student.

Ara has a range of effective approaches to capturing the student voice, and there was evidence of genuine reflection on feedback at programme, department and executive levels. The appointment of the student voice coordinator was part of a deliberate strategy to effectively communicate with students. As a result, student representatives are appointed and a student council is in place. Student representatives also sit on the academic board. Other feedback mechanisms include course surveys, the student experience survey, and focus group interviews. Programme and departmental reviews documented reflection on the student voice and appropriate responses.

#### 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

The evaluation team saw some strong approaches to teaching at Ara, particularly through the use of real-world contexts to develop knowledge and skills. The focus areas provided examples of project-based learning being used to engage learners, for example in Automotive and the Diploma in Engineering, and reflective journals to support learning in the Bachelor of Broadcasting and Medical Imaging. Student feedback gathered by Ara and the evaluation team identified that some tutors are using technology effectively to enhance learning. Ara supports academic staff to develop as teachers through professional development opportunities and support to gain a teaching qualification. Ara celebrates good teaching with annual teaching awards.

An external review commissioned by Ara in 2015 recommended that Ara be more explicit about defining what excellence in teaching and learning looks like and to develop tools to better evidence quality teaching. This has resulted in the

development of an academic capability framework and the pilot of formal teacher observations with several departments. These developments are positive and hold promise to strengthen the consistency, understanding and evidence of effective teaching practice across the organisation. However, teaching observations are not explicitly linked to Māori and/or Pasifika pedagogies.

Lower levels of achievement for Māori and Pasifika indicate that their learning needs are not being fully met. A staff capability tool, E Amo E Rere, was developed in 2011 to support staff to develop knowledge about the Māori learner identity and the relationship to effective teaching and engagement. While a number of staff have used the tool, the extent of use and value is not clear. Some departments have used the tool and proactively sought professional development with respect to working with Māori and Pasifika learners. The response to lower Māori and Pasifika achievement has been focused on support and pastoral care and specific programme changes. This work could be further enhanced by an increased focus on classroom practice and learner engagement.

Moderation of assessment is generally well managed at Ara. Across the programme focus areas the evaluation team saw programme staff systematically engaging in pre- and post-assessment moderation and external moderation with standard-setting bodies or other education organisations offering similar programmes. For NZQA, national external moderation reports show a marked improvement from 2014, when 12 of the 37 samples did not meet requirements. In 2015 that had dropped to five of the 25 samples not meeting requirements; and six units that had not met requirements in 2014 met requirements in 2015. For the New Zealand Diploma in Business, over a number of years Ara has consistently met requirements for the vast majority of the prescriptions submitted. An internal audit of moderation identified that while moderation was generally occurring, some of the documentation of the processes needed strengthening. As a result of the audit, professional development opportunities were identified, particularly for new staff. The action plan, submitted to NZQA, identifies professional development as a key activity. This action plan is being regularly monitored by the academic board.

The self-assessment of teaching practice is ongoing, with systematic course evaluations, course summary reports, programme reviews, the student experience survey and other programme and department-specific mechanisms. The academic capability framework and the formal teaching observations hold promise for further improving the self-assessment of teaching practice. Teaching and learning evaluations have also been reviewed to ensure better feedback is gathered. The student experience survey recorded a 2.8 percentage point decrease in satisfaction levels with the teaching, from 83.6 per cent in 2014 to 80.8 per cent in 2015. While some departments perform particularly strongly, students are less satisfied with the teaching in others, for example in the Engineering and Architectural Studies Department. There are indications that feedback on formative and summative assessment could be strengthened in some programmes, and the experience of online learners is inconsistent. Ara has indicated that it plans a key focus on

improving the quality of teaching and learning as part of a wider strategy to improve achievement.

## 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Student guidance and support is a strength at Ara. Across the focus areas the evaluators noted a student-centred approach and a clear understanding of the range of services available to support learners to achieve. Students were clear about where they could go for support and were positive about the support they received. Tutors are the first line of support for students, and the evaluation team saw and heard a number of examples where tutors gave extra support to learners when required. It is notable that over two years, more than 86 per cent of learners reported that they felt able to ask for help when needed. As programme portfolios are reviewed, the provision of clear pathways through different levels are identified and made more explicit. This is important as, in the past, students without the necessary skills have been enrolled in open-entry programmes that staff subsequently determined were too difficult for them to achieve. That said, a review of special admissions into programmes with prerequisites showed that the right decisions were made and the vast majority of students experience success. Ara's commitment to open entry to programmes up to level 3 is commendable. Professional development for some staff, to better equip them to identify and support the needs of some of the students who had been admitted under open-entry policies, could enhance the achievement opportunities for these students.

Students are positive about the student services available to them, including a recreation and health centre, student advocacy, student advisors, academic support, international support and disability support. The student experience showed a significant 10 per cent jump in satisfaction with student support services from 2014 to 2015, from 68.4 per cent to 78.2 per cent, indicating improvements in the services provided. The Engineering and Architectural Studies Department students' satisfaction with student services shifted from 60 per cent in 2014 to 79 per cent in 2015. This improvement has been attributed to a much fuller orientation programme which has lifted students' awareness of the services available to them. Ara has a well-established Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) system. Improvements have been made to ensure the right PASS study groups are available where they are most needed, and 2015 saw a 28 per cent increase in the use of the services. Students reported positively on their involvement in these groups and the support it gave them to succeed.

Ara has effective support in place for priority learners. The Centre for Māori and Pasifika Achievement provides a centralised service to support Māori and Pasifika learners. In addition, it provides targeted support to some programme areas when

requested. For example, one project coordinated by the Centre for Māori and Pasifika Achievement included working with a programme team to build capability and establish a Māori and Pasifika stream in the pre-Health programme. Early evidence shows initial success in lifting retention and achievement and supporting more learners to undertake health degree programmes. Since 2013, Ara has had a youth transitions team to align services, working with schools to support transitions and providing support to youth on campus. The evaluation team heard of tutors working with the youth transitions team to adapt their teaching to better meet the needs of youth. Course completion rates have increased steadily for Youth Guarantee students since 2012.

Ara has a range of processes in place to support learners with their literacy and numeracy skills. Overall, the annual report shows that 90 per cent of eligible students complete the initial literacy and numeracy assessment, with between 47 and 52 per cent completing the progress assessment. Lower-level programmes reviewed as part of the evaluation generally show a good awareness of the assessment tool and how it could be used to understand learner needs. Automotive and pre-Health tutors explained how they identified learners who required extra support, and some reflected on how they were embedding numeracy skills into their delivery. Some programmes report significant gains for learners, particularly in numeracy. The Diploma in Engineering, reflecting on low achievement in one of its early courses, has now implemented clearer criteria for entry and has offered a summer school to support learners to lift their skills in calculus in particular. This has resulted in significantly improved achievement. While there is good work occurring at the programme level, Ara is looking to build on this work and develop an organisation-wide approach to more effectively embed literacy and numeracy into practice to build learner skills and knowledge.

