

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Otago Polytechnic

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 21 December 2015

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# Purpose of this Report

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

## Introduction

### 1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Otago Polytechnic
Type:	Institute of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP)
First registered:	31 May 2004
Location:	Forth Street, Dunedin
Delivery sites:	350 Queen Street, Auckland Corner Erris and Ray Streets, Cromwell
Courses currently delivered:	Otago Polytechnic offers over 100 programmes across 10 schools, from levels 1-9 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. For a full list see: <a href="http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/details.do?providerId=601339001">http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/details.do?providerId=601339001</a>
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 5,236 – 14 per cent of these are Māori and 3 per cent Pasifika International: 680
Number of staff:	551 full-time equivalents
Scope of active accreditation:	Please follow the link below: <a href="http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=601339001">http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/nqf-accreditations.do?providerId=601339001</a>
Distinctive characteristics:	Otago Polytechnic is a medium-sized regional polytechnic. More than 100 programmes are

offered across 10 schools including the College of Enterprise and Development; Te Maru Pumanawa, (Hospitality, Functions and Design); Otago Institute of Sport and Adventure; Veterinary Nursing; Architecture, Building and Engineering; Dunedin School of Art; Social Services; Nursing; Midwifery; Occupational Therapy; Capable New Zealand and the three campuses: Dunedin, Central Otago Campus and Auckland International Campus. Capable New Zealand is a centre which offers assessment services to enable experienced professionals to gain qualifications through an individualised pathway that recognises prior learning.

Ninety per cent of Otago Polytechnic's provision is at levels 4 and above, with 19 per cent delivered at level 4 and 51 per cent delivered at level 7. Health professional education is a significant part of what Otago Polytechnic offers, accounting for 22 per cent of all Student Achievement Component (SAC) funding. A significant number of students come to study at the institution from outside Dunedin. The participation of Māori learners is at 14 per cent (Māori comprise 8 per cent of the Dunedin population).

The Central Otago Campus was established in Crowell in 1987, and in 2011 the Auckland International Campus was established in partnership with an Auckland-based private training establishment, Future Skills. The establishment of this campus has resulted in a significant increase in the number of international students enrolling with Otago Polytechnic. Otago Polytechnic is a member of Tertiary Accord of New Zealand, an ITP partnership that fosters collaboration, and the Metro Group of ITPs.

Recent significant changes: The establishment of the Auckland International Campus in 2011 is a significant change that has occurred since the previous external evaluation and review (EER).

Previous quality assurance history: NZQA was Highly Confident in the educational performance of Otago Polytechnic and Highly Confident in its capability in self-assessment at the

previous EER in 2011.

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

In consultation with the polytechnic, the focus areas were chosen to be as representative of the programmes and related academic activities as possible. Programmes were chosen to include different levels, certificates to degrees, a range of delivery sites and modes, and a range of achievement results. The horizontal focus areas allowed the evaluation team to look at key focuses across the organisation. The following mandatory focus areas were included:

- Governance, management and strategy
- Māori achievement
- Pasifika achievement

In addition, the following horizontal focus areas were included:

- Sustainability
- International student support

Programmes selected included:

- Bachelor of Culinary Arts (Level 7)
- Bachelor of Information Technology (Level 7)
- New Zealand Diploma in Engineering (Level 6)
- Certificate in Health (Level 4)
- National Certificate in Sports Turf Management (Level 4)
- Certificate in Automotive and Mechanical Engineering (Levels 2 and 3).

## 3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

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

Prior to the EER, the lead evaluator and NZQA principal evaluation advisor visited Otago Polytechnic to discuss the scope and arrangements for the on-site enquiry. A self-assessment summary and supporting documents were supplied in advance of

that visit. After the selection of focus areas, relevant key documents were supplied to the evaluation team to support the plan of enquiry.

The on-site visit was conducted by a team of four evaluators over six and a half days. The evaluation team visited the Auckland International Campus and the Dunedin and Cromwell campuses. Discussions were held with the senior management team and representatives of the Council and the academic board. Meetings were held with representatives from the student success team, international student support staff, the research and development team, the office of the Kaitohutohu, and the director of sustainability. For each programme focus area, evaluative conversations were held with heads of school and group programme leaders, tutors, students and other key stakeholders including, where appropriate, members of the permanent external advisory committees.

While on site, the evaluation team asked for and was supplied with a range of documents to support the evaluative conversations.

# Summary of Results

## Statements of confidence on educational performance and capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Otago Polytechnic**.

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Otago Polytechnic**.

At Otago Polytechnic a future-focused governance and management team is making effective evidence-based decisions towards meeting the key goal of 'achieving educational excellence'. At all levels of the organisation there is a focus on improvement and innovation. Key projects are aligned to position Otago Polytechnic to maintain currency and quality into the future. Designing for Learner Success and the Sustainability Strategy are examples of this. The organisation has a clear understanding of its strengths and aims to build on them. Areas for improvement, including achievement for Māori and Pasifika, are readily identified and solutions carefully considered and implemented. All programmes and activities are monitored on an ongoing basis, using a range of key indicators, qualitative and quantitative data and evidence to track progress. This ongoing focus on educational excellence, informed by robust data, results in an organisation with effective teaching and learning, strong industry links, consistently strong educational performance indicators and good evidence of valued outcomes for graduates.

Learner achievement at Otago Polytechnic has been consistently strong over a number of years across a number of indicators. For example, using the Tertiary Education Commission's (TEC) educational performance indicators, the organisation has maintained its relative position in the ITP sector, in 2014 sitting above sector medians and ranking in the top quartile across all indicators. Since 2011, course completions have remained steady at 82-83 per cent, with qualification completions increasing from 74 per cent to 90 per cent (with an increase of EFTS (equivalent full-time students)). The achievement challenges for Otago Polytechnic include lifting achievement for Māori and Pasifika, particularly those studying at levels 2 and 3.

Valued outcomes for key stakeholders are evident through ongoing graduate surveys, strong industry engagement, formal relationships with iwi, research, and community engagement and activity. Graduate destination surveys from a number of years show that graduates value their study at Otago Polytechnic. From the most recent graduate survey, 91 per cent said they would recommend the programme to others, and 86 per cent believed the programme was a good investment of time and money. An employer survey indicates that over 90 per cent believe Otago Polytechnic graduates to be as good as or better than graduates from other tertiary organisations.

Effective connections with industry are maintained at all levels of the organisation. These relationships seek to ensure that needs are matched and graduates meet industry expectations. Representatives from the permanent external advisory committees across the focus areas spoke of the value of the programmes to their

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industry and the community. The last few years have seen a change in approach to research and enterprise activity, and this has resulted in a steady increase in research including that which is quality assured. Otago Polytechnic has also been deliberate in establishing meaningful relationships with local iwi to acknowledge their mana whenua. In Otago, local runaka have representation at the governance level which ensures input into key decision-making processes.

Matching the needs of learners is a key focus for Otago Polytechnic, and there is a range of approaches to understanding how well it is achieving this. Learners are surveyed on a number of occasions and some noted 'survey fatigue'. However, importantly, this data is used to understand the student experience within a few weeks of arriving, and later their responses to courses and teaching. The evaluation team saw that the information gathered from these surveys was used alongside other data to identify and respond to course, teaching and support issues. While some survey data identifies different cohort groups, the evaluation team thought that more could be done to explore ways to capture and respond to the voice of Māori, Pasifika and international learners, as cohorts with distinct needs.

Good teaching is valued and celebrated and the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards won by the institution's teachers over the past four years, including the teaching team from the Bachelor of Culinary Arts in 2015, is external validation of this commitment. Experiential learning is clearly evident in the majority of the programmes looked at by the evaluation team – from the Youth Guarantee learners building racing carts to the third-year Bachelor of Information Technology community-based projects, programme staff consciously provide opportunities for learning by doing. The evaluation team saw good evidence that, where there are indications of teaching not being effective, the issues are identified and a plan put in place for an appropriate response.

