



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

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KIA NOHO TAKATŪ KI TŌ ĀMUA AO!

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Universal College of Learning (UCOL)  
Te Pae Mātauranga Ki Te Ao

Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 17 July 2017

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*Final Report*

# Purpose of this Report

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

## Introduction

### 1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Universal College of Learning (UCOL)
Type:	Institute of technology and polytechnic (ITP) <a href="http://www.ucol.ac.nz">www.ucol.ac.nz</a>
Location:	Head Office, Corner King and Princess Streets, Palmerston North
Delivery sites:	Palmerston North, Whanganui, Masterton, Taumarunui, Auckland. Student numbers in 2015 by location were: Palmerston North 4,061; Whanganui 1,757; Masterton 660; Auckland 461.
Programmes currently delivered:	During 2015, UCOL offered 82 qualifications. These ranged from certificate programmes to postgraduate diplomas.  The organisation is approved to deliver the degrees, programmes and/or training schemes as listed on the <a href="#">NZQA website</a> .
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	In 2015, around 8,000 students were enrolled at UCOL:  Domestic students: 7,002 EFTS (equivalent full-time students) SAC (Student Achievement Component) funded; 158 (117 EFTS) Youth Guarantee-funded (data supplied by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)).

	International students: over 300. Source countries: predominantly India, China, other Asia (source: UCOL)
Student population characteristics:	Under 19 years, 26 per cent; under 25 years, 60 per cent.  Māori 30 per cent; Pasifika 6 per cent.
Number of staff:	466 permanent staff (either full-time or part-time).
Distinctive characteristics:	UCOL's stated vision is, 'To inspire students, business and community to succeed'. UCOL's stated mission is to 'Develop great graduates who make a difference wherever they work in the world'.  UCOL's region has a significantly higher proportion of the population with no education qualifications than does New Zealand more generally. UCOL maintains a small amount of foundation-level provision because of the disproportionately high number of people with low qualifications, and the high proportion of NEETs (not in education, employment or training) aged 15-24 in the region. Around half of the EFTS at UCOL are at certificate level, 35 per cent are at degree level, with the balance at diploma level. (Source: Martin Jenkins' Te Atakura evaluation report.)  UCOL's main operational region also has a relatively high proportion of Māori. In 2013, almost 30 per cent of UCOL students were Māori, compared with 23 per cent for 'all ITPs'. Since 2011, Māori student enrolments at UCOL have gradually increased across all levels of study.  Te Atakura (a teacher training initiative modelled on the Te Kotahitanga educator development model developed by Russell Bishop at Waikato University for mainstream schools) was developed by UCOL initially to improve the educational achievement of Māori students. Subsequently, an effective teacher profile was developed incorporating teacher competencies. It was introduced at UCOL in 2012. An 'effective teacher profile' was developed to support a 'relationship-

based' approach to teaching and learning. UCOL is the first tertiary education organisation to formally employ this research as far as developing teacher competencies is concerned.

Significant changes since the previous EER:

UCOL has a new senior management team. There have also been some changes in Council membership, reflecting changes implemented across all ITPs since 2011.

There have been recent changes in the first tier management personnel and structure at UCOL. The current chief executive took up the role in January 2015. Structural change in the senior leadership area began in semester 2, 2015 with the disestablishment of roles and creation of new directorships (Education and Applied Research, Quality, Business Development, and Student Success). These new executive directors commenced in their roles from mid-February 2016.

Shortly before this external evaluation and review (EER), head of school and programme leader roles were being finalised for each of UCOL's faculties: Health and Science, Business and Humanities, and Engineering and Applied Technologies.

The student experience team (library, learning services, student support and health services) was disestablished and was being replaced with a newly configured student success service, with changes occurring during the EER.

Previous quality assurance history:

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

UCOL has professional affiliations with the following entities, and is in some cases subject to their quality assurance mechanisms: Nursing Council of New Zealand; Medical Radiation Technologists Board; New Zealand Institute of Management; the New Zealand Board for Engineering Diplomas and IPENZ.

UCOL participated in the inaugural consistency

reviews for the New Zealand Certificates in French Cuisine (Intermediate and Superior) and the New Zealand Certificate in French Patisserie (Basic) (Levels 2, 3 and 4). In each case the outcome was 'sufficient evidence' of graduate consistency which is currently the highest rating available.

Within NZQA systems for external moderation of assessment, overall performance for standards-based assessment has been satisfactory. Some issues in assessment were identified in the 2016 moderation cycle for standards in business and management, and computing and science. In 2015 an action plan was required to improve assessment in one prescription within the New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 6).

UCOL has demonstrated variable but clearly improved performance within moderation of assessment of unit standards by industry training organisations (ITOs). An overview of results 2012-2016 across all samples (pre- and post-moderation) shows: 91 approved, 29 modified or approved after modifications, 24 not approved.

Other:

UCOL has been in the low-risk category of the Crown's Financial Monitoring Framework for the past seven years. This reflects a near 3 per cent operating surplus, and a surplus in 2015.

The Tertiary Education Performance Report (published by the TEC in 2015) stated that 'in 2014, UCOL's educational performance was mixed, compared with 2013. Financially, UCOL remained in a solid position'. A more recent statement from the TEC reports that 'in 2015, UCOL's educational performance improved overall with good improvements seen in educational achievement of learners, which was on par with the ITP sector. UCOL remained in a financially solid position.'

In February 2015, Council and the new chief executive established the lifting of rates of course and qualification completion as an institutional priority.

UCOL is currently replacing many of their existing local provider and national certificate/diploma programmes as new qualifications are listed following NZQA's mandatory reviews of qualifications at levels 1-6. In 2016 UCOL made application to NZQA for approval and accreditation of 33 new qualifications, with 32 approved at the time of the EER. Between 35 and 40 programmes of study to achieve New Zealand qualifications will have been approved and/or accredited by the beginning of 2017.

A jointly signed letter from NZQA and Immigration New Zealand was sent to UCOL detailing concerns over Indian student visa decline rates in 2016. The letter required improved performance by the end of 2017.

In 2016 UCOL signed a partnership agreement with the School of Electronics and Technology of Dongguan, China. This reflects UCOL's longer-term objectives of 'contributing to the learning and developmental needs of China, and supporting Education New Zealand's goals to grow international education'.

The TEC had scheduled a routine audit of UCOL for May 2017.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

### Focus areas and rationale

The sample size for this evaluation comprised three thematic areas and seven programmes, drawn from five of the nine broad vocational areas available at UCOL (Table a). This totalled approximately 642 EFTS from the 2016 enrolments, with a gender balance slightly skewed towards males. Programmes selected reflect offerings across all three campuses as well as two approved sites. They span New Zealand Qualifications Framework levels 3-7. Some programmes have a relatively small number of students, but according to enrolment data supplied by UCOL, only 12 of 91 UCOL programmes have more than 50 EFTS. Most programmes enrolled fewer than 30 EFTS in 2016. Recent educational performance indicator data for the selected programmes is shown below (Table b), and 2015 and 2016 enrolments are shown in Table c.

**Table a. Focus areas**

Thematic focus areas		
1.	Governance, management and strategy	This focus area has importance for the quality of the educational experience of the students, for matching the needs of key stakeholders, the employment experience of staff, and the legal, ethical and compliant context for operating as an ITP with numerous stakeholder interests to understand and meet.
2.	Te Atakura Initiative	To address the achievement disparities between Māori and non-Māori students, UCOL has invested significant resources in improving teaching and learning at UCOL, particularly for priority students. Te Atakura is based on Te Kotahitanga, a compulsory education sector programme of professional development that has resulted in positive shifts in teacher practice and Māori student outcomes.
3.	Support and achievement of international students	Achievement, support and programme relevance and outcomes for International students. This area also provided a lens on practices around compliance with The Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016.

**Table a. continued**

Programme focus areas		Students	Vocational areas and descriptions	
4.	Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science (Level 7)	94	Health Science	Offered at Palmerston North only. A degree not previously reviewed during an EER of UCOL.
5.	Certificate in Science and Health (Level 3)	160	Health Science	Offered at Palmerston North and Whanganui. An open-entry foundation programme leading to various other UCOL programmes, including degrees.
6.	Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology (Applied) (Level 7)	106	Information and Communications Technology	Offered at Palmerston North only. A degree not previously reviewed during an EER, with a long history of delivery and comprising related exit qualifications at diploma level.
7.	Diploma in Photographic Imaging (Level 6)	46	Photography, Arts and Design	Offered at the UCOL Institute of Commercial Photography Auckland (UICPA) and in Palmerston North.
8.	Diploma in Beauty Therapy (Level 5)	28	Beauty and Hairdressing	Offered at Palmerston North, Whanganui and Wairarapa. Solely female students in 2016.
9.	Certificate in Carpentry (Level 4)	89	Trades and Industry	Offered at Palmerston North, Wairarapa, Taumarunui. Significant enrolments by Māori male students. Was included in 2012 EER.
10	Certificate in Automotive Engineering (Level 3)	105	Trades and Industry	Offered at Palmerston North, Wairarapa, Whanganui. Significant enrolments by Māori male students.
<p><b>Sizeable or otherwise important programmes not selected and reasons:</b> The Bachelor of Nursing, which is by far the ITP's largest programme (over 500 EFTS) was a focus area in the previous EER when it was rated as Excellent on both scales. NZQA noted evidence from a recent accreditation visit for approval of the new Diploma in Enrolled Nursing by the Nursing Council. Their report, along with monitors' reports, provided a substantial and positive external commentary on the performance of that degree. Notably, 97 per cent of UCOL's 87 candidates passed the Nursing Council State Final examination in 2016.</p> <p>NZQA also noted the scale of this programme in proportion to others – and hence the impact that it has on the overall TEC educational performance indicators for UCOL as well as the performance of international students, many of whom are enrolled in this programme. As such, its performance is</p>				

indirectly captured under key evaluation question 1 (and to an extent, key evaluation question 2) as well as under the international focus area. The Bachelor of Applied Science (Medical Imaging Technology) was not eventually selected due to students being on practicum at the time of NZQA's visit. UCOL suggested this as being disadvantageous. Instead, UCOL proposed a substitute degree of similar size also from Health Sciences, the Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science (Focus Area 4).