There is strong support for international students, and this is well coordinated across departments and central services. There is a whole-of-journey approach from first enrolment to graduation. With the growth in international student numbers, Ara has reflected on how well it has supported international students and made improvements, including liaising with programme teams to ensure referrals are made for struggling students, and workshops on academic conventions in the week-long international student orientation. A non-credit bearing online course is in development which will provide international students with important knowledge about the polytechnic environment before they arrive. The Education Code of Practice is well implemented, with effective review and work plans to ensure that the new outcomes are able to be met. For example, there is effective monitoring of agents and student success through the Tribal database.

Ara reflects on how well it guides and supports students through a range of survey data, the student council and other student feedback mechanisms. The feedback has resulted in changes being made, including the extension of access to Wi-Fi and computer labs and software, the creation of more workspaces in the library, and the setup of drop-in academic support. Of note was the reflective self-assessments presented to the academic board from student services, including the International

Centre and the Centre for Māori and Pasifika Achievement. These reports presented useful case studies of responding to evidence and making changes to enhance services. These changes are monitored for effectiveness. While evidence suggests student services is working to support and guide learners, Ara is trialling a new model of student service delivery in Timaru. This aims to ensure services are available for all learners through the introduction of more self-navigation and support tools and more efficient use of specialist services.

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

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

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

Ara has demonstrated that it has been able to successfully manage change over the past five years. Governance and management have shown strong ability to consult and plan and adapt to ensure resilience and sustainability. Following the series of earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, Ara (then known as CPIT), along with other tertiary education organisations, witnessed a drop in student numbers. Since 2011, Ara has rebuilt numbers, from 4,502 SAC EFTS to 5,220 in 2015, and from 548 international EFTS in 2012 to 842 in 2015. The organisation continues to work through a master plan to rebuild campus buildings, including the significant task of rebuilding the Trades Campus based at the Woolston Campus in Christchurch. In addition, the programmes being offered have diversified with the expansion of trades training to meet the demands of the Christchurch rebuild and the significant portfolio refresh that is the result of the Targeted Review of Qualifications.

The most recent significant change has been the combining of the two polytechnics, Aoraki and CPIT, and the establishment of Ara. There was good evidence that, while change has been difficult for some, the process has been largely well managed. The Better Business Case for bringing the two organisations together provided the plan, and there was good evidence that this was being systematically worked through. The decision to include the chair of the old Aoraki Council on the new Council and base a member of the senior leadership team in Timaru has supported the work and gone some way towards alleviating concerns about the commitment to South Canterbury. Programme areas reviewed during the EER generally had good systems in place to engage with the new campus and to coordinate the alignment of programmes, assessments and resources. While the change has been very difficult for some staff, others reported little change to their business as usual. Understandably, more work is required for the South Canterbury campuses to feel fully integrated with the new Ara.

Organisational purpose and direction are clearly set through the strategy documents, and these are aligned with performance indicators reported to Council. Council receives a range of useful information and data, and participation at

academic board deepens their understanding. The EER occurred at a particularly complex time for the organisation, with the recent combining of the two organisations and a new strategy in the process of being set. There was good evidence that a range of stakeholders, including those from South Canterbury, were consulted as part of the strategy-setting exercise. For example, all staff were brought together to a planning day to help inform the direction of the organisation. The evaluation team applauds the stretch targets Council is planning to set, particularly with respect to equity of achievement. The most recent appointment of a new Kaiarahi (a leader for Māori) will also support this work.

Through the different strategy documents, it is clear that Ara has a commitment to deliver valued outcomes for its students and wider community. With a focus on relevance and accessibility, Ara has made significant shifts in moving to flexible and work-integrated delivery. While strategies for supporting priority learners have not all been successful at lifting achievement, there is evidence that they have enhanced the experience for those enrolled. The review of industry engagement and the new focus on academic capabilities demonstrate a willingness for continuous improvement.

Staff reported favourably about their management and reported feeling valued and supported in their work. Staff surveys are conducted regularly and issues responded to. Results benchmarked well with other ITPs with respect to the organisation caring about the wellbeing of its people, being part of an effective team, and feeling that they are working for a high-performing organisation. In response to feedback, management is working on improving communication channels and building a sense of unity in the organisation.

There is a considered, proactive and multi-pronged approach to managing compliance. This includes the use of the 'comply with' tool to monitor updates to laws and regulations and ensure that the right people are informed, as well as internal audits and reviews, external audits and reviews, and strong systems to ensure that risks identified are managed. For example, Ara independently sought an audit of programme learning hours meeting requirements, and as a result is working to develop clear guidelines for learning hours with respect to work-integrated learning. There is good evidence of important compliance matters being raised and discussed at Council, senior management and academic board levels. One of the requirements for combining the two organisations was an assurance that entry criteria, programme hours and health and safety issues were being managed consistently across the campuses. Where issues were identified, plans were put in place to resolve them. The recent establishment of the new, independently chaired Council audit and risk committee is timely.

Stakeholder engagement is evident at all levels of the organisation, and this ensures that there is a good understanding of key regional stakeholder needs. This understanding is supported by the systematic collection of data and information to build a picture and inform decision-making. In response to the previous EER, considerable work has been done on ensuring that there is one source of

achievement data and that it is reported consistently at all levels of the organisation. Further enhancements to knowledge management include a move to enable programme leaders and managers to access user-friendly, real-time data to inform their performance monitoring activity.

In this large and complex organisation, it is not unexpected that there are pockets of lower performance and some goals still not met. However, it is clear that Ara senior management has a good understanding of where the gaps are and has been working to improve and enhance the quality of delivery and the value of outcomes for all key stakeholders. The improvements in Youth Guarantee achievement rates is a positive sign, but there is more work to do. The appointment of the new Kaiarahi and the setting of stretch targets with respect to equity of achievement will focus attention on that area for improvement. Sitting across this is a new academic capability framework, which, if well aligned and implemented, has the potential to target resources more effectively, lift teaching quality and monitor and improve student engagement and achievement, particularly for priority learners.

## Focus Areas

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

### 2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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

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

See Findings 1.6.