A distinctive feature of Otago Polytechnic is the transparency of information shared across the organisation. The polytechnic's performance portal is accessible to all and contains key data, including achievement data, course and teaching survey data, the work environment survey and school annual programme reviews and progress against ongoing action plans. Transparency is also indicated with the Council's involvement in the permanent external advisory committees and the appointment of staff and a student representative to Council.

The senior leadership team is focused on improvement and change, and the evaluation team noted that some programme staff are feeling somewhat overwhelmed by new initiatives. Having said that, staff involved in two new initiatives, Designing for Learner Success and the shift to self-leading teams, recognised their value and worth. The Sustainability Strategy continues to be a focus for Otago Polytechnic, and key indicators and focused evaluations are used to monitor progress. A number of exciting sustainability projects are evident, and across a number of focus areas learners and staff could clearly articulate what sustainability meant for them in their context. As expected, there is still some way to go to fully meet objectives.



The establishment of the Auckland International Campus, in partnership with Future Skills, has been well managed. A sharp increase in international student numbers and the unique nature of the market has presented challenges which have required the ongoing attention and focus of the board. A shift to more permanent teaching staff, the appointment of a campus manager, and more deliberate engagement with staff at the Dunedin campus are some of the responses to these challenges. Enrolment data, course achievement and student satisfaction rates are reported on systematically and support quality assurance. It is of some concern that the percentage of students who respond to the Auckland International Campus's surveys is low when compared with other Otago Polytechnic surveys. It is noted that other approaches are used at the Auckland International Campus to capture the student voice.

The strategy and direction of Otago Polytechnic is purposeful, clear and future-focused. Key stakeholders, including staff, are valued and there are systematic processes in place to understand and meet their needs. The organisation is data-driven and the scope, transparency and use of information is significant. The organisation has strong self-assessment processes, including annual programme reviews and focused internal and external audits and evaluations, and consequently has a good understanding of its own performance. Gaps in performance have been identified and resources deployed to address them. However, these gaps do not affect the vast majority of learners, most of whom are achieving well and gaining knowledge and skills and qualifications that are of value to them and future employers. For these key reasons, NZQA is highly confident in Otago Polytechnic's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

# Findings<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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**.

Overall achievement is strong and reflects the organisation-wide focus on achieving educational excellence (see Table 1 for SAC-funded students).

**Table 1. Course completion rates %, SAC-funded learners, 2011-2014**

<b>Overall</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2104</b>
All levels	83	82	82	82
Levels 1-3	69	70	71	72
Levels 4 and above	82	84	83	84
<b>Māori</b>				
All levels	72	75	78	76
Levels 1-3	51	62	69	62
Levels 4 and above	74	78	78	77
<b>Pasifika</b>				
All levels	67	72	69	66
Levels 1-3	54	61	89	48*
Levels 4 and above	66	75	67	68
<b>Under 25</b>				
All levels	82	82	82	82
Levels 1-3	69	69	68	68
Levels 4 and above	83	84	83	83

\* 29 EFTS delivered

Course completion rates have remained steady for the past four years, with small increases noted for programmes at levels 1-3 and for Māori learners at all levels. The organisation benchmarks itself against the ITP sector using the TEC educational performance indicators and performs strongly, ranking in the top

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<sup>1</sup> The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

quartile across all indicators. Since 2011, Otago Polytechnic has met organisation-wide targets.

The organisation has a range of mechanisms for understanding and monitoring course completion and retention, qualification completion and employment outcomes. Through the performance portal, all programmes and courses are expected to report by priority learner group. Course completion targets, set by programme and across the organisation, are monitored and reported against, and low-performing programmes are identified and targeted for support. Reporting on the education and employment achievement of learners is a clear expectation in the annual programme evaluation and review process.

The organisation looks beyond the TEC educational performance indicator data to understand achievement. For example, cohort qualification data is also collected and reported to Council.<sup>2</sup> For full-time students, the cohort qualification rate (completion rate plus one year) has shown a steady increase from 62.47 per cent in 2013, to 64.81 per cent for 2014 as at August 2015 (this will increase as more learners complete final courses in 2015). This data, reported separately for Kai Tahu learners, shows that as a cohort full-time students are achieving qualifications at a greater rate than all other learners, with rates improving significantly, from 38 per cent in 2012 to 73 per cent in 2014. In addition, course retention data is collected at the programme level and a pilot programme is underway to attempt to measure student achievement of transferable skills.

The achievement challenges for Otago Polytechnic are to increase achievement for Māori and Pasifika, particularly those studying at levels 2 and 3, and to increase achievement for all learners studying at levels 2 and 3. The organisation recognises that there are still learners who are not successful and the project, Designing for Learner Success, is targeting less successful programmes and courses. The gap in achievement for Māori has narrowed slightly since 2011, but there is more work to do to achieve parity. A new centre is one initiative that has been approved to try and better match the needs of Māori. While they make up only 3 per cent of the learner cohort group, the gap in achievement for Pasifika is significant and has not improved over the past four years. Responses in 2015 include increased targeting of student support, personalised learning plans, and increased Pasifika support staffing. There is also a new Pasifika strategy which has been developed through engagement with the Pasifika community.

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<sup>2</sup> The Cohort Completion rate calculates the total completions for a qualification divided by the total headcount of students expected to complete across all cohorts. Rates given are for both those due plus one year.

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

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

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

The value for learners who complete their study with Otago Polytechnic is strong, as evidenced by the annual graduate destination surveys and an employer survey and, at the programme level, records of graduate employment and evidence and feedback gathered through the focus areas.

From the most recent graduate destination survey, 91 per cent of graduates said they would recommend the programme to others and 86 per cent believed the programme was a good investment of time and money. Of those who responded (39 per cent response rate), 81 per cent were either self-employed or in employment, 71 per cent of whom reported that their qualification was either highly or partly relevant to their employment. Across these indicators, Otago Polytechnic is on a par with the four other ITPs who participated in the survey. Employers were asked to compare Otago Polytechnic graduates with graduates from other organisations, and 34 per cent believed they were better and 61 per cent believed they were about the same.

Across a number of the focus area programmes, the evaluation team saw evidence of valued outcomes. For the Bachelor of Information Technology, graduate destination data going back to 1996 shows strong employment outcomes. For example, 24 of the 31 learners who graduated in 2014 have been tracked and have found relevant employment. Local employers attested to the graduates' work-ready skills and noted that they regularly approached Otago Polytechnic for graduates. The Certificate in Automotive and Mechanical Engineering Youth Guarantee learners appreciated the fees-free learning and valued the work-ready skills they believed they were acquiring through the programme. Twelve of 18 students on this programme progressed from level 2 to level 3 and were succeeding, and a significant number from level 2 and 3 had moved to relevant employment and/or apprenticeship.

Project-based and work-based learning is integrated into programmes as part of an organisation-wide expectation to embed experiential learning. The evaluation team saw this in evidence in the largely work-based National Certificate in Sports Turf Management and the work experience component of the Certificate in Automotive and Mechanical Engineering. Learners spoke of the value of applying their learning in real work environments and a significant number had found full-time employment as a result of this experience.

There is strength in the relationship that Otago Polytechnic has built with local iwi and the runaka. A memorandum of understanding was signed in 2004 and re-signed in 2013 with the four Araiteuru Papatipu Runaka. Under this memorandum, the Komiti Kawanataka was established to provide runaka representation at a

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governance level. An annual report is produced that documents the organisation's progress with respect to the ITP's Māori Strategic Framework. With the establishment of the Auckland International Campus, a memorandum of understanding was signed with Ngāti Whātua to acknowledge their mana whenua. These relationships add value to the informed decision-making about key goals and resourcing.

Applied research has been a key focus and has shown considerable growth. Total research outputs have increased from 338 in 2012 to 480 in 2014, with an increase in quality assured research outputs from 267 to 355. The evaluation team heard of a number of examples where the community and industry benefits from this activity and from the applied learning projects of students. For example, in the Bachelor of Information Technology programme students undertake a major information technology development project in their third year. The evaluation team saw many examples of projects undertaken for industry and/or external communities. Similarly, the institution's focus on sustainability has generated opportunities to work with the community on innovations for sustainable development.