**Table b. Educational performance indicator data for the focus area programmes, 2012-2015 (source: UCOL)**

Focus area programmes	2015		2014		2013		2012	
	Course completion	Qualification completion						
Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science (Level 7)	83%	63%	79%	66%	73%	65%	74%	75%
Certificate in Science and Health (Level 3)	72%	71%	70%	62%	67%	58%	58%	40%
Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology (Applied) (Level 7)	85%	86%	82%	79%	80%	73%	77%	76%
Diploma in Photographic Imaging (Level 6)	78%	40%	79%	49%	75%	56%	70%	53%
Diploma in Beauty Therapy (Level 5)	85%	83%	87%	82%	80%	78%	72%	67%
Certificate in Carpentry (Level 4)	76%	73%	51%	50%	75%	65%	61%	55%
Certificate in Automotive Engineering (Level 3)	62%	57%	59%	55%	74%	69%	57%	43%
UCOL's largest programme: Bachelor of Nursing (Level 7)	87%	79%	87%	80%	90%	90%	91%	79%
UCOL (all programmes)	79%	74%	75%	67%	76%	65%	73%	65%

**Table c. Enrolments into focus area programmes, 2016 (and 2015) (source: UCOL)**

2016 enrolled EFTS	Level	Qual. EFTS value	Qual. code	Focus area programmes	2015 enrolments				
					EFTS	Students	Male	Female	Gender %
93	Level 7	3.0	MA4110	Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science (Level 7)	93	99	59	40	M (60%) F (40%)
160	Level 3	1.0	MA4128	Certificate in Science and Health (Level 3)	184	231	31	200	M (13%) F (87%)
107	Level 7	3.0	MA4000	Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology (Applied) (Level 7)	100	121	106	15	M (88%) F (12%)
46	Level 6	2.0	MA4311	Diploma in Photographic Imaging (Level 6)	43	45	17	28	M (38%) F (62%)
28	Level 5	1.0	MA4258	Diploma in Beauty Therapy (Level 5)	37	38	0	38	M (0%) F (100%)
89	Level 4	1.0	MA3984	Certificate in Carpentry (Level 4)	80	120	115	5	M (96%) F (4%)
106	Level 3	1.0	MA4119	Certificate in Automotive Engineering (Level 3)	84	113	99	14	M (88%) F (12%)
<b>UCOL's largest programme:</b>									
576	Level 7	3.0	MA4010	Bachelor of Nursing (Level 7)	585	719	93	626	M (13%) F (87%)

### 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.*

A collaborative approach to identifying focus area programmes was used in the planning of the on-site visit. Two preliminary meetings were held with UCOL senior management. At one of these, the chief executive summarised for NZQA the ITP's key strategic change initiatives and overall educational performance since the 2011 EER.

UCOL provided access to an online repository of programme-related and self-assessment documentation, including examples of planning, quality assurance processes, educational performance indicators for all programmes over recent years, and claimed improvements. The evaluators also familiarised themselves with recent TEC performance information and other NZQA reports.

A team of four evaluators conducted the on-site enquiry over five days at the Palmerston North Campus (26-28 October, and 1 and 2 November 2016). Two of these evaluators visited the Whanganui campus. The evaluation team held a meeting on 25 November to collate their findings, and verbal feedback concluding the on-site phase was provided to UCOL that same day.

During the on-site phase, interviews were held with: Council members, including the chair and deputy chair; the chief executive and executive leadership team and other senior staff; heads of departments, programme leaders and teachers from the focus area programmes; student support staff. Groups of students and graduates from the focus area programmes were interviewed. Graduates and some external stakeholder representatives, including employers, with a knowledge of programmes were also interviewed. During or following these interviews, a range of supporting documentation was requested and sighted to confirm evidence. A meeting specifically focusing on the ITP's approach to managing compliance was held during the on-site visit.

Educational performance data appearing in this report is predominantly from two sources: TEC tables (2011-2015) for overall educational performance in tertiary education organisations, and information provided by UCOL, including that appearing in their annual report and annual programme self-assessment reports (mainly from 2014 and 2015) supplied prior to the EER. In some cases, additional or supplementary course cohort data was sampled or provided following the evaluative interviews with staff. This included sampling some cohort's enrolment, attendance and withdrawal rates using the ITP's monitoring technology.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Universal College of Learning (UCOL)**.

UCOL is closely matching government expectations for a regional ITP as expressed in the Tertiary Education Strategy and reflected in UCOL's programme portfolio and sound financial and educational performance. Closely aligned with that, UCOL's ability to attract and serve a consistent proportion of priority group students (Māori, Pasifika and under-25s) year-on-year is noteworthy. UCOL's performance in meeting the requirements of NZQA – their primary quality assurer – is also positive.

Overall, there has been a steady, credible increase in course and qualification completions since the previous EER. A clear trajectory of improvement can be seen in those indicators, as reported under Findings 1.1. UCOL has worked towards this improvement, which has also been an expectation reflected in TEC performance-based funding targets. There is still some way to go to demonstrate sustained improvement, for example surpassing the ITP sector median.

Although evidence of alignment with industry and/or stakeholder needs and graduate outcomes is often clearest and most positive at programme level, it is not yet well linked to any overarching 'knowledge management' framework or documented analysis of graduate outcomes and labour market trends across all programme areas. Recent actions to improve this with more centralised data collection systems are, however, credible but are not yet fully implemented. UCOL is participating in a pilot project with the TEC and other TEOs and now has useful employment and income data to better understand graduate outcomes.

Council and senior management, many of whom are new to their roles, are aware of the challenges, having established and clearly set out strategic priorities and goals. These are actively communicated across campuses and understood by staff. The evidence suggests that UCOL leadership at all tiers is now clearly focused on higher organisational performance. This includes both a stronger, shared knowledge base around industry engagement and better, measurable outcomes for more students. This commitment is currently most evident in terms of planning, resourcing, and documented monitoring. Important initiatives or changes (particularly the recent introduction of executive dean positions and new heads of school and programme leader appointments, and re-alignment of student services) have yet to strongly show their intended benefits in respect to educational performance.

Managing compliance responsibilities – and subsequent actions such as reducing sub-contractor and international student agent risks, updating programme information, and auditing course delivery hours – are positive interventions to assure the quality of educational performance and to manage risks.

Examples of improvements or high quality educational practices include:

- Introduction of new qualifications as soon as feasible after the completion of the mandatory review of qualifications process. UCOL is proactive in relation to maintaining and refining relevant programme offerings.
- Pursuing new programmes and initiatives in collaboration with other stakeholders which are meeting the needs of sometimes hard to reach or under-served students.
- Course completions overall have increased from 71 to 79 per cent and qualification completion from 65 to 74 per cent since the previous EER. UCOL was under-performing compared with their sector peers against whom they benchmark their performance; in 2015 UCOL reached the ITP sector median.
- Course completion rates for the significant proportion of Māori students (71 per cent overall in 2015) are also improving.
- Marked improvements in both course and qualification completion rates for the Faculty of Engineering and Applied Technology, and among all courses at levels 1-4, are notable and positive.
- International students seem well served and pass courses and achieve their qualifications at rates exceeding 90 per cent. UCOL is carefully managing a reasonable volume of enrolments.
- Research is matching needs and is reflective of the significance of UCOL's contribution to community well-being and knowledge dissemination.
- Implementing and evaluating a focused teacher development process (Te Atakura) is positively changing and improving teaching practices.
- Evidence of growing integration of outlying campuses, resourcing programmes equitably and transparently.
- Harmonising some systems and approaches to self-assessment reflects strategic planning and management leading to improvement.
- Better, more accurate and timely monitoring data – programme level to executive – was needed at UCOL, and this is evidently now being achieved. This data is being used to better inform decisions and predict outcomes; this improvement is relatively recent.

Performance limitations or areas for further improvement:

- Further improving overall completion rates and reducing attrition in some programmes; relatedly, closer parity of completion for all student groups enrolled.
- Establishing stronger, more consolidated evidence of the range and quality of graduate outcomes institutionally.
- The differential between Māori and all other student course completions at levels 1-4 was 13 per cent in 2013, 16 per cent in 2014 and 11 per cent in 2015. This remains an area of considerable challenge to the ITP despite genuine, concerted effort.
- The current reconfiguration of student support services has had some negative impact on students, leading to a loss of confidence by some; the improvements sought from these changes were not yet apparent at the time of the on-site visit.
- While moderation processes overall are reasonably robust, and ITO moderation findings are at least good, there have been some performance gaps in relation to both ITO and NZQA-managed systems which need improvement.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Universal College of Learning (UCOL)**.

UCOL can demonstrate a credible and connected sequence of actions and improvements leading from its own self-assessment, planning and change processes. The ITP's self-assessment processes and tools have been significantly strengthened and refined over time, and subject to additional critique by reviews and evaluations sought from external experts, discipline specialists and/or contractors. Self-assessment occurs at all levels of the organisation, is well documented and, when sampled, reveals a clear evolution of practice since the previous EER.

'Project Transform' (which was UCOL's important and 'to be evaluated' change and improvement plan at the time of the previous EER) was convincingly and thoroughly reviewed in 2012. Current strategic planning and related action is also clearly apparent, and shows early signs of effectiveness. They explicitly build on Project Transform's goals of improvements in educational performance indicators, as well as other important measures.<sup>1</sup> Strategy and evaluation are working in a complementary way in numerous areas.

Introduction of new or enhanced tools and processes for self-assessment that are producing effective results/working well has occurred. These have a direct bearing

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<sup>1</sup> UCOL's Strategic story 2015-2018, projected outcomes and key performance indicators.

on stronger monitoring and evaluation to improve the student experience and heighten the opportunity for all students to succeed. In short, these include initial student experience surveys, Faculty Boards of Educational Improvement, transition coordinators' reports, programme level data from students' attendance, and engagement applications (or 'apps'). Much of this activity is relatively recent or is being expanded after trialling, but it is clearly contributing to both the quality of educational performance and the trajectory of improvements in quantitative achievement as shown by educational performance data summarised under Findings 1.1.

A key item of focus area self-assessment is the annual reports produced by each UCOL programme. These are useful to all staff, feature increasingly accurate data, are used to monitor delivery and pass rates, and lead to plans for or review of spending or other changes. They also serve a performance management function. Some of this reporting is too generalised, and in numerous instances the variation in linking claims around value with robust evidence indicates more specific training is required, but overall they are a robust and useful tool for programme level use.

The focus area Te Atakura has been systematically monitored and evaluated since its inception. More broadly and impressively, UCOL's analysis and understanding of Māori student achievement is constructive and positive. The actions being taken are credible, long-term focused, and increasingly embedded across the ITP. Monitoring and evaluation are particularly strong in this dimension.