### 2.2 Focus area: International student support, wellbeing and achievement

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

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

There has been significant growth (30 per cent) in international student numbers from 2013 to 2015 as a result of targeted strategies to rebuild numbers following the events of 2011. Achievement rates for international students studying at Ara are consistently strong and exceed internal targets. The increase in course completions from 80 per cent in 2012 to 90 per cent in 2015, and the increase in qualification completions from 71.7 per cent in 2012 to 79.4 per cent in 2015, exceed the Ara targets of 87 per cent and 65 per cent respectively.

**Table 2. International student participation and achievement<sup>9</sup>**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
EFTS	548	579	659	842	1,000 <sup>10</sup>
Course completions	80%	86.5%	88.5%	90%	-

In 2015, Ara international students came from the key markets of China (503 – 36 per cent), India (463 – 33 per cent), Japan (156 – 6 per cent), Thailand (67 – 3 per cent) and a range of other countries. The focus on diversifying student numbers from markets such as Germany, Vietnam, Russia and Ukraine as well as other emerging markets is showing positive trends and outcomes in 2016, with small numbers from a range of other countries.

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<sup>9</sup> Source: Ara Institute of Canterbury Evaluative Report 2016

<sup>10</sup> Achieved in October 2016.

The outcomes from the i-graduate survey, the International Student Barometer 2015, show an 88 per cent overall satisfaction, and 79 per cent of students say they would recommend Ara to others. This compares well with other ITPs and the outcomes from the Ara student satisfaction surveys. Departmental comparisons are used in the analysis of these surveys to identify areas of strength and to inform the annual review process. There is growth in the approval of post-study work visas for Ara graduates – 766 in 2014 increasing to 1,035 in 2015. These are strong indicators of value.

Ara completes an annual review to evaluate the organisation's compliance with the previous Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. A comprehensive internal review of the new Education Code of Practice provides evidence that Ara has effective systems and processes to ensure compliance with the new outcome requirements.

Ara has conducted several significant reviews in response to the growth in international student numbers, the expansion of internationalisation to strengthen institutional relationships, extension of study abroad opportunities for student and staff exchanges, professional development for staff, and annual recruitment planning. These have included student focus groups, systems and process reviews and data analysis to identify key areas for improvement. As a result, a number of initiatives have been successfully implemented during 2016, including additional resources, a new team leader for international admissions and enrolment, a new international student induction and orientation process, a new service model of delivery to increase responsiveness and specialist support services, and strengthening the collaboration between international advisors and departmental staff.

Clear management structures and well-coordinated communication strategies provide strong and inclusive decision-making to support the growth in internationalisation across the whole organisation and ensure that international students are valued and supported at Ara.

### 2.3 Focus area: Māori Achievement

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

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

Ara reports that strategic plans since 2010 have explicitly targeted increasing Māori participation and achievement. Ara has improved its data management systems for collating data which has supported the strategy to improve monitoring and reporting. This enables all departments to track and respond more quickly to issues affecting student progress.

Māori students totalled 12.6 per cent of enrolments in 2015, up slightly from 12.3 per cent in 2014. This exceeds the Ara catchment area demographic of 9 per cent Māori. However, Ara is not yet meeting organisational targets for Māori

achievement. There was an increase in Māori course completion achievement from 2013 to 2014, reducing the disparity between all students and Māori to 7 per cent, but this achievement reversed in 2015 and the gap widened to 9.4 per cent.

Some programmes performed very well. From the focus areas sampled, there is excellent performance in the Bachelor of Medical Imaging and Bachelor of Broadcasting, which have Māori students achieving course completions higher than their non-Māori peers (100 per cent and 98.5 respectively). The Bachelor of Māori Language and Indigenous Studies was recently revised, a significant improvement being the introduction of the capstone research project in the final year, varying options that might lead to employment. While the programme is yet to have its first cohort of graduates, it is steadily improving and the last board of studies reported course completions of up to 88 per cent. The New Zealand Certificate in Cookery programme also achieved very well, with Māori students only just dipping below their peers at 87.8 per cent and 87.5 per cent respectively. However, this very positive achievement is inconsistent across the institute.

Some other focus areas sampled showed the disparity between Māori achievement and their peers as greater than the Ara achievement gap of 9.4 per cent, with two programmes reporting achievement gaps of 19.8 and 19.6 per cent respectively. This is despite a number of initiatives introduced to improve achievement.

He Toki ki te Rika Trade Training Academy (a strong tripartite collaboration between Te Tapuae o Rehua, Ara and industry) has been in place for five years and has been a very positive intervention with positive employment outcomes. However, this programme also had a drop in achievement in 2015, anecdotally attributed to students finding employment and abandoning their studies. Ara is keen to explore how it can encourage ongoing study opportunities for students to complete their programmes while in employment, for the longer-term benefit of the students, and also for students to take advantage of the next level He Toki ki te Mahi project which focuses on developing Māori leadership.

Following the earlier successes of He Toki where graduates were celebrated, an additional project, Eke Takaroa, was implemented which celebrated a number of Māori students' learning journey, challenges, achievement success and the impact of this success including the contribution to whānau, iwi and community. The project is also a manifestation of the Ara kaupapa 'Whānau transformation through Education' which also aligns with the Ara mission of 'Leading education for employment in partnership with communities', highlighting the valued outcomes for the participants.

Another positive initiative was the Centre for Māori and Pasifika Achievement, a team that works across the institute and also engages with external clients to support departments to raise participation and encourage students to succeed. The August 2016 quality select committee report on the Centre for Māori and Pasifika Achievement notes the variable success of the centre. Some departments have worked collaboratively with the centre to support students, while others have expected the centre to solve all participation and achievement issues, and other

departments are still not engaging. The findings of the quality select committee have identified actions for improvement to strengthen operations to fully realise the centre's potential.

An initiative to support teaching staff to strengthen relationships and teaching practice (E Amo E Rere) has led to an increase in champion staff in departments, but again, practice is not consistent. What is clear is that successful programmes for Māori students at Ara include a number of indicators:

- Strong entry criteria and interview processes
- Student and whānau-centred
- Appropriate and culturally responsive
- Māori staff or E Amo E Rere champions (leadership, teaching, administration, support)
- Māori cultural practices including noho marae, hui, karakia, mihi whakatau, which acknowledge values of manaaki and whanaungatanga and include concepts such as ako, tuakana-teina
- Te reo Māori collaborations, i.e. School of Art and Design and Te Puna Wanaka-Ko Tāku Kupu Ko Tāu)
- Opportunities to apply theoretical learning (work placements)
- Working collaboratively with the Centre for Māori and Pasifika Achievement and student services.