Otago Polytechnic is outcomes-focused and for a number of years has given attention to understanding outcomes for graduates. At the programme level there is variation in the systematic recording of graduate outcomes, and the outcomes for learners who choose to depart early. Where the permanent external advisory committees are working well, programmes have a good understanding of the value of their activities to industry and the community. In some focus areas, while the committee's activity was limited, there was still strong engagement with industry groups and employers. The value for learners who progress to higher levels of study is not well understood and better understanding could inform the development of pathway programmes.

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

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

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

Programmes and activities at Otago Polytechnic are regularly reviewed to ensure different stakeholder needs are being met. The organisation has a range of approaches to understanding the needs of its stakeholders, including learners, staff and employers. Responsiveness to student feedback is strong and the evaluation team saw good examples of how the institution told students about what had been done as a result of their feedback. For example, students at the Auckland campus were given a credit card-sized summary of the actions being undertaken to address issues raised. These included moving the library to make it more accessible, opening up the eighth floor to more student-focused activity, increasing the opening hours of the computer lab, and running more student events such as cricket games and chess competitions. In the Bachelor of Information Technology, student

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feedback has led to changes in teaching and the provision of more peer support for those students who are identified as at risk.

There is good evidence that learners' needs are being met. The survey of 2013 graduates showed that 91 per cent were satisfied with the quality of their programme. Course evaluations show that 90 per cent of learners are satisfied overall with their course and 94 per cent noted that the course is relevant to their industry or profession. To support these findings, results from the 2013 AUSSE survey show that Otago Polytechnic compares well with other tertiary education organisations on the different engagement scores, particularly with respect to the survey categories Active Learning and Supporting Learning environment. The results from this survey also show a year-on-year steady increase in engagement scores for Otago Polytechnic. Data from this survey on career readiness was used to inform planning for the student success team.

With few exceptions across the focus areas, the evaluation team saw good evidence of project-based and applied learning being used to integrate theory and practice. For example, in the Certificate in Automotive and Mechanical Engineering, learners work in teams to build racing carts, an industry-based project which is a key component of the third year of the Bachelor of Information Technology. Work experience is also an essential component of the National Certificate in Sports Turf Management. This is particularly important as employers rated very highly the importance of graduates being able to apply knowledge and skills.

The organisation-wide move to blended learning, involvement in the Tertiary Accord of New Zealand e-campus, and the continued work of Capable New Zealand shows recognition that learners have a range of needs in terms of how and when they study. Participation in the Central Lakes Trades Academy, the new Dunedin Trades Academy and the delivery of the Altitude foundation learning and work experience programmes shows a commitment to meeting the needs of learners who are at risk of disengaging from education. Clearer data on the outcomes for these learners would improve understanding of how well their needs are being met.

Generally, students spoken to felt listened to and valued. If anything, students reported having to respond to too many surveys. Programme outcomes are clearly articulated and aligned to all stakeholder needs, therefore students are strongly connected to and focused on their success, whether it is employment or further study.

Student achievement data indicates that the needs of Pasifika and Māori learners at levels 2 and 3 are not as well met as for other students. However, the institution is aware of these shortcomings and has prepared strategies in partnership with key communities to address them. The evaluation team noted the wide range of initiatives implemented in 2015, and the commitment by the institution to evaluating their effectiveness.

Industry engagement is effective. Staff are engaged with industry developments and concerned to keep their content current. At the programme level, the evaluation team saw good engagement with employers and industry, either through well-established permanent external advisory committees, work placement opportunities, industry engagement in delivery through guest lectures, formative assessment or industry accreditation processes. Feedback from employers indicates that programmes are generally matching their needs. The employer survey highlighted the importance employers place on work-ready skills including oral communication skills, working in teams and the ability to problem-solve. Otago Polytechnic is attempting to be more specific about the alignment, teaching and measurement of these transferable skills with the development of a draft capability framework in 2014 and a pilot programme being trialled at the Auckland International Campus in 2015. The evaluation team notes the engagement of Council members in different permanent external advisory committee meetings and the systematic engagement of the senior leadership with key industry groups, strengthening the organisation's links with these key stakeholders.

Staff are valued as key stakeholders and are also given regular opportunities to give feedback. It was evident throughout the EER that teaching staff were comfortable being open. It was evident that while staff are committed to the organisation they are feeling pressured by workload. The senior leadership team is aware of this issue and is working to improve it, through the Designing for Learner Success project, for example.

Formal relationships with iwi are a strength of the organisation, and this is reflected in key strategic documents. The evaluation team understands that the runaka would value graduates who are able to engage with Māori as clients. Intentional strategies to achieve this are not yet strongly evident in the programmes that were focus areas in this EER. The evaluation team understands that this is a goal for the Designing for Learner Success project and is part of the organisation's commitment to dual culture as part of Otago Polytechnic's commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. While some student surveys are analysed by cohort group, Otago Polytechnic could do more to gain the views of Māori and the Pasifika learners to support their understanding of how to match their needs.

#### 1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Otago Polytechnic is committed to quality teaching. This is reflected in the requirement for all staff to have completed or be working towards the level 7 Graduate Diploma in Tertiary Education. The evaluation team heard examples of teaching staff improving their teaching as a result of learning from their study. Good teaching is rewarded and recognised internally and externally. For example, staff have received National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards every year since *Final Report*

2007, 2013 aside. In 2014, Otago Polytechnic won three of the 12 awards, one by a team of five staff teaching the Bachelor of Culinary Arts.

Experiential learning has been a key component of Otago Polytechnic's teaching strategy for a number of years and is a key component noted in the Effectiveness of Teaching performance dimension reported in annual programme reviews. Across most of the focus area programmes there was strong evidence of experiential and project-based learning and programmes with assessments linked with industry. For example, in the Bachelor of Information Technology the students develop their skills through programming projects and work on projects with clients from year 1. The projects increase in size and complexity across each year of the degree, with the major project happening in year 3. The evaluation team also heard from international students at the Auckland International Campus that they were required to complete a workplace project in their third year of their degree. Some students noted the importance of this project as a means of transitioning into employment in New Zealand, and staff noted a number of students who had gained permanent employment as a result of this project.

Those teaching at degree level and above are supported to do research and to connect that with their teaching, and all degree programmes have research plans in place. A change in the way research is funded, to ensure an alignment with the organisation's strategy and business and/or community engagement, has resulted in a significant increase in research outputs. Students appreciated the industry expertise of teaching staff.

There are a range of approaches to understanding effective teaching and seeking feedback from learners and colleagues. All teaching staff are required to seek feedback on their teaching, and 73 per cent did so. Overall, 96 per cent of learners believed their teacher was effective and 94 per cent believed the teacher provided a learning experience that met their expectations. This feedback is available by school and by programme, and the evaluation team heard examples of active performance management of teachers who did not meet expectations. Furthermore, those programmes where staff had not engaged in seeking feedback were expected to address this gap.

The evaluation team heard numerous examples of teachers adapting their practice and teaching approaches to better suit learners' needs. There is a collegial approach to delivering programmes, with staff supporting each other across different programme areas, although perhaps not as much across schools and disciplines as could occur.

Moderation is occurring and in most programmes there was evidence of pre- and post-moderation occurring to ensure assessments are fair and appropriate. However, the processes and use of the moderation feedback is occurring unevenly across different schools. This was identified in the moderation report supplied to the evaluation team. The report noted that a review of moderation policy was required. There were some concerns around the processes in place for effective pre- and post-moderation of assessments at the Auckland International Campus.

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Currently, the Auckland campus operates on a different schedule and this has some impact on coordinating moderation.

Designing for Learner Success is an exciting initiative which holds great promise for the redevelopment of programmes to better align with key strategies. The evaluation team recognises that development of the Designing for Learner Success project is an iterative process and learning from the first round will inform future developments. In addition, the evaluation team noted good examples of staff modelling and embedding sustainable practice in their curriculum and teaching. Students were able to articulate well what sustainable practice meant for them in the Bachelor of Culinary Arts, the Certificate in Health, the Bachelor of Information Technology and the National Certificate in Sports Turf Management.