Academic board and related quality assurance processes are robust and well documented. The ITP's quality management system is in active use and has been subject to a comprehensive policy/procedure review in recent times. Improvements have been made to important processes such as enrolments. Compliance monitoring is occurring and has also led to changes and strengthened processes or better information for students or stakeholders.

Robust, useful and well-used examples of self-assessment organisation-wide include: Council self-assessment; the 2014 and preceding reports on the student experience at UCOL; the staff engagement survey 2015; successively, Rourou Aronui and Te Waka Hourua strategies for engaging with iwi stakeholders; relatedly, the draft but promising Purongo a Tau Māori 2015 Report. Annual reporting to stakeholders is comprehensive and accurate. A number of factors show that self-assessment findings being considered and used to inform planning, resourcing, staff development or to reward good practice. These include tweaks and changes to survey processes, job descriptions, responses to staff survey feedback by management; and inputs such as staff awards and recognition, as well as staff Treaty of Waitangi workshops across sites, and student scholarships.

The UCOL International Business Strategy 2013-2018 was not fully realised, but a thorough high-level investigation and detailed reporting of UCOL's international work by an external consultant is indicative of good investment in self-assessment

under this focus area. In many respects, the strategy has been superseded by the change in focus under the new leadership, with improvements having already occurred.

To reflect the intended positive impacts of UCOL's strategic redirection in international education, the improvements in visa approval rates required by Immigration New Zealand need to be achieved by the end of 2017.

As noted in this report, some aspects of the multi-dimensional student services change were not particularly well monitored, or well managed and communicated. The rationale (to gain efficiencies and improve service effectiveness) and documented planning and communications (self-assessment relating to a significant change process) appear to have been more convincing to the evaluators than their execution.

# Findings<sup>2</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 **Excellent**.

Performance is generally strong in relation to this question, and related self-assessment indicates clear and comprehensive evidence of improved performance linked to initiatives taken by staff and management to lift achievement. There is a clear, positive direction of improvement from a relatively low baseline (2011), and certainly scope for further improvement. Based on the focus area programmes, the range and quality of programmes on offer provide UCOL's students with relevant educational experiences at the various levels. The programme portfolio is subject to ongoing maintenance and updating. Attention to developing and maintaining sound teaching practice (rated as Excellent in this review – see Findings 1.4 below) also supports the credibility of student achievement.

The UCOL self-assessment summary states: 'New institutional leadership has clearly communicated its expectations of improved performance and educational outcomes resulting in UCOL making significant gains across all sites, and in implementing greater consistency in high quality self-assessment across all areas of the institution. Improvements resulting from the initial phasing of this changed leadership resulted in 2015 UCOL educational achievement being at the sector median for Course Completion (79 per cent vs 79 per cent) and slightly above the sector median for Qualification Completion (74 per cent vs 72 per cent), and [remaining] above the sector median in Student Progression (41 per cent vs 37 per cent) and Student Retention (73 per cent vs 69 per cent). Institutional monitoring is showing 2016 achievement is on track to at least maintain the 2015 figures'.<sup>3</sup> These are credible claims. According to data supplied in February 2017, a course completion rate of 78 per cent is likely for the 2016 academic year.

Based on the available educational performance indicators (see Tables 1 and 2 below), as well as the relevance of content and quality of programme design and teaching (see Findings 1.1-1.6 and focus areas), this evaluation found that students achieve well at UCOL, and that as indicated by the excerpt above, UCOL has clear

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<sup>2</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>3</sup> For all TEOs, NZQA affirms the principle that a well-run organisation is based on robust, ongoing and transparent self-assessment. In theory, an EER of a high-performing TEO should act as a third-party validation of the findings produced by that TEO's self-assessment.

understanding of this achievement and what has led to improvements since the previous EER.

As recently as 2013, UCOL had the second-lowest rate of successful course completion of all ITPs, and the third-lowest qualification completion rate.<sup>4</sup> After successive years well below the ITP sector median, UCOL has now reached it. The progression indicator over the 2014-2015 period remained unchanged, although improvement here was also a stated focus for UCOL. Regardless, both of those indicators continue to exceed the sector median. More students are being retained on programmes, and passing their courses and qualifications than before.

UCOL-supplied data sourced from the student management system shows that international students – who study in the same cohorts as domestic students (with the highest number enrolled in the nursing degree) – perform well, with high course and qualification completions rates (see Table 5 below).

**Table 1. UCOL educational performance indicator data, 2012-2015 (SAC-funded)\***

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2015 Māori	2015 Pasifika	2015 under 25	2015 Intl.**
Students (SAC-funded EFTS)	4,594 (3,204)	4,242 (3,151)	4,020 (3,013)	4,150 (2,889)	3,953 (2,831)	1,202 (838)	262 (171)	2108 (1648)	340 (190)
Course completion	71%	73%	76%	75%	79%	71%	76%	78%	92%
ITP sector median	79%	79%	80%	80%	79%	74%	73%	79%	n/a-
Qualification completion	65%	65%	65%	67%	74%	66%	75%	70%	89%
ITP sector median	64%	69%	74%	72%	72%				
Progression	35%	43%	43%	41%	41%				
ITP sector median	32%	38%	37%	37%	34%				
Retention	55%	65%	68%	71%	73%				
ITP sector median	55%	66%	68%	69%	69%				

\*Source: TEC, The Performance of Tertiary Education Organisations Tables (2011-2015).

\*\*UCOL

<sup>4</sup> Source: First external evaluation of Te Atakura (UCOL self-assessment).

**Table 2. Qualification completion rate by level of study, 2012- 2015 (SAC-funded) (proportion of enrolments shown in brackets as %)**

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Level 1	60% (46%)	56% (37%)	60% (44%)	69% (47%)
Level 2	65% (53%)	73% (56%)	69% (63%)	73% (78%)
Level 3	63% (58%)	66% (61%)	66% (60%)	73% (69%)
Level 4	67% (53%)	70% (55%)	66% (54%)	72% (64%)
Level 5	77% (72%)	78% (70%)	80% (86%)	80% (87%)
Level 6	83% (61%)	87% (51%)	87% (54%)	87% (69%)
Level 7	95% (79%)	93% (87%)	90% (81%)	90% (83%)
Level 8	92% (84%)	94% (119%)	100% (99%)	93% (89%)

Sources: TEC, The Performance of Tertiary Education Organisations Tables (2012-2014) and UCOL-supplied data. International students excluded as not SAC-funded.

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

Course and qualification completion rates for TES priority groups (see Table 3) are generally lower than those of non-priority group students (depicted in Row 1), but have improved for all groups since 2012. Māori student performance, using these indicators as a measure, is the lowest of the groups tabulated from TEC performance reports (Row 4). The gap is closing, and is closing fastest for Pasifika students (see Table 4). 2014 was ‘a dip year’, for reasons briefly explained in UCOL’s self-assessment summary as relating to impacts of change at the leadership level of the ITP. UCOL is fully aware of these performance differentials and has well-developed and well-resourced strategies in place to further improve performance.

**Table 3. Trends in course (and qualification) completion rates – priority groups 2012-2015 (SAC-funded)**

Row	Group	2012	2013	2014	2015
1	*Other students	77% (82%)	80% (71%)	79% (73%)	82% (78%)
2	Under 25	71% (59%)	74% (60%)	74% (62%)	78% (70%)
3	Pasifika	64% (60%)	67% (55%)	74% (51%)	76% (75%)
4	Māori	65% (51%)	67% (54%)	65% (56%)	71% (66%)

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

Source: TEC supplied data (2013-2015; UCOL-supplied data (2012).

**Table 4. Course completion (CC) rate differential ('gap') – Māori and/or Pasifika compared with not-Māori/not-Pasifika students**

	CC at course levels 1-4 only* (Māori/not Māori)	CC at all course levels	
		Māori	Pasifika
2012	65% compared to 79% (14%)	22%	10%
2013	67% compared with 80% (13%)	12.7%	13.5%
2014	64% compared with 80% (16%)	14.6%	5.3%
2015	71% compared with 82% (11%)	11.1%	6.0%

Source: TEC data share XL (11 October 2016)

\*Where most Māori students are enrolled.

### Youth Guarantee

UCOL was the third highest-performing ITP in 2015 for Youth Guarantee-funded students, with course completions of 84 per cent (sector median 75 per cent) and a qualification completion rate of 78 per cent (sector median 67 per cent). This was for 158 students (117 EFTS). Thirty-one per cent were aged 17 and under, and 31 per cent were Māori and/or Pasifika students.<sup>5</sup> This is a target group identified by the TEC as not having enjoyed great success or necessarily being well served in formal education settings previously. This is strong performance with a sometimes challenging or otherwise disengaged student group prioritised for additional assistance.

### International students

International students seem well served at UCOL and pass courses and achieve their qualifications at rates exceeding their peers (Table 5). Notably, the majority are enrolled in the Bachelor of Nursing which is the ITP's largest programme. Although the nursing degree is not a focus area in this evaluation, available external evidence indicated that the overall picture of student achievement is particularly strong for this programme. There were around 200 international students enrolled at UCOL in 2016.

**Table 5. Trends in course (and qualification) completion rates – international and domestic (SAC-funded groups 2012-2015)**

Group	2012	2013	2014	2015
International students	95% (123%)	94%(128%)	91% (97%)	92% (89%)
All other UCOL students (all levels)	73% (65%)	76% (65%)	75% (67%)	79% (74%)

\*There are limitations in this comparability as international students are largely in programmes at level 5 and above. (Data for international students supplied by UCOL.)

<sup>5</sup> Source data: TEC performance reports.

All programmes have a moderation plan which reflects UCOL academic policy and procedure. This is monitored by faculty boards of educational improvement which are sub-committees of the academic board, and examples of this monitoring activity were seen in minutes (including sub-contractor samples, as was a required action from UCOL's audit of sub-contracted delivery). Academic approvals committees meet to approve results at teaching level. These are then reported and approved through the academic board. The recently developed monitoring systems give an early warning on student disengagement as well as a check on the likely pass rates, and anomalies can be identified quite easily. Plagiarism controls described across the on-site visit included Turn-it-in software, teachers being knowledgeable about each student's quality of work, group projects, student training in attribution of sources, and referencing workshops. Pass rates at UCOL are credible.

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

The rating for performance in relation to these key evaluation questions is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for these key evaluation questions is **Good**.

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

The rating for performance in relation to these key evaluation questions is **Good**.

The rating for capability in self-assessment for these key evaluation questions is **Good**.