The inclusion of some or all of these indicators may assist Ara's initiatives to improve Māori participation and achievement which are at different stages of implementation and success.

The Kaiarahi position (member of Te Kāhui Manukura), which has been vacant since the beginning of the year, was recently filled. This is timely as the Kaiarahi can support the recently appointed director of student services' review of these initiatives, their successes, and areas for ongoing improvement to agree milestones to gauge progressive achievement to meet the parity target set for 2018.

## 2.4 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Agribusiness 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**.

The standout features of this programme are the positive way in which the programme matches the needs of the students and the clear value that students and other stakeholders are deriving from it. Students are able to study alongside the demands of their employment and attend regular tutorial support workshops in their local area at times that fit in with farming commitments.

Course completion rates of around 50 per cent in the first cohort in 2015 were disappointing. The high early attrition was attributed to the fact that intending students were not adequately vetted and informed prior to enrolment. The recruitment for the programme is contracted to Primary ITO. Ara programme staff addressed this issue with the ITO, and subsequent new students have been better informed and matched, and have been retained. Staff report that course completion rates for 2016 are trending at over 80 per cent. The first graduates from the programme are not expected until early 2017.

Through self-assessment and reflection, staff now understand course data and have reflected on what changes may be necessary for students to achieve. They regularly monitor the programme to ensure that achievement is occurring. This data is shared and discussed with ITO field officers – who are contracted to provide individual student support – at monthly meetings and, where needed, achievement strategies are agreed for individual students.

There is evidence from multiple sources that this programme is providing high value to stakeholders, especially the students. Formal research undertaken by Dairy NZ and Fonterra provides empirical evidence of the strong correlations between farmer and farm worker qualifications and farm production and income. The design of this programme was informed by that research, particularly addressing some of the skill gaps identified, such as human resource management and financial planning. Students and Primary ITO confirmed that the delivery of the Ara programme is highly attuned to the individual agribusiness enterprises of the student (e.g. dairy, cropping, contracting, etc) and that they work on real projects that are immediately useful in their enterprise.

There was evidence of multiple layers of positive relationship-building which provide positive support for this programme. Staff are actively working with other ITPs, Dairy NZ, Primary ITO and local employers. Training advisors employed by Primary ITO are contracted to provide individual support to students and to communicate with students in person or by telephone on a fortnightly basis. Although the formal student evaluation system is patchy, the monthly meetings between ITO training advisors and Ara teaching staff, where the progress and needs of every student are discussed, has proved to be a highly effective feedback mechanism.

## 2.5 Focus area: Bachelor of Māori Language and Indigenous Studies

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

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

The Bachelor of Māori Language and Indigenous Studies is a new qualification approved in 2013. The first graduates are expected at the end of 2016. The degree is delivered by Te Puna Wanaka, the Māori Unit of the Department of Humanities at Ara. The degree is part of a three-stage te reo and tikanga Māori programme designed to scaffold learners' progress from the certificate and diploma programmes through to a level 7 degree. The aim of the degree is to produce highly proficient speakers of te reo Māori and to contribute positively towards 'raising awareness of Māori, Pasifika and other indigenous perspectives and kaupapa in a range of cross disciplinary contexts'. A capstone project (a key change in the revised degree) in the final semester provides the opportunity for learners to undertake research to benefit organisations in a kaupapa Māori context that incorporates te reo and tikanga Māori.

**Table 3. Extracts of Bachelor of Māori Language and Indigenous Studies data tabled at academic board meetings in 2015 and 2016**

	All	EFTS	SCCR*	Māori	Pasifika	Under 25
Sem 1 2015	25	11.6	76%	64%	100%	65.6%
Sem 2 2015	29	13.8	80.9%	78.6%	81.3%	83.1%
Sem 1 2016	25	13.4	87%	88.7%	86.4%	91.2%

Data source: Reports to the Board of Studies 17/9/2015 and 17/5/2016 respectively

\*Successful course completion rates

Overall, successful course completion rates in 2015 and the first semester of 2016 have either met or surpassed Ara targets. Data also shows a steady increase in successful course completion for each semester. These figures are significant given that the course completion rates for the certificate and diploma programmes have consistently been lower than the expected Ara targets. Interviews with Te Puna Wanaka staff indicate that those learners who have decided to continue and complete the degree, should successfully complete the qualification.

The degree programme is valued highly by students and stakeholders. Learners commented that prior to enrolling with Ara they either had very little to no ability in te reo Māori. The acquisition of the language and having the ability to hold a lengthy conversation in te reo Māori with more competent speakers and confidently using their reo and tikanga abilities in whānau, cultural and employment environments holds the most value for them. They were now being seen as role models by whānau and as future whānau leaders. Valued graduate destinations

from the previous degree iteration included lecturing in other tertiary institutes, iwi researchers, radio announcers, cultural advisors, business consultants and school teachers. Students of the current degree already have similar pathways mapped out post-graduation. Similarly for stakeholders, the opportunity to have speakers with a good level of spoken te reo Māori and able to provide research capabilities for their organisation as part of the capstone research project was highly valued. One stakeholder (a school principal) commented that the level of reo taught through Te Puna Wanaka was of a very high standard and they were always happy to take degree students as part-time support teachers at their total immersion Māori school.

The language competency levels of the Te Puna Wanaka staff are of a high standard. Some are graduates of Te Panekiretanga o te reo Māori, a programme nationally recognised and considered by experts of the Māori language as designed specifically for fluent Māori speakers to take their language skills to a level of excellence. Te Puna Wanaka staff are actively involved in professional development, with many completing higher qualifications and implementing acquired research methodologies to support students with their research capstone projects. In addition, staff are active in the community and are able to use these relationships reciprocally either to provide their expertise to advance community activities or as avenues for seeking community advice and input. This community involvement role-models to the students the valued outcome of using learning to benefit others.

Evidence provided by Te Puna Wanaka shows that the level of pastoral care and support for learners is comprehensive and effective. Learners commented that through the expression of tikanga Māori values and principles such as manaakitanga and whanaungatanga, the learning and teaching environment contributed greatly to them progressing to the level of confident fluency in speaking and expressing te reo and tikanga Māori with competence. They said staff were more than approachable, both in constructively correcting learners' te reo and providing opportunities for learners to critically use their tikanga skills in formal settings, including pōwhiri (official welcomes) and seminar-type presentations. The encouragement by staff for learners to seek out and be involved in community activities and events not only provided ideas for the capstone research component of the programme, it also put learners in environments where they could apply their language abilities.