### 1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Staff understand and take seriously their role in being the first line of responsibility for the pastoral care of learners. This leads to strong engagement between students and staff, and this was commented on by staff and students across the focus areas. In addition, across the focus areas there was evidence of strong engagement with the student success team to provide extra assistance for learners when required.

There have been shifts in the approach of the student success team, particularly relocating to the open plan area, breaking down barriers to access. A supporting whānau space (Te Poho) is provided for Māori learners on campus, and this will be enhanced with the development of the new Māori Centre. Support for Pasifika students has increased in 2015 and the panel noted the initiative of holding a Pasifika careers night and the newly implemented process of interviewing Pasifika students at the start of their study to put in place a personal education plan. Ensuring that the voice of these learners is captured and their needs are well understood and responded to is a work in progress.

International students are being well supported, as evidenced by achievement rates. There are opportunities to gather further data or to improve response rates to better understand international students' needs and the value of outcomes for them as a distinct cohort. There are some indications that international learners would like clearer programme information.

The new Auckland International Campus has seen significant growth over the last few years, from 11 students in 2012 to 270 in 2014. As expected, a number of processes and systems have been developing as the campus grew, and that includes processes to guide and support students. The campus takes its obligations to meet the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students seriously and regular audits of compliance against the code were evident.

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A newly developed research plan, student support framework and a review of the internship component of the Bachelor of Applied Management are all positive initiatives that seek to enhance the experience of students at this campus. Of concern is the low response rate to surveys: the First Impressions survey, the commencing students' survey, and the international students' arrival survey. For example, only 20 per cent of learners responded to the 2015 First Impressions survey. Of those that responded, 46 per cent responded to the questions, 'Clear information about Otago Polytechnic' and 'Clear information about my programme' with a fair or average rating. It is noted that a range of methods are used to gain student views at Auckland International Campus.

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

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

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

The strategy and direction for Otago Polytechnic is clearly articulated and in evidence across both programme and service areas. A key theme for the evaluation team was the future-focused approach of the senior leadership team. Positioning the organisation for the future is evident through the development of the Tertiary Accord of New Zealand e-campus, a focus on blended learning, community and business-focused, applied research, the Sustainability Strategy and the Designing for Learner Success project. The Designing for Learner Success project has been initiated, with programme staff reporting favourably on the impact on teaching and learning and assessment. The challenge will be ensuring a quality process is followed when the number of programmes being reviewed increases, particularly with competing projects and responsibilities drawing upon staff time.

The organisation is focused on achieving educational excellence, and the Designing for Learner Success project is a key component of expected improvements. Achievement is closely monitored across the organisation. Organisation-wide and programme-specific achievement targets are set and monitored and achievement is benchmarked across time and across the organisation. Achievement reports to Council are detailed and highlight achievement at different levels, across schools and for different cohorts, and highlight achievement challenges. Programmes that are performing below expectations are expected to account for achievement gaps and are given support to improve. Annual programme review guidelines set clear expectations for levels of performance, and to gain 'excellent' course retention and completion rates, including those for Māori and Pasifika learners, programmes or groups of programmes have to consistently exceed targets.

Sustainability and sustainable practice remain a key focus for Otago Polytechnic. The organisation has set goals for sustainability and is monitoring key indicators to

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make a difference to the environment. A sharp drop in the use of coal has had an impact on the organisation's carbon use, but this has been somewhat offset by an increase in air kilometres. Most focus area programme staff and learners were able to articulate what sustainable practice meant for them in their programmes, and some students viewed it as adding value to their programmes of study. An internal audit of the information technology service centre showed strong movements for that team over time. Annual programme review ratings of performance against the Sustainability Strategy show some variability, as did the review of sustainability in degree programmes, which found all programmes had sustainability integrated but the quality of this varied. As noted above, while there have been some significant gains, there is some way to go before the objectives for this strategy are met.

A number of projects sit under Otago Polytechnic's six key platforms, and there is some sense among programme staff that their energies are being pulled in a number of directions. Workload problems have been identified through the Work Environment Survey, and the senior leadership team has made a commitment to address this. The move to self-leading teams is one of the projects that is underway, and while staff report that they could do with more resources to support their responsibilities, generally they are positive about the shift to greater control. The Work Environment Survey indicates that staff are highly engaged, with 99 per cent saying they really care about the success of the organisation, and 98 per cent are proud to tell others they are part of Otago Polytechnic.

The Council is actively engaged in the life of the organisation, attending regular permanent external advisory committee meetings and other institutional events. Representation on the Council includes a staff member, a student and a representative from the Komiti Kawanatanga. Council members are well informed and noted greater detail in the information they received from the senior leadership team. The evaluation team notes a strong commitment to addressing the needs of Māori and particularly local iwi, and this can be seen through the Māori Strategic Framework and the Komiti Kawanataka and the way in which it works with Council and the senior leadership team. The evaluation team recognises that the organisation is in a time of change with respect to the office of the Kaitohutohu; however the team also recognises the commitment to the Māori Strategic Framework shown through the commitment to the new Māori Centre.

The strategy and direction of Otago Polytechnic is clearly communicated and there is good evidence that change is well managed. There are strong processes in place to understand and meet the needs of stakeholders, including learners, industry, community and staff. The organisation is rich in data, and ongoing monitoring, annual reviews and targeted evaluations are features of self-assessment activity. Consequently, the organisation has a comprehensive understanding of its own performance against goals.

# Focus Areas

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

## 2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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

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

See 1.6 above

## 2.2 Focus area: Sustainability

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

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

Sustainability is one of Otago Polytechnic's key strategies, and the organisation has made a commitment to becoming a leader in the field of education for sustainability and sustainable business practice. Implementation of the Sustainability Strategic Framework is evident throughout the organisation, both in the education provided and its operations.

Since 2008 all programmes at Otago Polytechnic have been required to ensure that their graduates are capable of practising sustainably in the context of their specific discipline. To support staff in incorporating sustainability into the programmes, good practice guidelines have been developed covering curriculum, teaching and learning processes/pedagogy, informal curriculum and campus experience/sustainability of operations. All of the focus area programmes clearly incorporate sustainability into the delivery of the programmes through a variety of methods. The extent to which this practice occurs, however, is variable, and student achievement is often not assessed. This finding is consistent with the institution's own review of sustainability in degree programmes. Improved assessment would strengthen confidence that graduates are able to practise sustainably.

Education for sustainability is an integral part of the annual review of each programme, and this has identified some areas for improvement in focus area programmes, although this has not been consistent. For example, the 2014 annual programme reviews for most focus areas were rated in the range good to excellent; however, two reports rated this aspect of the programme as poor or adequate and neither contained an indication of how this would be improved. In 2014 the institution reviewed the implementation of sustainability in degree programmes and is conducting a similar review for certificate and diploma programmes this year.

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The 2011 EER report made several recommendations for improvement; however, it is too soon for the effectiveness of these to be evident.

Teaching effectiveness in relation to sustainability was difficult to ascertain with confidence. Teaching staff are encouraged to determine what sustainability looks like in their programme, and staff interviewed were generally able to provide a clear outline of this. Students interviewed were mostly able to describe sustainable practice in relation to their programme of study. Stand-out programmes reviewed as focus areas included the Bachelor of Culinary Arts and the Bachelor of Information Technology.

Developing the skills to practise sustainably is an added value for graduates of Otago Polytechnic. The institution's 2013 employer survey identified that 61 per cent of employers rated the importance of the graduate attribute 'Demonstrate an understanding of social, environmental and economic sustainability' as high or very high in making employment decisions. The same survey also found that 45 per cent of employers rated the graduates as high or very high in this attribute.

Sustainability at Otago Polytechnic also adds value through operational efficiencies. Significant energy saving and other sustainability projects have been undertaken and monitored for effectiveness. For example, between 2012 and 2014 power usage at Otago polytechnic decreased by approximately 18 per cent and power monitors are now installed in all buildings. Additionally, in the most recent survey by the Tertiary Education Facilities Management Association, Otago Polytechnic had the lowest energy footprint. Benchmarks are established and reported on. For example, the polytechnic's waste to land fill in 2014 was 24.2kg per EFTS and FTE (full-time equivalent) staff compared with the New Zealand average of 26.3kg. The institution's efforts in sustainability have been recognised internationally and it was a finalist in the 2014 Green Gown Awards. The awards recognise sustainability best practice in the Australasian tertiary education sector.