*(These two key evaluation questions are reported together as the evaluators' findings and ratings were complementary and overlapping. The range of ratings for focus areas under these key evaluation questions ranged from Adequate to Excellent, for both educational performance and capability in self-assessment. Higher ratings are more prevalent under Findings 1.3, mostly reflecting the apparent documented links between programmes and the future needs of the workforce being served.)*

Across programmes sampled there is good evidence of valued outcomes for students, industry and other important stakeholders. The self-assessment supporting the answer to the question around valued outcomes, although variable and in some cases relatively anecdotal and informally documented, is similarly of good quality and used to monitor programme performance.

As indicated under the statement of confidence, UCOL is closely matching government expectations for an ITP as proscribed in the Tertiary Education

Strategy priorities.<sup>6</sup> Closely aligned with that, UCOL's ability to attract and serve a consistent proportion of TEC 'priority group' students (Māori, Pasifika and under-25s) year-on-year is noteworthy. Improvements in achievement since the last EER indicate that students' needs for these groups are increasingly better matched, providing a valued return on investment.

Council and the executive have recognised that the overall engagement with external stakeholders has in the past been variable or inconsistent, and they have made this a priority for themselves and UCOL. External engagement is seen as an important aspect of the new management team. A new framework and policies have been developed to provide guidance and a more consistent approach to effective stakeholder interactions. Engagement is reportedly moving towards a more collaborative approach with industry for mutual benefit. The example of internships in the Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology provided a strong example of this evolution. Programme leaders and teachers commonly maintain readily available consultation logs, and these capture notes on constructive conversations and site visits with relevant industry/other stakeholders on an ongoing basis.

At the organisational level, how well Council or the executive know the value of outcomes for key community-level stakeholders (and in that context how well the ITP is matching their needs) is difficult to accurately determine. However, a stakeholder engagement framework has been established, directly supported by Council, including the creation of industry and student engagement policy documents. UCOL is also currently participating in a trial with other TEOs led by the TEC which will provide detailed data on employment and earnings outcomes for their younger graduates. The ITP had received preliminary data from this at the time of the on-site visit and this will extend the breadth of information currently captured in the annual graduate surveys.<sup>7</sup>

Although evidence of alignment with industry and/or stakeholder needs is often clearer at programme level, it is relatively anecdotal and not yet well linked to any overarching 'knowledge management' framework or investigative work. The current work of centrally consolidating programme-level data and reporting is, however, credibly managing this limitation. A shared client relationship management system is currently being implemented partly for this purpose. UCOL has implemented graduate tracking (at level 5 and above) through the faculties

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<sup>6</sup> [Tertiary Education Strategy 2014-2019](#)

<sup>7</sup> 'This data shows that UCOL degree graduates earn the same or better than their graduate counterparts from other Institutes of Technology, and that graduates from UCOL's level 1-4 programmes earn less. UCOL students' employment rates across levels 1-7 generally match those of the ITP sector. The data only includes discipline areas where UCOL has at least 100 young, domestic graduates in that particular year.' (Source: UCOL)

where, in common with many other TEOs, social media and professional networking websites are now monitored to gain information on graduate outcomes.

Technologies (including an 'attendance app' and a 'progress app' with teacher-loaded data) for daily student engagement monitoring have been developed, made available and are in active use in numerous programmes. The faculty boards of educational improvement are now well positioned around using up-to-date evidence from programme leaders to understand performance in a more timely manner and identify gaps which may indicate when student needs are not well met. Good examples of helpful interventions with students also surfaced in discussion with staff and students. These are all solid improvements based on self-assessment, reflection and trialling relating to better matching needs.

Engagement with Māori stakeholder groups and iwi more broadly is noted as being more authentic and purposeful and more thoughtfully directed, with examples also given of the engagement in the classroom and with in-depth kōrero during application/enrolment to understand and better match taura needs with programme requirements. That said, it was not clear how this higher-level engagement with external stakeholders has changed significantly over time. However, it does appear to have changed qualitatively and in its intent.

Examples of using stakeholder feedback and/or programme analysis that is adding value include:

- Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science – interns support selected sportspeople with strength and conditioning work with elite teams. Feedback has shown that this is making a considerable difference to those stakeholders who would have not come as far in their professional year without the support of these UCOL interns.
- Pursuing new programmes and initiatives in collaboration with other stakeholders which are meeting the needs of sometimes hard to reach or under-served students (Māori Pasifika Trades Training; the multi-stakeholder/agency carpentry programme in Taumarunui and later pilot-programme in Whanganui; automotive in Whanganui; prison programmes; trades academies; vocational pathway programmes). There have been some excellent examples of understanding grassroots programming needs, working collaboratively with at times multiple and challenging stakeholders, resulting in excellent and readily measurable longer-term outcomes. The competence and experience of staff working in these ways could be shared more widely across the ITP sector.
- The nursing programme offered at all three campuses has the largest number of graduates from a UCOL degree. It has a clearly focused and well understood set of key stakeholders (in particular district health boards), who are being well served, and a subsequent clear knowledge of the excellent valued outcomes. Most graduates find programme-related employment within a

reasonable period after graduating, according to annual programme reports. The programme is well served by the foundation certificate focus area programme.

UCOL systematically gathers feedback from students regarding their satisfaction with teaching and services provided. The Tōku Reo: My Voice survey conducted in semester 1, 2016 found that 82 per cent of respondents reported a 'positive overall experience'.<sup>8</sup> The graduation day survey is useful in determining numbers going into employment but is relatively rudimentary, particularly when compared with UCOL's student satisfaction survey report<sup>9</sup> with usable findings. As indicated under the statements of confidence, some variations of course survey formats across sites – with some quite low response rates – may constrain the utility of student surveys beyond monitoring. UCOL intends a revamp of these from 2017. Students also have an opportunity to put forward their views through the student ambassador programme and related processes, although a few students questioned the effectiveness and resourcing of this.

UCOL's performance in matching the requirements of NZQA – their primary quality assurer – is also positive. UCOL is proactive in relation to maintaining and refining its programme offerings and introduces new qualifications as soon as feasible after the completion of the mandatory review of qualifications process. Degree monitoring occurs as intended. Some staff have been involved in qualifications reviews, photography being a prime example, where the new qualification will be offered from 2017. Focus area programmes carpentry and beauty therapy have also been involved in the targeted review, and have collaborated with other ITPs in developing a curriculum, etc. Aside from some areas to work on in meeting NZQA and ITO moderation, the quality assurance performance here is strong.

UCOL certainly appears to be matching NZQA's research requirements for degree programmes<sup>10</sup>, and is well placed moving forward with the new UCOL Research and Knowledge Transfer Strategy 2016-2018. All faculties have research plans in place and in operation. Capture and reporting of research plans, approvals and

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<sup>8</sup> 'The aim of this survey is to determine students' first impressions of UCOL with a view to identifying areas in which UCOL is performing well and areas in which it could improve. 619 responses were received from 3,139 ...students [a 20% RR]'.

<sup>9</sup> 'The Student Satisfaction Survey report presents the findings of the 2014 UCOL Student Satisfaction Survey, which obtained the views of 418 students from a random selection of the UCOL student population from all campuses (Palmerston North, Palmerston North Online, Whanganui UCOL and Wairarapa). It is the 17th annual report on the student experience at UCOL.'

<sup>10</sup> 'NZQA expects that the research activity and culture would increase with the level of degree programmes, and be clearly demonstrated. In all cases, it is expected that research will be exposed to peer scrutiny and its outputs recorded in an appropriate form' (from NZQA - Research Strategy).

outputs is convincingly presented to the academic board, for example through forums and conferences and the annual report.

Establishing stronger, more consolidated evidence of the range and quality of graduate outcomes institutionally is required. The current work of centrally consolidating programme-level data and reporting into the Pātaka Kōrero information system is, however, credibly managing this. Compared with the previous EER, there has been marked improvement across activities relating to these key evaluation questions, and this improvement reflects strengthened self-assessment. Nevertheless, there is scope for more robust analysis to determine the value across the programme portfolio, and then report on that in a more convincing fashion.

#### 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Approaches to teaching and assessment which reflect high-quality student-teacher interaction were strongly evident in both evaluator interviews and scrutiny of students' written evaluation feedback over recent years. Capture and representation of such feedback was convincing. There was good evidence that assessment is serving learning, and the needs and attributes of individual students are known and considered by staff. Students felt fairly treated and supported to succeed by all accounts. The various institution-wide, well-resourced and well-led initiatives for developing tertiary teacher competencies can be broadly correlated with this.<sup>11</sup> The favourable trend in course and qualification completion indicators also suggests improved student engagement. Overall, a cohesive theme of assessment providing students with timely and useful feedback was apparent across all focus areas.

UCOL has been implementing and evaluating a focused teacher development process (Te Atakura) which is positively changing teaching practices. Te Atakura includes focused teaching observations, co-construction meetings, and documented action plans. Teaching staff involved can report positive impacts on their teaching. Resistance to this model by some staff (as reported in UCOL's commissioned evaluations) appears to be managed and perhaps is dissipating as it becomes business as usual.

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<sup>11</sup> Certificate in Adult Teaching Advanced ([CATA](#)), the High Performing Teaching Teams initiative and The National Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education ([Vocational/Workplace](#)) and Te Atakura professional development.

Numerous teachers interviewed have been through multiple observation cycles as part of the Te Atakura teacher development process or as part of the high-performing teaching teams' initiative – and in that sense it is a coaching and development model. This is well documented and developmental, with management appraisal dealt with separately. To balance this finding, teaching observations reportedly occurred less consistently, or less often, in the earlier portion of the period between EERs, according to some teachers. Scrutiny of pedagogy has been strengthened at UCOL, and the establishment of an 'effective teacher profile' to support a 'relationship-based' approach to teaching provides a clearly shared model for both recognition and performance management.

The skills of staff teaching international students are developed by workshops for all new staff on Code of Practice expectations, regular workshops open to all staff run by those in high-performing teaching teams, regular scheduled practice-sharing across campuses, and a module within the teachers' certification programme (CATA) on working with international students. (These findings also contribute to the rating for the international students' Focus Area 2.2.)

While moderation processes overall appear robust, and ITO moderation findings are at least good, there have been some performance gaps in relation to both ITO and NZQA-managed systems. These instances are being closely managed, with notable improvements in moderation results, for example for carpentry and beauty programmes over time. Grade analysis and greater scrutiny of marking could be readily applied to degree programmes based on focus area findings. Deeper analysis of the reasonably high volume of external moderation feedback (both NZQA and ITO systems) could also be applied. In the latter case, as with some other areas of self-assessment, use of information is better at programme level than institution-wide.