Self-assessment is ongoing. Since the implementation of the revised degree in 2014, monitoring and reviewing of the qualification has been regular, with a particular focus on the curriculum, completions, progression rates and teaching practice. Te Puna Wanaka has regular staff and feedback meetings with an emphasis on daily checking of attendance, class progress updates, and potential professional development opportunities. Department management, together with the Te Puna Wanaka leadership, are involved in these meetings to understand and monitor the effectiveness of the teaching, as well as any need for additional resources. Staff also discuss and share across-faculty learning activities and

strategies to help broaden the engagement of Te Puna Wanaka learners to the wider Ara campus.

Te Puna Wanaka is meeting its external moderation requirements with only minor improvements recommended. One example of responding to the external monitor was the strong suggestion for Te Puna Wanaka staff to undertake their own professional development related to research so they are better able to support learners in their capstone projects. This recommendation has been addressed.

Although it is a small team, Te Puna Wanaka has strong shared leadership, as evidenced by recent promotions of staff which has been well managed so as not to affect the steady improvements gained in student achievement. The team has a shared purpose and direction for Māori achievement, and achievement results to date indicate that it is likely to continue to meet or exceed the Ara goal of Māori achievement parity in 2018.

## 2.6 Focus area: New Zealand Diploma in Engineering

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

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

A key feature of this programme is strong industry engagement. The Engineering programme advisory committee detailed how engaged they are with programme development and delivery, feeling a clear sense of ownership of the programme and a responsibility to the learners. It was notable that some committee members were employing students before they had completed the programme, allowing them time off to complete. The programme received full Engineers New Zealand accreditation in 2015 across the electrical, mechanical and civil specialisations. In addition, over 90 per cent of engineering graduates were in relevant employment and believed they were using the knowledge and skills they had learned.

There was evidence of improvement in the experience of the students studying this diploma. For example, there was a sharp jump in the number of learners who agreed or strongly agreed that the programme was preparing them for industry, from 42 per cent in 2014 to 74 per cent in 2015. Course completion rates have also improved, from 71.6 per cent in 2015 to approximately 82 per cent in 2016. Māori achievement has also improved, from 63 per cent in 2015 to 74 per cent in 2016. Programme management and teaching staff attribute these improvements to a stronger orientation and more careful attention to following up students with attendance issues. The evaluation team also heard that, following an analysis of achievement in one course, students are now screened to ensure they have the necessary maths skills, and if not they are offered a summer school course.

The programme is working hard to match the needs of learners. For example, many courses are offered at times suitable for those in work. To better match the needs of Māori learners the programme team has engaged with the Centre for

Māori and Pasifika Achievement and the E Amo E Rere framework and has appointed a champion from within the department.

Teaching is variable in the programme and this is reflected in student satisfaction rates. Some tutors are innovative in their approach, using a 'flipped classroom' or project-based learning, site visits and industry speakers to engage students. However, students told the evaluation team that other tutors were not teaching effectively and were not supportive of their learning needs. Programme management is aware of these concerns and is actively managing to improve performance.

Management is collecting and analysing information from stakeholders, and there is good evidence that they understand the strengths and gaps in the programme. Strong engagement with industry is a strength of the programme, and increasing the links that students can make with future work will enhance engagement and achievement. Building on the strengths among the teaching staff and ensuring that less effective teaching practice is managed will be a key focus for this programme.

## 2.7 Focus area: New Zealand Certificate in Cookery

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

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

The New Zealand Certificates in Cookery (Levels 3 and 4) were offered for the first time in 2015. These new qualifications were developed as a result of the new qualifications listed on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. The level 3 programme is delivered in Christchurch through Youth Guarantee provision and the Canterbury Tertiary College collaboration with schools. In 2015, the level 4 programme was delivered in Timaru under Aoraki Polytechnic's programme approval (15 EFTS) and in Christchurch under CPIT (88 EFTS). Both programmes attracted international students. In 2016 the same programme is being delivered on both campuses using the CPIT-developed programme and teaching and assessment resources.

**Table 4. EFTS and course completions 2015**

	Level 4 EFTS	Level 4 students	Course completions level 4	Level 3 EFTS	Level 3 students	Course completions level 3
All	88	122	92%	31	64	68%
Māori	6*	7	83%	0	8 (12.5%)	48%*
Pasifika	1*	2	na	0	5 (8%)	70%
Youth Guarantee	na	na	na	23	0	61%
Canterbury Tertiary College	na	na	na	8	0	na
Under 25	35*	96	na	0	64 (100%)	na
International	47	67	98%	0	0	na

Source: CPIT/Ara programme evaluation report 2016. \* SAC only

Overall achievement in the level 3 programme, while not meeting Ara's stretch targets, are meeting the TEC Youth Guarantee course completion targets. A range of strategies have been put in place in 2016 to continue to lift the performance of priority groups – Māori students and Youth Guarantee students enrolling in the second semester – and there are early signs of improvement. Outcomes for the Canterbury Tertiary College students in 2015 are strong – 15 of 17 students achieved the level 3 qualification alongside NCEA, and seven students are enrolled in the level 4 programme in 2016. The level 4 programme has high levels of course completion and exceeds Ara targets for its Māori and international students.

A strong feature of the design of these programmes is the embedding of increased practical sessions to enhance industry relevance. Practical competencies and the application of theoretical concepts, along with growth in personal development, especially time management, working under pressure, working in teams and work-readiness attitude are positive outcomes which produce graduates who are ready to work in a range of kitchen settings and starting levels. Industry stakeholders interviewed confirmed the importance of these attributes, and many indicated that they prefer to recruit their staff from Ara because the students have a realistic view of working in a kitchen environment, are well prepared for working there, and are therefore more likely to stay.

There is good evidence from surveys of high levels of student satisfaction with the programme (82 per cent), the teaching (90 per cent), the learning environment (84 per cent), and meeting needs as a learner (89 per cent). International students are highly satisfied with their learning (100 per cent). A well-qualified, responsive and supportive group of staff have strong industry connections which are complementary and provide a rich learning environment for both students and colleagues. Comprehensive support processes are in place to encourage and mentor students to achieve successful outcomes and pathway to further study or

employment. Well-qualified, industry-recognised staff work alongside students to prepare for national and international competitions. This has led to strong performance at national competitions for both Christchurch and Timaru cookery students. Positive outcomes of employment and/or further training for both Christchurch and Timaru graduates (currently 93 per cent) attest to the work-readiness and quality of skills and attributes which are closely aligned to the expectations of employers. There is more work to be done to expand stakeholder engagement into the South Canterbury region, and already there are clear signs that this has started positively, particularly in the Oamaru area.