Engagement with the community regarding sustainability provides valuable outcomes. This is well illustrated by the range and scope of related projects undertaken in the community by students in the course of their studies and by staff engaged in applied research projects.

There is a strong commitment by management to embedding sustainable practice in the educational provision and operations of the organisation. This is evident by the appointment of staff at a senior level in the organisation with oversight for the strategy, and the way that sustainability is embedded in the educational delivery and operations of the organisation. The effective management of this was clearly demonstrated to the evaluation panel through documentation provided and discussions with staff and students.

## 2.3 Focus area: Pasifika achievement

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

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

Pasifika learners comprised 3.8 per cent of the total student population in 2014, with a total of 136.2 EFTS. They do not perform as well as other students, having overall course completion rates over the past three years of 73.9 per cent in 2012 (compared with 84.2 per cent), 67.8 per cent in 2013 (81.6 per cent), and 61.6 per cent in 2014 (82.9 per cent).

Generally, most programmes had only small numbers of Pasifika learners in 2014, with most Pasifika learners enrolled in degree-level programmes and only 0.5 EFTS enrolled at levels 1-3. The programmes with the largest percentages of Pasifika learners in 2014 were:

- Certificate in Health (11 EFTS)
- Bachelor of Nursing (8.4 EFTS)
- Bachelor of Information Technology (7.5 EFTS)
- Diploma in Business (6.8 EFTS)
- Bachelor of Social Services (Capable New Zealand) (5.87 EFTS)
- Bachelor of Social Services (5.87 EFTS)
- Bachelor of Applied Science (Physical Activity, Health and Wellness) (5.62 EFTS).

For the 16 programmes with three or more EFTS in 2014, only five had course completion rates comparable to non-Pasifika learners. Students in degree-level programmes tend to perform better than students at lower levels. Pasifika course and qualification completion rates for 2013 and 2014 are significantly below those for all students, although small numbers make comparisons difficult. Qualification success rates show a similar picture (Table 2).

**Table 2. Pasifika achievement, %, 2013-2014**

<b>Course completion - Pasifika</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>Target</b>
Levels 1-3	89	48	70
Level 4+	67	68	70
<b>All students</b>			
Levels 1-3	71	72	75
Level 4+	83	84	80
<b>Qualification completion - Pasifika</b>			
Levels 1-3	73	43	40
Level 4+	54	52	70
<b>All students</b>			
Levels 1-3	63	63	45
Level 4+	74	81	75

Self-assessment – including using stakeholder and student feedback – of the causes of lower completion rates suggest there are a number of potential contributing factors:

- First in family to study at tertiary
- Workload
- Financial difficulties
- Family responsibilities
- Health/stress
- Maintaining study/life balance
- Students studying as a means to access allowances
- Students in programmes that are not a good match for their preparedness to study at that level.

Otago Polytechnic has an external advisory group to help meet the needs of Pasifika students, and this group has been instrumental in the development and approval of Otago Polytechnic's Pasifika Strategy which began to be implemented in 2015. Pasifika staff recognise that tertiary education is highly valued by Pasifika peoples. Recognising this, Otago Polytechnic implemented a Pasifika Careers night for prospective students and their families in 2015. The further development of this initiative will be monitored.

Recognising shortfalls in student achievement, Otago Polytechnic has increased support staffing to Pasifika. The Pasifika student advisor is 0.8 of an FTE in 2015 (0.5 FTE in 2014). The advisor has been pivotal in further developing Otago Polytechnic's links with its community and in ensuring that all Pasifika students are

being supported. She has met individually with 99 of the 140 students for 2015 to discuss their support needs and advise them on services available. Otago Polytechnic has a dedicated space for Pasifika students to study and relax in.

There are only a very small number of Pasifika staff at Otago Polytechnic, with six of the 556 permanent staff identifying as Pasifika. This places a large load on these staff. Otago Polytechnic management has approved a Pasifika Strategic Framework and has shown a commitment to this by increasing the resourcing available to support Pasifika students and providing dedicated study space. Otago Polytechnic management has a clear focus on building relationships to improve community engagement and decision-making to ensure students are in programmes where they can succeed. The external Pasifika advisory group is key to this approach.

## 2.4 Focus area: Māori achievement

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

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

Otago Polytechnic has shown a commitment to formalised relationships, and Māori are represented in institutional decision-making. To guide its progress, the organisation has a Māori Strategic Framework in place and progress against this framework is reported annually in a Māori Annual Report. There was an external review of this framework in 2013. This review noted progress against the framework since 2011 and a commitment of staff to the goals. It also noted pockets of excellence in different schools. A large number of recommendations were made with respect to, for example, staffing, curriculum, student support and leadership. All schools are expected to report their progress against the framework, and ratings by the leadership team note some variability. Some focus area programmes have embedded a Māori dimension and knowledge, although this was variable across the focus areas. The Designing for Learner Success is expected to ensure a Māori dimension is incorporated, but how this will occur is still to be developed. A key commitment has been made by the senior leadership to establish a centre for Māori learning and support that will be 'by Māori, for Māori'.

Rates of participation for Kai Tahu and Māori have increased since 2011, from 10.4 per cent of the total student population in 2011 to 14.4 per cent in 2014, above the proportion of Māori in the local population. The number of Māori graduates from Otago Polytechnic has increased slightly over recent years. The cohort completion rates show solid improvements in Māori achievement, and in some key programmes, including the Bachelor of Nursing and the Bachelor of Occupational Therapy, where Māori participation is strong, Māori are achieving qualifications at higher rates than non-Māori. The educational performance of Kai Tahu is reported separately and shows as a group that they complete qualifications at a higher rate than all learners. However, Otago Polytechnic still has a gap between Māori and non-Māori achievement (Table 3).

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**Table 3. Course completions Māori and non-Māori, %, 2012-2014**

	2012	2013	2014
Māori all levels	75	78	76
Non-Māori all levels	84	82	82
Māori levels 1-3	62	69	62
Māori level 4 and above	78	78	77

In relation to course completions, the difference between Māori and non-Māori course completion increased between 2013 and 2014, and this increase occurred at all levels. For example, over this period Bachelor's programmes course completion rates increased slightly from 87.8 to 88.2 per cent for non-Māori, while rates for Māori decreased from 86.4 to 78.2 per cent. The reasons behind the shift are not well understood, although some staff explained it as the result of less targeted support.

Other indicators show that Māori gain value from studying at Otago Polytechnic. Māori student satisfaction with Otago Polytechnic is high at 94 per cent, and 82 per cent of Māori respondents to the graduation survey had found employment. There is a strong student support service and this is supported by Māori staff. Te Poho is a prefab building where Māori learners can gather to find support and kai. A range of survey data is collected but not all of it is analysed by ethnicity. It is important that Māori learners' voice is effectively captured to inform ongoing developments.

The institutional strategic documents show a commitment to Māori learner success. For example, four full-fee scholarships are set aside for local runaka, and four are available for Māori from other iwi. Investment for a Māori Centre has been committed and the Council is actively involved with Māori through a number of committees. It is notable that annual hui are held with Kai Tahu where Otago Polytechnic reports formally and specifically on Māori success to Māori stakeholders.

## 2.5 Focus area: International student support

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

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

Overall, the achievement rate of international students studying at Otago Polytechnic has remained steady and relatively strong (Table 4).

**Table 4. Course completions, international students, 2012-2014**

	EFTS			Course completion %		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
All	228	376	503	87	81	84
Auckland International Campus	11	146	270	47	76	87

This consistent rate of achievement occurred despite sharp increases in both participation and achievement at the Auckland International Campus, established in 2011. Cohort completion rates show high levels of qualification achievement for full-time students at the Auckland International Campus in 2014. Achievement of international students is reported separately at the programme and course level and this enables staff to track international students' success. The student success team adopted a proactive approach to target support to some schools where international student achievement rates were causing concern.