Ongoing engagement and active interaction with relevant industry bodies and/or employers was very evident at programme level across focus areas. Teaching staff and programme leaders are proactive in ensuring their currency or understanding changes in employment patterns which can inform their teaching. In most cases (where appropriate to the programme design), teachers are also identifying opportunities for work experience or employment of students. This was particularly well documented in the carpentry, photography, and information technology focus areas. In the case of carpentry, students reported a desire for more work experience in industry. Overall, students at UCOL have good opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in a variety of relevant settings, and suitable resources are available.

The previous EER reported high variability in teachers 'using UCOL's e-learning system to engage students in their learning'. Evidence from students interviewed now indicates that significant improvements in capability have occurred since then.

Computer facilities and services received a very positive rating in the most recent campus-wide student survey.<sup>12</sup> Across programmes the use of online tools and practices to supplement and support teaching and learning looks well embedded. Other forms of technology directly supporting learning (for example computer labs, photography studios, beauty salons and trades facilities) are also strongly supporting the quality of teaching and learning at UCOL.

UCOL's Literacy and Numeracy Action Plan 2016-2018 reinvigorates previous work. A high proportion of teaching staff interviewed had completed or were recently enrolled into the National Certificate in Adult Literacy Educator, and embedding practices were in many cases well-articulated. No institutional-level information was presented for gains or improvements in literacy and numeracy. UCOL has identified a need to better incorporate literacy and numeracy requirements into the curriculum where applicable. These are still important areas relating to literacy and numeracy where UCOL could show further evidence of improvement.

Some issues around lost student assignments (after point of submission) and some missing results were identified within UCOL's self-assessment. Aspects of this were also confirmed with student representatives by the evaluators. These seem to relate to changes in student services. This issue was investigated by the academic board and actions were subsequently taken to prevent a reoccurrence. These matters have affected the ratings in Findings 1.5 and are discussed under the focus area programmes where applicable.

## 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Students at UCOL have a range of high quality information, programme-related resources and guidance processes available to them, as attested by improving pass rates and the findings from focus areas. Findings of the two most recent annual UCOL student satisfaction surveys also support this view. All information sources – programme documents, handbooks and web material – undergo quality assurance through the quality directorate. Communications staff attend the relevant information-sharing and checking meetings. The UCOL website provides useful guidance to prospective students by indicating possible job prospects and salaries for most programmes, with a link to Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment 'Occupation Outlook' reports.

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<sup>12</sup> Ninety-six per cent of the 2014 survey items were rated 'A' ('very satisfactory' and 'very important'), up 5 per cent on the 2013 survey. The ratings were high across campuses and student groupings.

Students on some programmes (particularly at levels 1-4) have an impressive range of non-teaching support staff following up to enable their success – these include Kaitiaki Akonga (staff from the Raukura team) and transition coordinators as well as a specialist support staff member for students with a disability that could affect their studies. The new ‘student success’ approach focuses on targeted support and greater use of educational technology tools to develop greater student independence across all levels of programmes. There are also efforts being made to ensure that support is equitable and consistent across the three campuses. UCOL’s self-assessment has been significantly informed by benchmarking against student support by other ITPs.

Retention on programmes was somewhat inconsistent across focus areas, and this leads to some uncertainty for the evaluators around student readiness for their programme and/or acceptance onto the correct level of programme. The recent initiative where staff have a ‘pre-enrolment kōrero’ with prospective students before acceptance on a programme is a step towards strengthening entry processes.

Teaching quality, which has rated highly in this evaluation, is being strengthened through the Te Atakura initiative (see focus area reporting below). Teaching staff and those Te Atakura coaches interviewed by the evaluators on numerous occasions described ways in which this was also strengthening pastoral care and their approach to interaction with students more generally.

Performance in this area is strong in respect to the pastoral aspects of Te Atakura and general information, facilities and services to students. However, it is to an extent undermined by weaknesses in the monitoring and deployment of changes to student services on the main campus throughout 2016. Changes to student services on the main campus occurred from August 2016, with almost all new/updated roles in place immediately.

These changes led to some disaffection by students, inconsistent performance experienced by some, and the perception by some that service quality had declined. Overall, the communication strategy and monitoring of the change was unconvincing. Additionally, the still-evolving student success approach is not yet well understood or supported in the teaching and learning and library areas, and was certainly not well understood by many of the students – including those from programmes most directly affected, who were interviewed.

That said, the implementation of Te Atakura – which encourages a wholistic, supportive approach to student learning, and the related proactive follow-up of students who are at risk of disengaging, as well as the positive trend in course completions, are all features of good student support with related in-depth self-assessment.

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

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

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

As reported above, UCOL is making steady progress in improving the educational achievement of learners, their experience on campus, and in particular their interactions with teaching staff. Participation and achievement has been made a focus for governance and management. Academic board minutes and reports from the faculty boards of educational improvement give the Council clear information about student achievement across programmes and an understanding of participation and achievement across UCOL.

The faculty boards of educational improvement were introduced as part of a strategic intent to shift to a focus on student success and academic quality. The directorate has an open invitation to the faculty boards and attends as available. The change in nomenclature from faculty boards of study to faculty boards of educational improvement is a reframing highlighting the shift from compliance to quality, student success and improvement that the Council, directorate and programme management are committed to. The faculty boards have also provided opportunities for cross-discipline collaboration. They identify systemic or intractable issues and possible emerging issues around student achievement. The meetings use standardised reporting templates – including action plans monitoring follow-up – which report on matters of educational quality. In-depth conversations about quality and improvement opportunities bring in multiple perspectives, as was intended. They have also supported a consistent management and monitoring approach.

The directorate has a sound awareness around student selection initiatives. Board minutes record discussions around entry criteria. The emphasis on 'right programme, right time for each student', particularly at level 4, is shared. However, based on focus area samples, the evaluators were not convinced that the improvements to the student selection process were well embedded.

Governance and management activities around funding and new programme development are well balanced and apparently well resourced. The quality of the resources available to students is high, and there are notable areas of investment in facilities since the previous EER.

Each programme's self-assessment report is prepared and submitted in approximately February the following year. The evaluators questioned the timeliness of any actions for change and correction before the next cycle of enrolment and start of programme. Centrally provided performance data has provided better information with which to make and support direction and decision-making.

As also noted under Findings 1.2, there are limitations in an aggregated source of ITP-wide outcomes evidence to gauge programme value and alignment with industry

needs. Graduation day survey findings provide some data on transition to employment, but need to be treated with caution as they are non-validated and do not identify whether the vocational outcomes relate to the programme studied. Industry and stakeholder engagement is an area of development by both Council and the new leadership team, who are using their contacts and knowledge to engage well with the community and iwi. They are working at refreshing this strategy (Rorou Aronui). Engagement is moving from recruitment to a more collaborative approach with industry where the relationship is mutually beneficial. Overall, the evaluators determined that the focus of efforts is positive and current work here is convincing in its intent.

Examples of stakeholder feedback reflecting UCOL's value-add include the Bachelor of Exercise Science, where interns support sportspeople with strength and conditioning work with their elite teams. On a much larger scale, the contribution of nursing and information technology graduates to the workforce is significant and strategic. It was difficult to determine at an organisational level how well Council or management knows the value of outcomes for key stakeholders as the programme-level capture and analysis ranges from detailed year-on-year capture to less formal documentation. As noted, new processes have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented to tighten reporting and gather reliable aggregated performance data – both monitoring and outcome.

Focus area programmes could note where changes had been made to ensure the programmes meet the needs of the learners and other stakeholders, with a refocus on attending to the literacy and numeracy needs of students. Council and senior management mandate, fund and encourage ongoing professional development by all staff, recognise high performers, and provide favourable conditions for research. Numerous teachers across the focus areas have obtained teaching qualifications, and have completed the CATA qualification. Similarly, numerous teachers across the focus areas are participating in Te Atakura, including focused teaching observations, co-construction meetings, and documented action plans. These teachers are able to report positive impacts on their teaching and approach to pastoral care. These activities and their impacts are summarised in annual self-assessment reports and elsewhere. Further development of embedding kaupapa Māori principles and aspects of mātauranga Māori at the programme design stage is occurring and complements the more established initiatives. Investment in programme and staff development, as well as quality systems and overall curriculum maintenance, is ongoing and substantial at UCOL.

Restructuring of the student services function seems to have been based on cross-ITP benchmarking<sup>13</sup> rather than student survey feedback, which seemed reasonably positive on these services. The main issues seem to be lack of a clear plan for

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<sup>13</sup> The existing service was twice the sector average in cost according to the benchmarking data used.

monitoring the changes and mitigating any negative impacts, and potentially the timing and/or communications were not being well optimised. Management responsiveness to feedback on the support services was not immediate or prompt. Examples of disgruntled students surfaced across some focus areas evaluated and these views were discussed and further clarified with student representatives as well as UCOL staff and management and warrant mention.

The size of programmes, and potential graduate numbers, do not always appear to be in keeping with the scale of the labour market in the regions served (aspects of this are covered in the focus area summaries). Regardless, this may be reasonable to some extent given that Palmerston North is a study destination attracting students who migrate in and out of the region to study with various TEOs.

UCOL's success with international students, balancing volume with quality and thinking strategically on their future direction, is positive and reported on more fully under Focus Area 2.2.

## Focus Areas

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

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

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

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

The ITP has followed through with high-level evaluations of its strategic priorities and performance-related goals and efforts. As indicated, this leads to credible connections between UCOL's 'Strategic Story'<sup>14</sup> and the component initiatives to lift achievement, meet funder requirements, and better match stakeholder needs. This has led to steady improvements in performance as measured by consistent enrolments, financial stability and educational performance indicators – with scope for further progress when compared with similar institutions in the latter case. Council and senior management have established and clearly set out the strategic priorities and goals. This commitment is currently most evident in terms of planning, resourcing and well documented monitoring. Council is suitably informed of financial and educational performance, and monitors the progress of all component parts of strategic planning. The appointments they have made or had input into at the executive level are sound.

Council and the executive have recognised that engagement with stakeholders has been variable and have made this a priority for themselves and UCOL. Improving external engagement is also seen as important by the new management team, with a revised framework and policies now developed to provide clear guidance and a consistent approach. Engagement with Māori stakeholder groups and iwi has been noted as now being more authentic, with examples given of the engagement at hui across the UCOL regions. It was unclear how this 'more intentional' interaction with these external stakeholders has changed significantly or qualitatively. As indicated under the statement of confidence for educational performance, some important initiatives or changes have yet to strongly show their intended benefits. Other projects such as Te Atakura and student progress monitoring technologies are more mature and are reported favourably elsewhere in this report. Engagement by the UCOL chief executive and directorate team with internal stakeholders (staff and students) has improved over recent times, according to numerous staff.