The challenges in maintaining consistent delivery and outcomes across the two campuses are well understood by both staff and management. In the Cookery departmental business planning, there is a strong commitment to relevant and purposeful planning and leadership to increase:

- Professional development for staff
- Stakeholder engagement across the regions, particularly the southern regions
- Sharing of learning and teaching strategies and resources to expand modes of delivery and stimulate the learning environments.

The aim is to produce graduates who meet the needs of employers across the wider region.

## 2.8 Focus area: Automotive Programmes including the Certificate in Foundation Studies (Level 2), Certificate in Motor Industry (Entry Skills) (Level 2), and National Certificate in Motor Industry (Automotive) (Level 3)

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

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

While achievement is disappointing in one of the programmes looked at in this cluster, the team are well engaged with industry and there are positive employment outcomes for graduates. Teaching staff have strong industry knowledge and are also reflective about their teaching approach. The evaluation team noted a keen focus for some tutors on embedding literacy and numeracy and working with youth.

These programmes are notable in that the vast majority of learners enrolled are under 25. Achievement in this suite of programmes is highest for the Youth Guarantee level 2 students, where targets are exceeded. However, this is not the case in the National Certificate programme where achievement rates have been low, and steadily dropping over a number of years. Tutors noted that the second half-year cohort consistently achieve at a significantly lower rate than the first half-year. For example, for the first semester of 2015, 20 out of 32 students completed assessment of their unit standards. However, for the second half of the year only

six out of 16 completed their assessment. The achievement by part-time students, who are on managed apprenticeships, also has an impact on course completion rates.

Programme managers, tutors and stakeholders believe the low achievement could be attributed to the demands of the programme and the low literacy and numeracy levels of the students, the multiple opportunities to gain employment in the Christchurch rebuild, and the structure of the programme and assessments. A new programme is planned for 2017 which will attempt to address some of these issues.

**Table 5. Automotive programme course completions, 2015-2016**

	Course completion 2015	Course completion semester 1 2016	Targets
Certificate in Foundation Studies (Level 2) (Youth Guarantee)	75%	79%	60%
Certificate in Motor Industry (Entry Skills) (Level 2)	61.2%	72%	77%
National Certificate in Motor Industry (Automotive) (Level 3)	39 %	61%	83%

For those that do remain in study, there are plenty of employment opportunities, with employers saying they struggle to find enough apprentices to meet the demands of their workplaces. The stakeholders told the evaluation team that they value the training delivered by Ara, as it develops some of the technical knowledge and skills required. The students train in well-equipped workshops, and work experience is built into the programme. Employers work with Ara, offering work experience to students. At times the work experience has turned into full-time employment and an apprenticeship. A spreadsheet of destination data shows that a significant number had already found employment on leaving the programme, many in related workplaces. Self-assessment identified that the department needed to be more systematic in the tracking of destinations.

All the teachers had completed or were completing their training in adult teaching or adult literacy and numeracy education, and some could articulate a range of strategies to embed numeracy into their delivery. The students spoken to related well to their tutors and felt supported to achieve. The programme team acknowledged the support they received from the youth transitions team to support their Māori and Pasifika and young learners. One tutor spoke of how he had adapted his teaching style to better match the needs of his teenage learners. A moderation report that followed a visit from the Motor Industry Training Organisation was generally positive, although it recommended that pre- and post-moderation activities be better documented. For one particular unit standard, further evidence of learner achievement was required.

Staff felt supported by the organisation and said they were provided with professional development and resources. Good processes were in place to liaise

with the automotive programmes in Timaru and Ashburton, with tutors there saying they appreciated the new resources and the regular contact with their managers. These programmes are characterised by strong industry engagement and programmes that work hard to ensure practical work-integrated learning is embedded. To improve performance, the programme must strengthen its understanding of achievement and ensure that it captures useful student and graduate feedback to help inform the new programme development and delivery.

## 2.9 Focus area: Engineering Trades levels 2-4

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

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

Student achievement on the two programmes evaluated in this focus area is weak and below Ara's own expectations. Course completion rates for 2015 are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6. Engineering Trades course completions, 2015**

	Course completion all students	Course completion Māori	Ara target
Certificate in Engineering (Fabrication) (Level 2)	57%	43%	77%
Certificate in Engineering (Welding and Structural) (Level 3)	76%	53%	83%

Staff and the organisation are aware that these achievement rates are unsatisfactory, but they have no tangible strategy for improving them. The focus for addressing areas of educational performance below Ara targets appears to be the introduction of a newly developed New Zealand Certificate programme in 2017 which it is hoped will bring about improved results for students. Programme development alone is unlikely to result in significant improvement unless it comes with a renewed understanding and teaching approach.

Staff see the principal limitation to student success being Ara's open-entry policy for programmes at level 3 and below. The programme could benefit from more effort through professional development to assist staff to work within policy parameters, for instance pre-enrolment conversations to ensure that students enrol on the right programme.

Nevertheless, industry stakeholders say that those students who do complete the programmes are learning useful skills and knowledge which they can apply in the workplace. The programmes are delivered over a three-day week to enable students to undertake work experience on the other days. Although this work experience is seen as valuable by industry, students and staff, it is not formally built into the programme structure. A concerted effort to integrate work experience into

the newly developed programme for 2017 may bring about better student engagement and improved results.

Industry engagement is sporadic and informal and there was no evidence of how it has informed programmes and brought about improvements. The lower success rates of Māori students on the programme indicates that the needs of Māori are not being well met.

The teachers on the programme are well qualified and all are engaged in ongoing professional development. The project-based approach to teaching being used has merit and is engaging many students. Use of the literacy and numeracy assessment tool is variable, with some staff regarding it as a compliance obligation rather than a teaching and learning tool. Literacy and numeracy support is provided through Learning Services. The recently introduced approach whereby Learning Services staff come to Trades classes is resulting in better connections with students.

The newness of some management staff and the extensive period that staff have been in acting roles has been difficult for both the staff concerned and those who report to them. Ara has committed to confirming management appointments by year-end 2016, and the new programme is scheduled to begin in 2017. The challenge now is for Ara to make a concerted effort to understand and address the poor educational performance in this area.

## 2.10 Focus area: Bachelor of Information and Communication Technologies (BICT) and Graduate Diploma in Information and Communication Technology (GDICT) (Level 7)

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

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

Both the BICT and GDICT programmes are supported by a strong industry advisory group and include CISCO and other industry standard content to ensure industry relevance. They also include industry projects that provide opportunities for students to gain work-relevant experience, with most of the projects being offered by local businesses. These opportunities are valued by the students as they provide real-work context and experience. In addition, they enable Ara to receive feedback from employers to keep the programme current and for employers to vet prospective employees.