There is evidence that graduates from the Auckland campus have gained employment, some as a result of their internships, particularly those from the Graduate Diploma in Hotel Management. However, more generally, the outcomes for international students are not as well understood as for domestic students. The survey of 2013 graduates indicated a lower satisfaction rate for Indian students and for those studying at the Auckland campus. However, the 2013 i-graduate survey of international students shows that 88 per cent were satisfied overall and 82 per cent would recommend the organisation; these are strong indicators of value.

The organisation has conducted and participated in formal surveys to better understand the experience of international students. These surveys generally show a reasonable level of satisfaction with the experience of enrolling, arriving and studying with Otago Polytechnic. Auckland International Campus course evaluations indicate high levels of satisfaction. The First Impressions survey for the Auckland International Campus indicates that students there would like better information and advice about their courses before enrolling. Of those that responded to the 2015 First Impressions survey, 46 per cent responded with a fair or average rating to the questions about 'Clear information about Otago Polytechnic' and 'Clear information about my programme'. Some students expressed anxiety about finding meaningful internships and work placements, which are integral components of their programmes. These components of the Bachelor's and graduate diploma programmes at Auckland International Campus are under review. Other mechanisms for gathering feedback include end-of-course *Final Report*

tutor reflections, focus groups and lecturers using a 'stop, go continue' model to gather immediate feedback. The evaluation team was shown a card distributed to students which outlined how the organisation had responded to issues raised. The low response rates to some surveys are of some concern.

Student support teams at Auckland and Dunedin have developed their own frameworks to guide their approach to supporting learners. For international students in Dunedin, strong support is offered upon arrival, with students reporting high levels of satisfaction with their orientation. Ongoing coordination with schools' international liaison staff helps identify and provide support for at-risk learners. Data collected by the team shows that one-third of international learners access academic and/or pastoral support.

Auckland International Campus's new framework looks at supporting students throughout their study and into employment. This framework is new and provides some structure for processes that have been developing rapidly. Data is collected and reported monthly to identify student points of contact with the student success team. With growing numbers it is important that the student success team is appropriately staffed to meet demand. Both Otago Polytechnic and Auckland International Campus have strong, regular practices for auditing their compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students.

The establishment of the new campus and subsequent significant growth in numbers has been well managed. The campus now has a strong management team in place and a growing number of permanent staff who are embracing new developments in teaching and learning. Across the campuses there is a commitment to ensuring that support for international learners is effective and meets regulatory requirements. Tailoring approaches to gathering feedback, to ensure that programmes and activities are matching the particular needs of international learners, continues to improve.

## 2.6 Focus area: Certificate in Health (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 **Excellent**.

The Certificate in Health (Level 4) is a 120-credit programme which provides an academic pathway into a range of health degrees, including Bachelor of Nursing, Bachelor of Midwifery, Bachelor of Occupational Therapy, Bachelor of Social Services and Bachelor of Science. It is delivered by either a blended learning model, with students having between nine and 12 hours of face-to-face tuition per week, or a fully online model. The programme was redeveloped in 2006 from a foundation programme to give it a stronger focus on health.

Student achievement in the programme is strong, although course completion rates have varied from 83.3 per cent in 2012 to 78.4 per cent in 2013 and 81 per cent in 2014 (Table 5). This is above the 2014 average for level 4 courses at Otago  
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Polytechnic which have average completions of 74.9 per cent. In 2014 there were 27 EFTS reported as Māori and course completion rates were 12 per cent below non-Māori. There were 11 EFTS reported as Pasifika in 2014, and there is a 6 per cent gap in performance between Pasifika and non-Pasifika learners. In 2013, Māori course success exceeded that for all students.

**Table 5. Māori course completions, 2012-2014**

	EFTS			Successful course completions %		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
All students	91.52	115.25	108.79	83.3	78.4	81
Māori students	N/A	20.12	27.12	N/A	81.6	71.58
Pasifika students	N/A	N/A	11.7	N/A	77.7	75.1

In addition to gaining skills to prepare them for further study, students commented that they gained confidence in and preparedness for study, and also gained maturity and personal growth and an increased sense of personal responsibility. Students commented that there was little bicultural content in the programme. Staff commented that they built sustainability practice into the programme.

Qualification completion rates were 85.7 per cent in 2014 against the Otago Polytechnic average of 61 per cent for level 4 programmes. Most students graduating from this programme go on to study for health degrees or other health-related programmes. Of the 99 graduates from 2014, 55 are in degree or other programmes at Otago Polytechnic and five are enrolled with other providers. Staff recognise that Māori achievement for 2014 is lower than for other students and have put in place changes to support and delivery. Changes to admission with the introduction of a self-assessment on readiness to learn has, in the view of staff, reduced the withdrawal rates (down to eight in 2015) and subsequent course completion rates.

Students undertaking this programme are highly motivated to complete and to compete for the limited places available in the Bachelor of Nursing in particular. Graduates, enrolled students and staff commented positively on the value of the programme in preparing students for successful study in the health degrees. Staff from the degree programmes commented that graduates from this programme were well prepared for continued study.

The programme is delivered using blended learning at the Otago campus and online throughout New Zealand. It provides a taster for students of all the health education opportunities available. Students commented that they felt the programme did not always represent good value for money as they would like to have had more contact with teaching staff and face-to-face delivery. Staff commented that students had the option to attend additional classes if needed. Student satisfaction with teaching is monitored and the one course that has had

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satisfaction rates of less than 80 per cent has been reviewed and additional peer teaching and support have been added. Staff use results from the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Tool to target support. Staff have been proactive in using student feedback and student results to plan improvements in delivery and support and there was evidence of sharing innovations in practice between teaching staff. Meeting between students and teachers and programme managers from the degree programmes that the students are progressing to is currently ad hoc. Staff have identified this as an area that could be improved and are currently exploring establishing an advisory group to ensure the programme continues to match needs.

Staff maintain their currency through professional development activities which include completing the Graduate Diploma in Tertiary Teaching and the Certificate in Mata Ao Māori. There is a strong peer support network and a sense of collegiality among the teaching team. The team share an office and are able to discuss issues as they arise.

Student retention has been an issue in this programme, falling below Otago Polytechnic benchmarks. New admission and enrolment processes have been added in 2015 to ensure students entering the programme are well prepared for the study load required. Management noted that the programme had a teacher-to-student ratio of 1:38 in 2014, and in 2015 has introduced a 0.5 FTE teaching assistant role. The teaching assistant follows up non-attendees and withdrawals. This, along with an improved enrolment process that ensures students are suited to the programme, has seen 'no-shows' fall from 20 in 2014 to five in 2015. Students commented that the administration staff were 'fantastic'.

Management is supportive of the programme, recognising that it provides an important foundation for students returning to study or who are not well prepared for the academic standards required of degree study. The Certificate in Health team is self-managing. The head of school has a leadership role with a focus on 'leading leaders'. The programme manager is an effective team leader and is valued by staff and students. Management is very supportive of staff and students. Management receives leadership training through staff capability team training and support is available to help develop leadership capability and quality.

## 2.7 Focus area: Youth Guarantee, including the Certificate in Automotive and Mechanical Engineering (Level 2)

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

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

There is strong learner achievement for this predominantly Youth Guarantee programme. Course completions for the level 2 programme in 2014 were 75 per cent and for the pathway programme at level 3, course completions were 86 per cent. Māori who study on this programme achieve well (Table 6).

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**Table 6. Youth Guarantee achievement, 2012-2014**

	EFTS			Successful course completions % (level 2)		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
All	21	22	24	85	72.73	75
Māori	3	1	2	66.67	100	100
Pasifika	0	1	-	-	100	75

All learners are assessed against the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Tool and most are assessed at step 4 or below. The programme is mapped at step 3 and tutors are deliberate in integrating literacy and numeracy into their teaching. Some gains for some learners are evident.

This programme offers value for learners who are disengaging from school, to enable them to find a meaningful career. Students spoke very positively about their educational experiences and the value the programme has for them as an employment pathway and also socially. The affordability of the study was a positive element contributing to student participation in tertiary education. Employers spoke positively of the quality of graduates and the skills they arrived with as being relevant and of value to them. Two-thirds of 2014 level 2 graduates progressed to level 3, and a number who did not complete moved into relevant employment. The programme team could be more systematic about its approach to understanding graduate outcomes.