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<sup>14</sup> [UCOL Strategic Story 2015-2018](#)

An area of growth and strength is the healthy organisational culture, leadership and direction (well referenced in staff interviews across focus areas). Seen in the context of the period since the previous EER, this is either newly established or being implemented, but is tracking positively. In numerous cases, performance agreements for numerous first (and second and third) tier managers or programme leaders will have only recently been set or re-set. Significant reshuffling of management has occurred across all campuses. Council spoke favourably of the new chief executive's decision-making and oversight of these changes. UCOL has recruited suitable staff with previous tertiary education experience in either ITP or university settings. Staff survey data also supports a view that the experience of staff with restructuring, leadership changes and greater transparency at the top is being realised and recognised by them.<sup>15</sup> Staff consultation and information-sharing meetings now occur routinely, which is also an improvement.

Other findings around self-assessment and compliance activities include the following.

There has been sound self-assessment of health and safety-related issues in response to legislative changes. The reputation research survey (2015) was a useful commissioned survey to monitor perceptions of UCOL by stakeholders and the public, and is being used to inform communications strategies. Research investment and capability-building was also evident through both the ITP's research outputs and focus area programmes.<sup>16</sup>

Issues among some TEOs with TEC funding breaches led to a series of investigations and changes at UCOL: a sub-contractor audit, including delivery hours, concluded in May 2014. No under-delivery of teaching hours was identified. UCOL has reduced its exposure to sub-contracted teaching risks by reducing the volume. A desktop audit of all UCOL programmes identified and corrected some 'minor incongruencies' in alignment with programme approval, and an audit of classroom use was concluding at the time of the EER. The next phase will closely scrutinise teaching hours allocations as a further point of triangulation. UCOL is clear about the risks and their requirements regarding compliance, and has suitably experienced and trained staff to monitor and correct issues arising. Council, the chief executive, academic board and (now) executive deans are all well informed on these matters.

There is still a need to establish stronger evidence around the ITP's programme relevance as viewed through the range and quality of graduate outcomes. As indicated in Findings 1.2, there is scope for stronger leadership and investment

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<sup>15</sup> November 2015. A response rate of 79 per cent yielded 386 responses and 300 pages of comments. The majority of staff reported feeling 'engaged'.

<sup>16</sup> Performance Based Research Funding external evaluation of UCOL's research activity would be useful evidence of quality.

here. The work being currently undertaken with the TEC and other TEOs is noted favourably.

## 2.2 Focus area: Te Atakura Initiative

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

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

Monitoring, review and external evaluation of this initiative to develop teacher competencies and improve learner achievement is particularly robust. This self-assessment has led to changes and improvements in the overall deployment of the initiative, as well as changes in teaching and pastoral care at programme level more generally. Improvements in Māori (and all other) learner achievement as reflected in UCOL-wide educational performance indicators (as reported under Findings 1.1) can be attributed at least in part to this initiative. The finding of UCOL's most recent commissioned review is also generally borne out by this EER:

‘Although UCOL has implemented a range of measures to improve their [educational performance], programmes that have implemented Te Atakura have had a greater increase in their successful course completion rate than programmes that have not.’ (Te Atakura Evaluation Sept 2016)

Significant ongoing investment by UCOL, buy-in by staff, and focused work by Te Atakura coaches and participating teachers has been substantial. The first external evaluation of Te Atakura stated that ‘in terms of the adaptation of Te Atakura for the tertiary and, more specifically, UCOL contexts, both teachers and coaches were ambivalent as to whether the programme had been sufficiently adapted’. This finding was not so evident in this EER, when it appears that a relative level of consensus had been reached as far as the aims and contributing processes are concerned. Reflection and learning has occurred among both management and teaching staff. Indications are, however, that Te Atakura still needs more work to become fully established and to realise the full extent of desired improvements. (The mechanisms and impacts of this initiative are reported in more detail under Findings 1.4 and 1.5 and within the focus areas below.)

Other aspects of Te Atakura are reported elsewhere throughout this report.

## 2.3 Focus area: Support and achievement of international students

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

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

For reasons already indicated under Findings 1.1, this is an area of high performance; it is being well managed, with recent changes likely to improve some

aspects. An example is the new formal arrangements with a Chinese tertiary education organisation. Course pass rates for international students are consistently high at around 90 per cent, and are higher than for domestic students across most programmes.

Compliance and review pertaining to the Code of Practice are sound. Outcomes, for example, include work being done in designing new agent toolkits and the audit conducted to ensure the website provides relevant information. An international student support coordinator ensures that students have access to the support they need, including first language assistance or referral to specialist agencies as required. A range of pastoral and academic supports are provided, and these are effective based on global student survey feedback and pass rates. A comprehensive self-review against the previous Code of Practice occurred in 2015. Three audits were also undertaken on the international student application checklists, and the number of overseas agents was also recently reduced. Review against the new code was planned for late 2016.

External evaluation of UCOL's international work has been robust, and the findings and suggestions arising are clearly being responded to. Goals established some years ago were not achieved, and UCOL has re-set the strategy. There is a move away from using agents to procure enrolments in favour of formal arrangements with overseas institutions and targeting programme pathways to match their needs. This will potentially assist in improving visa decline rates which are of concern to Immigration New Zealand and NZQA. The chief executive and a new, experienced bilingual executive director of business development are refocusing goals and working with overseas counterparts to achieve 'high quality student enrolments' rather than just increasing numbers.

A thorough high-level investigation and detailed reporting of UCOL's international work was conducted by an external consultant in 2013. Several small investigations have also been undertaken since then to look at aspects such as students' changing information needs across their years of study. Achievement data made available to the evaluators is analysed at programme level, but not at whole-of-institution level, and is not broken down by ethnicity or country of origin. Feedback is gathered systematically from stakeholders including agents and parents. Staff recognise a need to capture some of this data more formally.

## Focus Area Programmes

(Refer to tables b and c for performance and enrolment data.)

### 2.4 Focus area: Bachelor of Exercise and Sport Science (Level 7)

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

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

Programme achievement data shows that course completions have steadily improved year on year, to be in the 83 per cent range. Qualification completions have been relatively stable in the low to mid-60 per cent range. Performance by students under 25 years has also shown improvement. At the same time, there has been a decrease in qualification completion by Māori learners, and the programme has considerable attrition of students. More work needs to be done to understand the reasons for this and to offer solutions. The evaluators were informed that some students transferred to Massey University in 2016 (although there is no formal cross-credit arrangement, which may be disadvantageous). A broader review of selection practices and processes may also strengthen educational performance.<sup>17</sup>

The programme directly supports community wellbeing. For example, interns support particular sports with strength and conditioning assistance, and use their skills with elite teams in and around Palmerston North. This provides a valuable resource to the community as well as work-integrated learning for students. External stakeholders spoken to attested to the internship making a considerable difference to those clients who may not have been as successful without the support of these UCOL interns. The department provided graduate destination data for the past three to five years, however it was not particularly evident that the data was being used to support improvements, inform programme changes or establish new relationships.

Students and graduates believe that the UCOL programme is more applied in practice than other, similar programmes. Graduates supported and illustrated this view, and saw it as giving them a distinct advantage as they could relate to clients well and had applied skills other graduates coming from more theoretical programmes may lack. Programme-level evidence confirming this would bolster self-assessment. Somewhat surprisingly, teaching staff did not know the content or status of the monitor's report or whether actions and improvements had been addressed. Similarly, the programme leadership team did not demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the actions taken as a result of the monitor's report. It

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<sup>17</sup> UCOL states that the lecturing team provide additional support and different teaching and approaches for students who are competitive athletes with commitments to training, travel and competition. Despite this and a comprehensive outline at enrolment and orientation, some students do prioritise their sport over their study.

was suggested that actions were in programme self-assessment reports and that any issues would have been escalated to the faculty board. However, there was minimal evidence of addressing the monitor's recommendations within those sources.

Students reported that they were encouraged and supported to achieve by their teachers, and that the teachers were well prepared and did extra to support the students. However, they also said they had experienced many staff changes and that this was disruptive. Students also indicated that the changes to the central student services were disruptive, particularly changes to library services. The inability to get work printed at times, and care and trust issues around the central assessment submission system, were frustrations. Students did not feel the assessment box system was a reliable one, and although they had given feedback, they saw little response, and nor had any potential improvements been communicated to them. That said, students felt they received good pastoral care and support from teaching staff and the leadership team around personal issues, attendance matters, and protocols around assessment dates. Teaching staff remain the main source of student support, somewhat mitigating changes occurring centrally. Students feel comfortable talking with teaching staff about any aspects of their course or factors related to their success.

Staff use sound practices to monitor and manage student attendance and progress. Early detection of students who are at risk of not passing occurs, and allows for appropriate responses. The UCOL-wide attendance app grew from this. The system seems to be working well, notwithstanding the limitations noted above. However, a weakness is the lack of a clear position or shared practice on attendance. Teachers explained that students with satisfactory performance may not be attending, and in cases were 'not bothered' with attendance despite follow-up reminders or requests. Students reported that when they were absent they were consistently sent text messages from staff. However, this does not seem to have improved the attendance of some. If qualification pass rates were exemplary, this might not be an issue.

Staff are well qualified and research-active. The culture of research in and across the programme is extremely healthy. Research is introduced to students early in the programme. Students found this valuable and is helping them succeed in higher-level programmes, including graduate diploma and Master's-level study. Students enjoy and benefit from being involved in research projects.

Student feedback and survey data is routinely collected, but students were unsure what happened to their feedback and often could not describe changes resulting from the feedback. UCOL could consider its systems for collecting and responding to student feedback in this programme. Overall, this programme has a range of positive features which are undermined by performance lapses and lack of clarity in other areas.

## 2.5 Focus area: Bachelor of Information and Communications Technology (Applied) (Level 7)

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 Information and Communications Technology has excellent course and qualification completions which improved steadily between 2012 and 2015. Course and qualification completion indicators were 85 per cent and 86 per cent respectively in 2015. Annual self-assessment reports have also evolved and improved. This programme reflects the analytical capability of its staff, and reporting reflects or references evidence (internal findings as well as degree monitor findings or recommendations) more so than some other focus area programmes. Staff analyse course completions and seek reasons when courses have lower completions, to identify actions and improve them. For example, they identified an issue with lower Māori completion rates and have put strategies in place which are showing signs of working.