The BICT and GDICT programmes are delivered from the Department of Computing and are available from the Christchurch campus. The Timaru campus has a level 4 certificate which prepares students for study at degree-level, and a level 5 diploma which gives students credit for the degree. Evidence was provided of students who progressed from these pathways being successful in their degree study. The graduate diploma has been designed for international students who already have a degree, to gain practical skills and New Zealand experience.

These programmes attracted strong enrolments for 2012-2015.

**Table 7. Bachelor of Information and Computing enrolments, 2013-2015**

Enrolments	2013	2014	2015
International EFTS	31.4	50.8	57.6
SAC EFTS	169.1	177.0	168.4
% Māori	2.8%	4.1%	5.2%
% Pasifika	0.1%	0.2%	0.7%

While 2015 programme participation rates for Māori and Pasifika students are lower than institutional targets, they have shown a small increase since 2013, due in part to initiatives that have been put in place, including working with local iwi to recruit students, including contextualised work projects, and providing targeted support through the Centre for Māori and Pasifika Achievement and other support services.

Guidance and support for students is multi-layered and staff show a strong commitment to identifying and supporting those needing extra help. PASS and Friday homework groups are used to help students fill gaps in their learning and to get support to complete assessments. Learning plans are used for students at risk of failing. In spite of these initiatives, overall course completion rates are below the institutional target of 88 per cent.

Until 2015 Māori student achievement was comparable with non-Māori. Staff have reviewed the dip in achievement for the small number of Māori students in 2015 and put measures in place to prevent a recurrence. For example, Ara arranged specific business meetings between Māori students and employers to better ensure that work experience projects are a good match, and additional support has been provided for all students on Friday afternoons. A staff member has the role of champion to model the E Amo E Rere strategy and to liaise between the department, Centre for Māori and Pasifika Achievement and student services to strengthen engagement with support services. In addition, the department encouraged software development to map sites of historical significance which required input from Te Puna Wanaka. Management provides support by monitoring individual learning contracts to track student progress and to mitigate the risk of students falling behind in their studies. The department anticipates this collaborative approach will help restore achievement levels.

**Table 8. Bachelor of Information and Computing course completions, 2013-2015**

Successful course completions	2013	2014	2015
SAC students	80.6%	84.2%	82.2%
International students	86.5%	89.7%	89.6%
Māori students	80.4%	82.4%	68.4%
Pasifika students	0%	0%	58.3%

Employment outcomes are excellent for those who complete, and staff are able to identify causes of lower than expected outcomes and have followed up on those students who had not gained employment.

Recruitment of staff prioritises industry experience to ensure teaching is relevant to industry practice. Of the 17 teachers on this programme, seven have a teaching qualification and six are working towards one. Management reviews teaching evaluations, and when issues are identified they put initiatives in place to deal with them, for example using team teaching or mentoring, although course evaluations have not occurred for 2016. The computing department will be undertaking the newly piloted teaching observations in 2017.

There is good evidence that the effectiveness of initiatives to improve teaching and programme delivery are monitored and changes made to ensure they are effective. Staff and management monitor achievement rates and use a range of data-sets, surveys and tools to track student achievement. Staff review processes to monitor graduate outcomes, and they keep data on past students. Successful initiatives are shared with teachers in other areas, e.g. Friday study sessions. Self-assessment, moderation and monitoring all have strong management leadership with some engagement with teaching staff. Teaching staff said this allowed them to focus on teaching.

Staff felt well supported by management and commented that management had supported them through the issues caused by the 2011 earthquakes. Systems are in place to engage with Timaru staff.

## 2.11 Focus area: Bachelor of Broadcasting Communication

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

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

The Bachelor of Broadcasting Communication is a specialist 360-credit degree delivered by Ara under the New Zealand Broadcasting School brand. It attracts strong interest from across New Zealand and in 2015 had 188 domestic EFTS. The programme has not been actively recruiting international students, and the opportunities to match the needs of industry for an ethnically diverse workforce have not been fully realised.

The selection and interview process used to recruit students into this programme ensures a good fit between the aspirations of the learners, their needs, and the programme. Diagnostic testing is used as part of the selection process so that additional support can be targeted to need.

There is a structured process in place for managing at-risk students which starts with identifying students who may be struggling and wrapping extra support around them, which is valued by the students. Student representatives are in place and meet with management regularly. Institutional systems for gaining student feedback are used, and student representatives feed back management responses to the students.

Programme satisfaction levels are high, with 91.5 per cent of respondents in 2015 saying the programme prepared them for work, and 87.3 per cent reporting student satisfaction with the programme. The panel saw numerous examples of how the programme has been amended to meet the needs of students and industry, for example extra grammar tuition, use of digital media, and removal of shorthand.

The Bachelor of Broadcasting Communication has very strong course (97.5 per cent) and qualification completions (121.1 per cent) which are above institutional targets of 88 per cent for course completions and 77 per cent for qualification completions. Māori achievement (course completion of 98.5 per cent) exceeds that of all students (97.5 per cent), and achievement of under 25s is also above institutional targets – 98 per cent against a target of 83 per cent. There is still a gap in Pasifika achievement at 81.8 per cent, but this is still above the institutional target of 80 per cent.

The Bachelor of Broadcasting Communication is supported by a strong industry advisory committee, guest lecturers, and industry involvement in student selection and assessment of student projects. The inclusion of the large internship component ensures that industry linkages are actively managed, are meaningful, and result in good outcomes for industry and students. There is strong evidence of graduates finding employment related to their field of study, with 97 per cent of 2015 graduates who responded to the graduate destination survey reporting being employed in a role related to their qualification.

The school continues to build its research culture and six of the staff are currently research-active. All staff have a work plan which includes gaining their teaching qualification (where needed) and undertaking research.

Management shows strong leadership in building the programme, its strands, and the reputation of the school. There is an appropriate level of resourcing, including teaching and technician staff, and staff feel valued and supported. Staff and students are looking forward to new purpose-built facilities.

## 2.12 Focus area: Bachelor of Medical Imaging

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

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

This degree programme continues to be one of Ara's highly successful programmes. Successful course completion rates for the Bachelor of Medical Imaging have been consistently high prior to and including the last three years, ranging from 95.9 to 99.8 per cent. These results have exceeded Ara targets and overall achievement. In addition, the achievement of Māori students is exceptional, with 100 per cent course completions for the last three years. These very good results are attributed to a very strong selection process (only 38 places are available annually), a balanced theory and practical programme, and strong teaching and support. Two places are set aside for international students. The first international student enrolled this year and is making good progress. There are no Pasifika enrolments to date, but staff continue to build on strategies to encourage Pasifika participation and enrolment.