Project-based learning that centres on student interests is a feature of the approach to teaching. Staff are all required to do adult teaching training and content is delivered using student-centred approaches. Student feedback is frequent and consists of both formal and informal methods that are responded to by staff. Annual programme reviews are conducted and used as opportunities for improvement. The team saw examples of improvement opportunities being identified and responded to, for example the inclusion of more project-based activities early on in the programme and more automotive content in response to feedback. While internal and external moderation is occurring, an assessment committee had not been formed, despite this being a requirement from the 2013 annual programme review. External moderation highlighted issues with assessment design and these are in the process of being addressed.

The programme has a close relationship with the student success team and uses this service for individual students where appropriate. Learners noted that they had been well briefed about services available during their orientation. Breakfasts are provided and transport is available to help with student attendance. Friday study support sessions are used by students.

**Table 7. Otago Polytechnic Youth Guarantee EFTS and TEC educational performance indicator data**

	2012	2013	2014
EFTS	35	74	112
Course completions %	75	70	72
Qualification completions %	54	64	65

Overall, Otago Polytechnic has steadily increased the numbers of learners training under Youth Guarantee from 35 EFTS in 2012 to 112 in 2014. Learners are spread across a range of programmes at levels 2 and 3, with the majority in the Automotive and Mechanical Engineering programmes, Foundation Studies and Cookery. Course completion rates vary, from the level 2 Foundation Studies course completions sitting at 55.59 per cent, to the level 3 Certification in Engineering achieving at 91.54 per cent. Progression rates for Youth Guarantee learners is 44 per cent, which is higher than the rate for SAC learners. How well these learners succeed at higher levels is not well understood.

The student success team works across the different schools to provide appropriate support for Youth Guarantee learners and tutors. This includes referring at-risk learners, at times identified through the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Tool, to appropriate learning advisors and support staff to deal with behavioural issues, the provision of breakfast, and one-to-one career planning support.

## 2.8 Focus area: Bachelor of Culinary Arts (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**.

**Table 8. Bachelor of Culinary Arts course completions, 2012-2014**

	EFTS			Successful course completion rates %		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
All students	27.7	58	84	87	73.7	93.6
Māori	1	3.8	8.6	87	74	89
Pasifika	0	2	2.2	-	56	100
International	1	2	4.5	100	100	88.9

Achievement in this fast-growing programme is high, with an increase in achievement since 2012 and strong achievement for Māori and Pasifika in 2014 (Table 8). The cohort qualification completion rate for 2014 is sitting at 62.5 per cent, and this is likely to rise further. Learners said they gained increased confidence, self-belief and self-esteem through the programme. It was evident that staff closely analyse achievement data and respond to issues.

The value for learners is high. They said the programme gave them critical thinking skills and the ability to find creative solutions that they did not previously think were possible. Employment rates are strong, with all 2014 graduates either employed or self-employed. Work placements allow employers to get to know the learners and their work with a view to hiring them in the future. The programme is highly engaged with industry through work placements, involving industry in assessment events and programme staff participation in industry events and organisations. The inaugural 2014 International Food Design Experience conference was a well-attended event which provided the opportunity to showcase research and establish meaningful links with industry.

The programme matches the needs of learners well, with key features being personalised learning, integrated learning opportunities and the flexibility for learners to explore their areas of interest. Peer observations and the quick response feedback, 'stop, start, go' are two mechanisms used alongside formal surveys to gather learners' feedback, and learners noted considered changes in response to feedback, including changes to delivery at years one and two. Internal self-assessment processes have identified that the programme could improve processes to document outcomes from changes made and 'closing the loop' with learners with respect to responses to lower ratings given in course surveys.

The excellent teaching in this programme is highlighted by a team of five lecturers winning a Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award in 2014. Key features noted by the evaluation team are the collaborative learning, including the learner participation in the construction of assessment criteria, and applied learning evident through project-based learning and the opportunities for internships.

As with most programmes at Otago Polytechnic, the lecturers are the first line of support for learners, and students mentioned close and personal relationships with the teaching staff. Programme management has been proactive in developing teaching and learning approaches, and this has been supported by the wider polytechnic's management team. An internal review conducted in 2015 noted a 'strong team culture demonstrated in its open communication style', and this comment is endorsed by the evaluation team. Areas of strength include the strong, proactive approach to strategic planning and the integration of sustainability into the degree programme.

## 2.9 Focus area: Bachelor of Information Technology (Level 7)

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

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

Overall course completion has been relatively strong in the Bachelor of Information Technology, although 2014 was not a good year when compared with previous years, particularly for Māori learners (Table 9). The programme leaders looked closely at what affected achievement, including interviews with those learners who

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were not successful. Changes have been implemented in response. Data supplied to the evaluation team showed that achievement for Māori learners for semester 1, 2015 is much stronger.

**Table 9. Bachelor of Information Technology, course completions, 2012-2014**

	EFTS			Successful course completion rates %		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
All students	100.9	108	135	82.55	83.07	77.75
Māori	6.3	9.8	16	78.43	86	57.69
Pasifika	2	5	7.5	100	53.66	60
International	5.1	9	7.7	80.49	87.5	91.94

Stakeholders spoken to by the EER team, including employers, learners and graduates, noted the knowledge and skills achieved during the programme, including practical skills, communication and problem-solving.

Valued outcomes are clear, with graduate outcomes data collected since 1996. Evidence shows a significant number of graduates from 2014 have found relevant employment. Employers attested to approaching Otago Polytechnic to look for graduates who may be interested in work. There is value in the capstone projects undertaken by students in the third year. These projects are client-based and often add value to community or not-for-profit organisations. The programme has a strong research culture with all full-time teaching staff engaged as researchers. This has resulted in an increasing number of outputs, with 20 in 2014, 14 of which were quality assured.

The applied nature of this degree means that most graduates are work-ready and can be immediately useful to the employer. Industry engagement is strong, with a well-attended permanent external advisory committee that contributes to programme development and understanding of industry needs, for example changes in technology and the move to mobile technology. Industry engagement occurs all through the degree, with guest speakers sharing their knowledge and understanding of developments in their various fields and students given regular opportunities to apply the skills being learned. This is especially so with the six-month learner-directed industry project undertaken in the third year.

Student feedback and achievement rates in some courses in 2014 revealed some serious issues with teaching that the management team has responded to. The evaluation team saw evidence that, generally, teachers are engaging and support learners to achieve. Students noted that most tutors are approachable and provide helpful responses to feedback. While some students reported survey fatigue, it is clear that learners have multiple opportunities to give feedback including directly to teachers. Examples were given of feedback being sought about staff new to teaching, and support being provided to these new tutors. Internal and external

moderation is occurring, although the process for sharing the feedback from these processes is still being developed.

There are good support systems in place, and learners say tutors are approachable and helpful when issues arise. Peer support, one-to-one tutoring, and mentoring were three approaches used to support learners to achieve. A level 4 programme is an option recommended for those learners who need to build their knowledge and skills before entering the degree.

In this programme, students and lecturers were able to articulate clearly what sustainable practice looked like for them in their field. Students felt that having knowledge and understanding of sustainability was a value-add to their knowledge and skills. Employers were less convinced. The teaching team is exploring ways to fully implement the Māori Strategic Framework, although a start has been made with individual tutors incorporating some te reo and participating in professional development.

This programme has struggled to come together with a self-leading team, but has acknowledged its challenges and continued to work together to improve communication and decision-making. For a range of reasons, a number of staff have recently left the programme and some new staff members have been employed. This change has put pressure on staff to meet their various commitments to teaching and research. Despite this, the team reflects on its practice and is committed to delivering an industry-relevant programme and supporting learners to achieve.

## 2.10 Focus Area: New Zealand Diploma in Engineering (Level 6)

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

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

Overall student achievement at the course level is good (Table 10) and compares well with that of other ITPs. For example, in 2014 this programme reported a pass rate of 80 per cent which was above the median pass rate for ITPs offering the programme.