Employers approach UCOL staff seeking to employ graduates. Graduates are encouraged to set up a LinkedIn profile – this assists staff to track positive graduate outcomes, including into local information technology-related roles. Strong links with industry are fostered through second and third-year industry projects and the recently developed internship. In addition, stakeholders participate in networking events and role-play interviews with students annually. The embedded diplomas provide useful exit points for some students not wishing to commit to a degree. Outcome value is high, relating as it does to government's desire for growth in numbers of information technology graduates at Bachelor's or higher levels.

The programme serves a diverse student group in terms of age, background and aspirations. This includes some ex-university students who reported that they feel better served by the teaching and learning approach and smaller class sizes at UCOL. There is up-to-date technology and a project room provides good out-of-class hours access for students. A re-enrolment session at the start of each year provides returning students with an opportunity for good advice on planning and re-focusing on their studies after a break.

Teaching staff are suitably qualified. Many have postgraduate qualifications including doctorates, and some have completed literacy and language training which adds value to their teaching. Students interviewed reported genuine satisfaction with teaching and project supervision; some critical feedback in student surveys does, however, suggest some variability in teacher competencies. Student-centred assessment practices and a curriculum that is clearly structured and implemented to move students towards increasing autonomy and problem-solving through the three years of study was evident. Staff are research-active, and this activity is monitored through the faculty boards, and reported publicly in UCOL's annual report

As indicated, self-assessment reports demonstrate good analysis of learner needs; the traffic light system is being actively used to target student support. There are useful, critical peer observations of teaching and regular team discussions of teaching, plus pre- and post-moderation of assessments. Head of school meetings and faculty board meetings are used to monitor and ensure performance is on track and consistent with other programmes. The head of school is very knowledgeable about this programme – its evolution, goals and performance – having taught on it, which seems well linked to the institution’s overall Strategic Story and was one of several instances of leadership development sighted during this evaluation.

## 2.6 Focus area: Certificate in Science and Health (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 **Good**.

This sizeable focus area programme serves an important role and is serving a wide variety of students. It is highly regarded by both students and stakeholders as a pathway to higher education and eventual employment. Students are aware that success in this programme gives them a higher likelihood of entry and success in, for example, nursing, medical imaging, and midwifery degrees. Feedback from graduates on higher-level programmes, those in employment, and external stakeholders indicates that the certificate prepares students suitably and that graduates have acquired transferable skills and knowledge. Graduates commented that they do not think they would have succeeded in their degree-level studies had they not first completed this certificate.

Course and qualification completions have shown year-on-year improvements in performance, reaching 70 per cent for both course and qualification completion indicators in 2015. Retention and progression rates have also improved. While Māori course and qualification completions decreased in 2014, they significantly improved in 2015 to higher levels than in the previous three years. There is some variance in performance between sites, with the Palmerston North site outperforming the Whanganui site in course and qualification completions. This performance gap is widening between sites. Students interviewed observed that a number of students have dropped out, mainly for ‘life reasons’. No explanation was given for the differing performance, and information in self-assessment reporting was limited.

To address variation between sites, a Transition Coordinator was active throughout 2016 in Whanganui, and the staff were involved in Te Atakura in Palmerston North. UCOL suggest that these interventions are reflected in improved course completion rates at both sites.

Student selection appears somewhat inconsistent: some students had an interview, some did not. The Certificate in Science and Health is an open-entry programme

(though the regulations are changing to introduce entry requirements for 2017 onwards). Regardless, the interviews occurring were as intended by senior management: in-depth, assessing life commitments as well as academic acceptability. In the case of the Palmerston North site, students are carefully guided to check their intended pathway, as those taking medical imaging and vet nursing need to choose specific electives. Rich student selection discussions for those that have an interview were evident and are a result of previous entry practices being reflected on and improved.

Students said that as well as core content, they developed valuable skills such as self-confidence, self-esteem and public speaking. As a result of their study, students felt positive about future employment and entering higher-level qualifications with the skills necessary to succeed. They felt the programme was helping them to move successfully and confidently to further study and longer-term goals. The programme is effective in achieving its stated aims.

Staff are clear that graduation was a key student success measure as it allows entry to a degree. This serves to increase the teachers' care and focus when teaching, as well as their guidance. Teachers are aware of student achievement data and use this to review, reflect and lead improvement activities. The self-assessment reports and faculty board reporting also help support this focus. These reports are easily updateable by staff, ensuring the document is a 'living' one. Students said that the teachers often went to extra lengths, used their own time, and offered extra tutorials to help students succeed. As with other programmes, the faculty board monitoring of attendance helps maintain a student-centred view and the stated emphasis on improving student achievement UCOL-wide.

Graduation destination data is becoming more formalised and current. The new central system is expected to support greater use and knowledge of external stakeholder viewpoints and thus improved external stakeholder engagement. Annual self-assessment activities have been used to bring about changes to the curriculum in response to student feedback. As an example of improvement, following the discussion with internal stakeholders it was noted that students were passing at a lower than anticipated rate in their next level programme. It was decided that the certificate needed modification to ensure students could cope with the next level, which has occurred. While the self-assessment reports have targeted actions, the evaluators observed that there is at times a loss of impetus with these unless they are taken to faculty board level.

The quality of teaching and learning was considered excellent by both students and stakeholders. Evaluators were told by staff that Te Atakura is a very positive professional development initiative which is directly supporting teacher practice and reflection. In addition, teachers are well supported by CATA development. The observations and reflections from these channels are helpful and in use for reflective practice. The Te Atakura methodology allows space for teacher self-review and personal reflection of teacher pedagogy – guided by regular meetings

with a designated and trained coach – to maintain or amend their practice. All staff receive annual performance appraisals by a line manager where quality of teaching is one element of the discussion that is commented on. Training in literacy and numeracy teaching was also provided to all staff, as developing literacy and numeracy skills is an important programme aim.

Collegial dialogue is a key contributor to identifying new ideas or approaches, and sharing with peers is a common practice supporting the quality of teaching. There was strong evidence of peer support and discussions on teaching and sharing successful ways of engaging and lifting student (particularly Māori) achievement. Less favourably, not all teachers were aware of what happens with their moderation samples. This important area of academic quality needs to be strengthened.

Students said the teachers were helpful and approachable and available when needed. If there were issues or the students needed extra help they felt they could go to the teachers for support. Assignments reportedly match the course content and teachers provide quality feedback on assignments. The return times of assignments were inconsistent, sometimes taking up to four to six weeks. Students did not find this practice helpful as it did not allow them to know where they needed to improve in a timely fashion. Students were critical of recent changes to student support services and the impact on them.

Transition coordinators also directly support the engagement and retention of students by following up on attendance and well-being. Other wider UCOL services, such as computers for student use, Wi-Fi and the student ID, which offers purchasing advantages locally, were also helpful to students. Institutional regulations or practices allowing for opportunities for success include a catchup scholarship; resit and re-submission policies are utilised by students and also support student success.

## 2.7 Focus area: Diploma in Photographic Imaging (Level 6)

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

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

This is a strongly performing niche programme, recently extended into the Auckland market with a new site. Course completions show a consistent rise since 2012 (from 70 to 78 per cent), with the only caveat being the lower qualification completion numbers which reportedly reflect some students preferring to exit early with a skill-set but not the full qualification. Students learn the skills they need for work or to set up their own businesses through engaging in real-world projects. Employment outcomes recorded recently include photo-journalism, studio work and freelance/small business employment in, for example, wedding and portrait

photography. Students, staff and graduates have a solid record of achievement in photographic competitions and in exhibiting their work.<sup>18</sup>

Self-assessment reports have evolved over time and reflect the growing capability of staff in being more analytical and referencing evidence. Comprehensive information about graduate outcomes is collected and analysed to identify employment trends and changes in the industry as technological changes occur. This programme provides some of the best evidence of programme value and matched needs in terms of employment. Links with industry are reflected in programme delivery, course design and quality of technology and facilities – including loans or other access to new and specialised professional equipment, and work placement.

Teaching staff are professionals both in their industry and in their teaching. Students reported that support is tailored to their needs and is readily available. Teachers use peer observation and regular discussion to ensure teaching excellence and consistency. Changes have been made to accommodate student learning preferences. Staff are aware of their lower Māori enrolment (approximately 15 per cent of 2016 students were Māori) and achievement, and had conducted research which identified that Māori photographers tend to be in fine arts rather than commercial or professional photography. In 2016, teaching staff began an innovative project working with youth at a local marae to foster their skills and interests in photography with a view to increasing enrolments; this initiative looks promising for raising the profession's profile (and UCOL's profile) among these youth. The teaching staff are willing to try new things and to innovate.

Self-assessment is a whole-of-team approach and is ongoing. Staff use a structured, deliberative approach to assist in their reflections. The new head of school provides a prime example of UCOL's ability to grow their own leadership, is 'hands-on' and able to readily articulate a clear vision for assuring the future quality of the programme when the new New Zealand Diploma in Photography is launched in 2017.

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<sup>18</sup> For example, at the New Zealand Institute of Professional Photography Iris Professional Photography Awards, achieving New Zealand Student of the Year for 12 consecutive years, New Zealand Tertiary Institution of the Year for eight consecutive years, and winner of the Canon Eyecon Award for six consecutive years.

## 2.8 Focus area: Diploma in Beauty Therapy (Level 5)

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

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

Students on this reasonably small programme develop relevant skills and knowledge with which to enter industry, particularly beauty salons and spas, but also pharmacy/department stores sales counters. The programme has high course and qualification completions and has shown a positive trend of improvement for both indicators since 2011. Course completion rates have consistently surpassed 80 per cent since 2012. Most of the graduates listed in programme records have obtained relevant jobs, but as with some other focus area programmes, more formal outcome capture is warranted. Evidence of graduate outcomes and pathways to relevant employment (congruent with the level and duration of the programme) were to some extent based on informal evidence, but there is good follow-up on each graduate through industry networks and social media contact.

Evidence from ITO and international (ITEC audit) quality assurance perspectives are highly favourable to the quality of the teaching, resourcing and incremental improvements over time. The ITEC qualification endorsement provides additional portable recognition (with 100 per cent pass rates in recent years indicating that students are well prepared for the test). Regular student surveys and observational reports on teaching show that staff respond to students concerns. These showed developmental processes to improve both teaching and student engagement where there are deficiencies. Teachers' industry and professional body links help maintain their currency. Staff are well informed about the changes to the qualification, and are poised to introduce the replacement diploma in collaboration with other ITPs. The programme document captures all important aspects of programme design and delivery, including academic board-approved changes and the history of changes. As an example of its active use, the rationale around and use of student self-directed learning hours was well described by teachers and understood by students. Weekly scheduled salon practice supplements the programme and adds significantly to students' employment readiness.