The programme is valued highly by students and stakeholders, as affirmed by the very positive employment outcomes, with graduates being sought after by employers in New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom. Only one graduate from 2015 has not secured employment, principally because she cannot move from Christchurch and there are currently no positions available. Of the current third-year students who have yet to complete the programme, 43 per cent have already secured employment. The very strong relationship with key stakeholders, including clinical placements built up over many years, has resulted in a quality programme relevant to industry and the medical profession. Clinical placements provide an opportunity for prospective employers to develop relationships with prospective employees, especially the final clinical placement in the third year. Continued accreditation by the registration body, the Medical Radiation Technologists Board, provides external assurance that the programme continues to be relevant, current and fit for purpose.

Stakeholders report that students are work-ready, with attributes that meet the profession's needs. Students appreciate that the structure of the programme matches their needs. Blocks of theory followed by clinical placements provide opportunities to consolidate content and to apply knowledge in practice, 'like working in the real world'. They also report that the tutors are knowledgeable and genuinely concerned about their progress. A whānau approach is practised at the outset, from initial contact, application, pōwhiri, ongoing support and collaborative research projects which foster a sense of belonging and care to help each other succeed. Staff liaise with the Centre for Māori and Pasifika Achievement, student services and Te Puna Wanaka to support students. A tikanga approach based on the E Amo E Rere strategy is championed by one of the teaching staff who has seen the advantages of including values of whanaungatanga and manaakitanga, noho marae and tuakana-teina mentoring to support learners to succeed. The success of this collective approach to supporting students is seen in the achievement results.

Self-assessment is comprehensive and coherent and is used effectively to contribute to ongoing quality improvement. This has also contributed to the excellent results over time. Critical reflection on all activities is part of the revised/redesigned programme, now in its third year of delivery. Actions are devised to respond where a need to improve is identified, informed by staff meetings, the local advisory committee meetings, the degree monitor, and clinical placement tutor seminars. This is shown in practice by the change to teaching and learning to align anatomy with positioning techniques. Students keep a reflective diary which assists ongoing learning. Regular meetings between programme management and Ara senior management has facilitated speedier resolutions such as the police vetting process and field trips organised to view equipment such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging digital radiology equipment which is not readily available.

There is a clear focus on the future of the programme. The planned move to the new Health Precinct<sup>11</sup> will bring all related degree programmes together in purpose-built facilities (midwifery, nursing and the Bachelor of Medical Imaging). The currency and success of the programme is maintained through continued strong liaison with key stakeholders which provides input to the degree programme through the programme advisory group, the tripartite institute collaboration (Unitec, UCOL, and Ara), continued accreditation by the Medical Radiation Technologists Board, and increased numbers of clinical placement providers (Waikato District Health Board being the latest addition).

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<sup>11</sup> This is a training facility developed in partnership with the Canterbury District Health Board, University of Canterbury and Otago Medical School.

## 2.13 Focus area: Certificate in Pre-Health and Science (Level 3)

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

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

Achievement in the Certificate in Pre-Health and Science has been static over a number of years. Course completion rates have been steady, with significant gaps in achievement for Māori and Pasifika students (Table 9).

**Table 9. Successful course completion rates Certificate in Pre-Health and Science (numbers of students), 2013-2015**

	2013	2014	2015
Successful course completions all	66% (481)	62.3% (540)	62.9% (476)
Successful course completions Māori	49.4% (56)	39.1% (72)	55.8% (61)
Successful course completions Pasifika	37.1% (28)	46.2% (36)	27.3% (22)

Ongoing analysis of achievement data has concluded that the key to achievement is the entry level of the students. Consequently, the two new programmes will replace this one in 2017, one at level 3 and one at level 4. Key strategies, developed in consultation with the Centre for Māori and Pasifika Achievement, have been put in place to address the low achievement for Māori and Pasifika. This includes the establishment of coffee groups and Māori and Pasifika cohorts being put in the same class. Initial indications from 2015 and 2016 show an improvement for Māori, although less so for Pasifika.

There is value in the programme for the majority who graduate. The main pathway for graduates is to the Bachelor of Nursing, but others also move to the Bachelor of Midwifery, the Bachelor of Applied Science or the Bachelor of Medical Imaging. There has been some analysis conducted of successful course achievement in year one of the nursing degree which suggests that those who do move to degree level have experienced success.

The programme as currently configured does not match the needs of some learners in that, with open entry, some do not have the prerequisite skills to enable them to succeed. It is also problematic that some who successfully complete the programme still do not meet the entry criteria for the Nursing programme, where a 65 per cent pass rate is necessary for entry. The new programmes are expected to address these anomalies. The programme has strong connections with the destination programmes, with many of the staff teaching across the different levels, thereby having an in-depth understanding of the content and expectations. The programme has an advisory committee and representatives, including staff from the different health degrees, who said they had been well consulted in the development of the new programmes.

The programme leader consults with key stakeholders, including learners, and there is evidence of improvements being made. For example, student feedback noted inconsistencies across the courses and this is being addressed through more

consistent use of resources, teaching team meetings and moderation. Another improvement is the extended student orientation which helps build relationships and knowledge and understanding about the campus.

Professional development for staff has included improving the quality of teaching feedback and integrating learning technologies. While some staff reported using the E Amo E Rere framework to review their capabilities, Māori and Pasifika achievement suggests that more could be done to ensure that their learning needs are being better met.

Staff reported a collegial model of leadership where they were clear about changes that were occurring and provided with a range of professional development opportunities. The combining of the two organisations has resulted in a difficult phase for the Timaru campus, which should be largely remedied with the introduction of the new programmes. At the time of the EER, staff from Christchurch were visiting Timaru and were engaged in moderation and consulting with respect to programme development and delivery.

In summary, the programme as currently configured provides valued outcomes for the majority of learners who successfully complete, by providing a bridging pathway into a range of health degree programmes. The new programmes, designed to better match the needs of learners, aim to deliver better value for a greater number of learners.

# Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Ara:

- Continue the work on implementing the Academic Competencies Framework to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning.
- Renew the focus and ensure strategies are well resourced to continue progress towards equity of achievement for priority learners.
- Consider developing a wider range of useful indicators of student achievement.
- Continue to strengthen practices to ensure consistency of delivery, assessment and outcomes across the organisation.

# Appendix

## Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

*External evaluation and review is conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013, which are made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.*

*Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.*

*In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.*

*NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.*

*This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.*

*The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment. External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.*

*External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website ([www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)). The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.*

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