**Table 10. New Zealand Diploma in Engineering course completions, 2012-2014**

	EFTS			Successful course completions %		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
All students	33.5	112	121	83	73	80
Māori	4.5	12.3	8.1	64	65	75
Pasifika	0	4.6	3.8	-	78	47
International	3	7.3	4.3	95	69	67

Although student numbers are relatively small for Māori, Pasifika and international students, performance is not as strong as it is for others. Staff and management indicated some reasons why they believe this occurs, but plans for improvement were not evident and there appeared to be lack of action in some aspects. For example, in the 2013 annual programme review report the management team required all team members to actively engage in professional development by 31 March 2015 to increase the integration of Māori knowledge into course delivery and increase the Māori success rate, but this had not occurred.

The evaluation team found inconsistent understanding of data around graduation rates. Institutional data was confirmed as showing a 31 per cent cohort completion rate for full-time students to date for 2014, but both programme management and staff thought the rate was about 75 per cent. This rate demonstrates that a significant number of students take longer than two years to complete the programme.

The programme is producing valued outcomes for students and industry. The New Zealand Board for Engineering Diplomas developed and maintains the qualification and programmes to reflect national needs. Data on graduate employment is not systematically collected or analysed, and staff relied on anecdotal information which suggests that approximately 80 to 90 per cent of graduates were in employment. Good engagement with industry was evident and employers spoken to in the course of the evaluation indicated satisfaction with the quality of graduates from the programme and the need for this level of qualification. Members of the permanent external advisory committee felt that they were listened to and gave examples of where changes had been made to the programme in response to their feedback. A particular value of the programme identified by students is the pathway from relevant trade qualifications to the diploma and a pathway from the diploma to degree-level engineering qualifications.

The programme is delivered by theory classes and laboratory work, and learning materials are available for students online. Overall, the teaching on the programme is effective, although there appears to be variability between courses. This is evident from student survey results, and it was also mentioned by students. Students are able to give feedback on teaching and gave an example of where they felt their feedback was acted on. A common theme from both students and employers was the need to have a more industry-focused context for the delivery of the programme which could be achieved through work experience, industry visits and/or more project-based learning. There was an awareness of this by both the tutorial and management staff, although there was the view that it was difficult with the currently prescribed nature of the programme. A willingness to address this was evident and planned with the introduction of a new engineering diploma developed through the NZQA Targeted Review of Qualifications. The first year of the diploma is one of the first programmes to participate in the Designing for Learner Success initiative.

Students on the programme are well supported, with the first point of contact being the teaching staff and clear processes for referral of students to student services when necessary. However, guidance on entry to the programme did not appear to be as strong. The low pass rate in some initial courses was attributed to transition from school and lack of preparation for some subjects. For international students, language difficulties and difficulty in assessing the level of overseas qualifications were identified as issues contributing to lower pass rates.

Staff are engaging in some self-assessment activities, but it is not clear that self-assessment is consistently resulting in worthwhile improvements. In both the 2013 and 2014 annual programme reviews, the leadership team required significant actions for improvement that were not identified by the programme self-assessment. Additionally, the 2014 annual programme review update on requirements from the previous year did not address the requirements in the 2013 report, and it was confirmed by the evaluation team that some of the required actions had not occurred.

## 2.11 Focus area: National Certificate in Sports Turf Management (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**.

The National Certificate in Sports Turf Management is delivered from the Central Otago Campus in Cromwell. Students completing the two-year programme also gain the National Certificate in Sports Turf (Introduction to Turf Care) (Level 3) and the National Certificate in Amenity Turf Maintenance (Level 3).

Student achievement on the programme is relatively strong (Table 11), with Māori achievement improving in the last two years to be on par or better than the performance of other students. There have been no Pasifika students enrolled on the programme in the last three years. Stronger moderation processes are needed to strengthen the validity of these results.

**Table 11. National Certificate in Sports Turf Management EFTS and TEC educational performance indicator course completions, 2012-2014**

	EFTS			Successful course completions %		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
All students	18.2	23.7	22.5	86	85	81
Māori	3.0	4.9	5.1	66	82	90
Under 25-year-olds	14.1	21.7	18.3	86	85	81

Qualification completion rates are also good, with 82 per cent of students who started the programme in 2012 graduating within three years, and although the

three-year graduation figure is not yet available for the 2013 intake, 64 per cent of students have so far graduated. Students who do not graduate with the level 4 qualifications may exit with level 3 qualifications.

Work-ready skills are intentionally developed in students in year one in preparation for work experience in year two, and further developed during the internship in preparation for employment. Students must demonstrate appropriate work skills before they commence their internship.

Graduate outcomes for the programme are excellent, with all 2014 graduates gaining relevant employment. Records of graduate employment over the last five years show the vast majority of graduates are employed in related work, many still with their internship provider. The programme is valued by many employers and industry. At the national level, industry support for the programme is demonstrated by the provision of scholarships for students by New Zealand Golf, New Zealand Cricket and industry suppliers. Employers spoken to valued the programme and the opportunity to provide internships as it gave them the chance to assess potential employees and it was timed to coincide with the seasonal pattern of work. Students spoken to were positive about the learning through the internship and particularly valued the fact that the internship was paid work. They chose the programme as it was an alternative pathway to the industry to that provided by apprenticeships.

The programme effectively combines a mix of classroom delivery, practical work, work experience and paid internship to prepare students for work in the sports turf industry. Good facilities and equipment allow the development of safe work practices before students undertake their first work placement. This includes a small on-site golf course and industry-standard equipment. It was evident that staff considered the needs of both student and employer when assigning students to internships, and when necessary placements were changed.

The effectiveness of teaching on the programme is good. There is a high level of engagement between the teachers and students, and the students respect and value the skills and industry knowledge of the teachers. Teaching ratios are approximately 1:12, which means students have the opportunity to get direct support and guidance to meet individual needs. Evaluations of courses and teaching are positive, although some variability was noted by students. Student needs were assessed in a variety of ways and responded to effectively. Staff knew the literacy and numeracy assessment results and tailored teaching to the students' needs, and some students were identified as needing support and extra assistance was provided when required. Students have the opportunity to visit working sports facilities, and first-year students are currently fund-raising for a field trip to Melbourne in 2016 to gain more experience of temperate and cool conditions in a single environment.

Staff maintain their currency and industry engagement in several ways, including membership of professional bodies, conference attendance, visiting students on internships, and through the permanent external advisory committee. The skills

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and knowledge of the teachers on the programme was attested to by employers spoken to during the evaluation, and some commented that they see the teachers as a source of information and advice. Otago Polytechnic also holds field days on the Cromwell site and encourages industry to attend and interact with the teaching staff and students.

For the internship, students are provided with a workbook to enable them to self-assess against the learning outcomes and also for the employer to assess them. The documentation regarding assessment provided for employers was not as clear about their role in assessment as that in the student guide and better communication is required. Moderation processes are in place but could be strengthened with a recent ITO report identifying a number of assessments requiring modification before they could be used.

Students are well supported during the programme. Student support is primarily provided by the teachers who can refer students to student support services when required. Students were satisfied with the level of support provided and it was evident that the effectiveness of the support was enhanced by the high level of student/teacher engagement. Internship students receive at least two visits and a range of methods are used to maintain contact and monitor student progress and the appropriateness of the internship. Where necessary, a mentor can be arranged for the students.

The programme is well managed and resourced. Staff have been engaged in the NZQA Targeted Review of Qualifications and there is a clear direction for development once the new qualifications are approved. Staff are engaged in effective self-assessment and have identified that weak integration of Māori knowledge into the programme needs to be addressed.

# Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Otago Polytechnic:

- Continue to investigate strategies towards improving achievement for Māori learners, Pasifika learners and those studying at levels 2 and 3.
- Improve processes for understanding how well learners who graduate from certificate and diploma programmes succeed when they chose to enrol in further study at higher levels.
- Find effective ways to capture the voice of priority learners and international learners.

# 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/>.*

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E [qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz](mailto:qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz)

[www.nzqa.govt.nz](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz)

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