The only caveats on programme performance were the numbers graduating in relation to the size of the local labour market(s), and the duration of the overall programme in relation to job opportunities and potential return on investment (most students have also completed a previous certificate year<sup>19</sup>). It was noted that Palmerston North is also served by a PTE delivering similar training.

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<sup>19</sup> Attrition and issues with student engagement were also noted in self-assessment records for lower-level beauty programmes.

## 2.9 Focus area: Certificate in Carpentry (Level 4)

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

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

This programme is offered at the Palmerston North and Wairarapa campuses, and at a site in Taumarunui. Course completions have improved markedly since 2012 – reaching 76 per cent against a UCOL target of 80 per cent. Overall, since the previous EER, the pattern of results has been somewhat variable. Attrition from the Palmerston North programme has been reasonably high in 2016, and retention of students to full completion of the qualification is a performance limitation here. Students who do not meet the requirements for the award of the Certificate in Carpentry but who complete a minimum of 60 credits (of which at least 40 are at level 3) may gain the level 3 Certificate in Introduction to Carpentry. The programme at Taumarunui is a multi-stakeholder/agency initiative<sup>20</sup> achieving excellent results and very strong employment outcomes primarily from the Christchurch rebuild. Use of the National Certificate in Building, Construction and Allied Trades (a level 2 programme) as a foundation programme in Taumarunui seems linked to strong achievement and outcomes there.

As with other programmes, industry contact and programme outcomes are highly reliant on teacher-level interactions – which seem to be intensive and constant. These records – from notebooks and spreadsheets and social media – are now being aggregated in preparation for the organisation’s new database (the CRM). From that point of view, and in the absence of an advisory group, there is reasonable evidence of industry engagement linked to valued outcomes. According to an industry stakeholder, ‘the amount of contact [we have] with teachers is regular ... they are builders themselves’. Across the teaching team there is a good balance of youth and experience, with teachers having previously trained and/or assessed apprentices on the job.

Moderation engagement with the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation is active, covers many standards, is documented, and shows improvement over time, with good agreement rates now being recorded. Internal moderation appears to be more cursory with all samples sighted marked ‘Y’, indicating suitability but little in the way of critique or developmental commentary. Overall, moderation evidence shows that the skills and knowledge student achieve will be suitable for a ‘work-ready’ exit – which is the programme goal.

All students receive a hand tool kit, and most obtain their First Aid Certificate. Units achieved can contribute to the full trade qualification, and the skills learned are transferable to many occupations as well as personal use. It was unclear that the

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<sup>20</sup> Partners are UCOL, Christchurch’s Te Kaihanga Cooperative, Hinengakau Development Trust in Taumarunui, Te Puni Kōkiri, the local council and Ministry of Social Development.

volume of students on the overall programme (for example an intake of 50 in Palmerston North in 2015) is congruent with the scale of local industry needs. That said, the programme is an important operating pathway from secondary schools' trades academies, Youth Guarantee, and Māori and Pasifika Trades Training.

Students spoke very favourably about the quality of teaching and availability of guidance and support. They said the availability of on-job work experience (aside from the on-campus project building a house which is later auctioned to raise money for charity) was more limited than they would like.<sup>21</sup> There has been considerable turnover of teaching staff in a buoyant economic environment with many opportunities for tradespeople. Students described suitable processes to get additional support, including literacy and numeracy, and said they or other students used this support. They also showed a good general understanding of how the programme links to the apprenticeship/certified builder pathway. Their view was that students who have dropped out of the programme were not sufficiently committed to it or were unclear about the theoretical work involved.

New teachers interviewed were being well supported and were undertaking a range of appropriate induction training, including formal teaching qualifications and Te Atakura coaching. The new staff job descriptions do not specifically reference Te Atakura, which may be something to consider. The programme delivery and teacher profile correlated well with the programme document. The positive interaction of a transition coordinator, akonga kaitiakai (from the Raukura team) and teachers in supporting student engagement and participation was very apparent in this programme, and was positively referenced by students. The improved course completion rates can be positively correlated with this.

## 2.10 Focus area: Certificate in Automotive Engineering (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 **Good**.

This is the third largest of the focus area programmes. It is an important entry point to trades training, and is a pathway from secondary school trades-related programmes such as vocational pathways. Offered at each of the three UCOL campuses, this programme's course and qualification completion rates improved in 2015, reaching 62 per cent for course completions and 57 per cent for qualification completions. Both indicators remain below UCOL targets but show a positive increase nonetheless. Impacts from the Te Atakura initiative around Māori retention and completion are apparent. Māori achievement has improved significantly – 70 per

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<sup>21</sup> 'A minimum of 300 hours of practical work-based carpentry experience in programme: achieved through cabin and house build projects and work experience.' Source: Programme Document.

cent course completion in 2015 (up from 44 per cent 2014). Under-25 pass rates have also improved slightly. The evaluators heard that the introduction of Te Atakura to this teaching team in 2016 had been of real value, directly contributing to these improvements. Te Atakura coaching has provided useful professional development, making a difference to both their teaching practice and the student learning experience.

All students are well briefed on the programme content and UCOL expectations at enrolment. The presence of a transition coordinator provides notable support to teachers in respect to following up on student participation and any barriers that arise which may hinder their progress. Attendance and progress information is posted in the workshop and theory room so students have a clear view of their individual and collective progress and achievement. This reportedly motivates students and assists with attendance. Teachers are clear on attendance and progress, and support students who may be falling behind. Suitable practices for communicating student progress are used.

Relationships with industry stakeholders are ongoing but not formalised by, for example, an advisory committee. Staff identify graduate employment outcomes from their engagement with industry. Numerous graduates are employed locally and they have in turn employed others or offer work experience. The programme supports students seeking further study opportunities, including apprenticeships. Staff have begun to track the employment and further study destinations of their graduates. Available information shows that over 70 per cent of the students from the Palmerston North programme either went direct to employment or into further study.

Students felt they were supplied with the resources necessary to meet the programme requirements. The assessments are relevant and the skills gained useful and appropriate. Examples were noted of graduates using the skills learned, and also of those who had progressed to other trades. Self-awareness, self-confidence and clear communication were positive outcomes which made a difference to their ability to work with each other in the workshop and to gain work experience and be able to perform well in industry. Graduates can pathway into other fields because of the skills and quality of their learning. Students at Whanganui were not as aware of pathway options as those at Palmerston North (such as diesel or forklift mechanic, or electrical-related pathways). There is an opportunity here for more consistent guidance.

Teachers are skilled in their interpersonal and technical skills, and this contributes positively to student learning. Students said their learning is supported by both teachers and peers where they challenge, support and care for each other as part of a positive learning environment. Staff gather informally on a regular basis and reflect on their teaching and student progress. Teachers attributed improvements in student achievement at least in part to this intentional reflection and the changes or adaptations made. Programme leaders also have a teaching load; this was seen as positive as it keeps leaders close to teaching and learning and informs better

decision-making. Staff are involved in regular professional development and professional conversations around teaching.

A pilot programme in automotive at level 2 was run in Whanganui in 2015. The programme had only one graduate from the six enrolled. A level 3 programme was run in 2016 and there has been improvement, with nine of the 14 students enrolled still attending and looking likely to graduate in 2016. Due to the late provision of a classroom and workshop for the start of the level 3 programme, theory lessons were undertaken in the campus atrium for the first eight weeks. Both the teacher and students suggested this was detrimental and some students left during that time. This was clearly not an exemplary roll-out of a new programme, although steps to mitigate gaps occurred.

A useful annual self-assessment report identifies issues and opportunities, with staff input, and the programme leader manages the changes required. As with other programmes, the reports are discussed at the faculty board of educational improvement, and as with other focus area programmes this point of review and oversight is effective. Self-assessment and review of the use of student voice as a source of solutions to strategic priorities or whole-of-institution challenges seem limited in this focus area. Students give feedback to teachers whenever an issue arises, and were confident it would either be addressed or followed up in some way. Formal collection, analysis and reporting of student feedback across the programme was uneven. The response rate to the online survey was approximately 25 per cent. Feedback from students occurs, both formally and informally, but related processes could be improved.

The new executive dean and other senior staff have located themselves in a common working area to remove any sense of hierarchy. Staff said they are well led. They appreciated being included in decision-making and felt their ideas were valued. Programme leaders believe there has been a 'cultural shift' which has supported greater collaboration and more positive working relationships. In particular, there is a transparency and flow of information and communication occurring. Other shifts in professional expectations have occurred, for example more formalised scheduled meetings, with minutes and action sheets. They believe that no single input was responsible for these improvements, but a combination of leadership, culture change, Te Atakura and UCOL's renewed focus on student success and quality.

The Motor Industry Training Organisation (the standard-setting body) visited UCOL in 2016 and said they were satisfied with UCOL's training and assessment and internal moderation.

# Recommendations

UCOL is performing well and actively using detailed, system-wide self-assessment processes (including formal commissioned external evaluation and review and/or capability building services) to both understand and improve on their performance.

As suggested in the report and by the ratings, there are areas identified from this external evaluation and review that can and should be strengthened further. These include:

- Establishing stronger evidence around programme relevance for industry (and iwi) and matching needs (Findings 1.2 and 1.3) – and relatedly, better, consolidated evidence of the number, range and quality of graduate outcomes (Findings 1.2).
- Developing a more convincing evidence base around gains or improvements in capability for those implementing embedded practices, using the literacy and numeracy for adults assessment tool and students' NCEA Level 1 literacy and numeracy outcomes.
- Improving surveys and some programme's self-assessment summary reports, but this is not outside the normal evolution of tools and processes to provide better consistency, accuracy and relevance.
- There are programme administration quality matters in a few programmes which need attention, including turnaround time of assessment marking and fully embedding new and enhanced processes for submission of students' unmarked work.
- Further improving entry and selection processes to ensure students are on the right programme with a view to stronger retention across programmes.

These aspects listed did not serve to undermine the evaluation team's overall level of confidence in the ITP's self-assessment, which is used insightfully to make comprehensive improvements in programmes across the ITP.

As also stated under the Statement of Confidence for educational performance, there is still considerable scope to advance overall performance, and this is reflected in some focus area programme ratings.

# 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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