ITP QUALITY Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality
Mana Kounga ā-Pūtahi Hangarau, ā-Kuratini

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Whitireia Community Polytechnic

Te Kura Matatini o Whitireia

Date of Report: 12 August 2010

Contents

Purpose

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

Whitireia Community Polytechnic in Context

Location:	Wineera Drive, Porirua City
Type:	Polytechnic
Size:	4250 EFTS (from 2009 Annual Report)
Sites:	The main Whitireia Polytechnic campus is at Wineera Drive, Porirua. Trades programmes are offered from facilities in Mohuia Crescent, Porirua. Arts programmes are offered from the main campus, a campus on Cuba Street, Wellington and the Performing Arts Centre located on Vivian Street, Wellington. Business and computer programmes are offered both in Porirua and from a campus on Queen Street, Auckland. Aviation programmes are delivered from facilities at Ardmore Airport and the Kapiti aerodrome at Paraparaumu. Whitieria also has a campus located at Lindale on the Kapiti Coast.

Characteristics of Whitireia Community Polytechnic, te Kura Matatini o Whitireia

The name Whitireia translates from Māori as "ray of light" and te Kura Matatini o Whitireia as "the school of many faces of Whitireia". This diversity is evident in the broad multicultural make-up of its students and staff, the impressive array of education options, the locations where learning is available, and the different levels of learning on offer.

Whitireia Community Polytechnic has been in operation since 1986. It operates from campuses in Porirua, Auckland, Wellington and Kapiti and currently has in excess of 10,000 students or approximately 4200 Equivalent Full-time Students (EFTS). Of these, over 1000 EFTS are international students.

Whitireia Community Polytechnic has a close relationship with all its stakeholder communities and is focussed on delivering high quality and relevant tertiary education and training opportunities that typically lead to employment.

Quality Assurance History

ITP Quality conducted a full audit of Whitireia Community Polytechnic in May 2006, awarding Quality Assured status for four years. Three low-risk non-compliances requiring corrective action were identified and subsequently corrected, and six further recommendations were made. A subsequent Mid-Term Quality Review was conducted in September 2008 which endorsed the Polytechnic's Quality Assured status and made one recommendation.

General Conclusion

Statement of confidence on educational performance

> ITP Quality is **highly confident** in the *educational performance* of Whitireia Community Polytechnic*.*

The dedication and commitment of Whitireia Community Polytechnic staff who are focussed on maximising educational outcomes for the benefit of students and their whānau is clearly evident. This dedication and focus on student performance is exemplified by the high quality of educational achievement achieved across the majority of programmes offered by the Polytechnic. In 2009, 86% of enrolled students completed their courses, and 73% successfully passed their courses. Whitireia Community Polytechnic offers 121 different programmes at all tertiary education levels; from foundation level courses through to Certificate, Diploma, Degree, and Post-Graduate study. Whitireia Community Polytechnic is clearly meeting the needs of students, industry sectors, and community stakeholders alike.

The Whitireia Community Polytechnic environment is a caring and collegial one. Students collectively reported feeling well supported and guided in their studies. Support services are readily accessible and comprehensive.

There are very close links between Whitireia Community Polytechnic and employers and it is the strength of this relationship, and the work-ready capability of students that ensures the effectiveness of the placement programme that is central to many courses of study. These work placements provide students with valuable "real world" experience and frequently lead to employment opportunities.

Robust management systems and processes provide effective monitoring of programme retention and completion rates and this ensures that any necessary improvements are targeted and responsive.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

> ITP Quality i*s* **confident** in the *capability in self-assessment* of Whitireia Community Polytechnic*.*

Whitireia Community Polytechnic has clearly embraced the concept of evaluative self-assessment. This is reflected by the development and adoption of processes and guidelines that reinforce self-assessment as integral to maintaining programme quality and underpinning the educational achievement of students. The wide range of assessment mechanisms in use is evidence of this acceptance. Aspects include the structure of the

mandatory Annual Programme Reviews around the six KEQs, and the use of annual satisfaction surveys of students, graduates and employers.

The implementation of the evaluative self-assessment programme within Whitireia Community Polytechnic has been achieved in a relatively short time. Many programmes have applied the concept well and the EER team were encouraged by the progress made to date. However, the application of self-assessment practices is not currently uniform across the Polytechnic. Some programmes have more work to do in order to formalise and apply these mechanisms in a systematic, consistent and collaborative way that leads to purposeful programme development and change.

ITP Response

Whitireia Community Polytechnic has confirmed the factual accuracy of this report.

Basis for External Evaluation and Review

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

NZQA is responsible for ensuring TEOs continue to comply with the policies and criteria after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of courses and/or registration. The Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is responsible, under delegated authority from NZQA, for compliance of the polytechnic sector, and the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities. This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the guidelines approved by the ITP Quality Board.

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

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

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

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

Scope of External Evaluation and Review

Identification of Focus Areas

The focus areas were selected by the Lead Evaluator at the scoping meeting attended by Whitireia Community Polytechnic's Deputy Chief Executive (Academic), the Deputy Chief Executive (Operations) and, representing ITP Quality, the Lead Evaluator and Principal Advisor. Prior to the scoping meeting, Whitireia Community Polytechnic had provided the Lead Evaluator and Principal Advisor with information on the Polytechnic's performance statistics and strategic direction.

The focus areas were chosen so as to provide a representative cross-section of the NZQA levels of programmes offered by the Polytechnic and to enable judgements to be made regarding Whitireia's overall educational performance and self-assessment capability. The focus areas comprise a significant proportion of Whitireia Community Polytechnic's students and reflect a range of attributes identified as being of strategic relevance. These included courses delivered from each of the faculties and subject areas, retention/completion successes or areas of concern, partnership involvement and multi-modal delivery. The programmes selected, and their attributes, are shown in the table below.

School	Programme	Type of award	NZQA level	EFTS (2009)	Delivery	Rationale
Health	Bachelor of Nursing (Pacific)[1]	Degree	7	84	Porirua campus, plus clinical component at hospitals and health centres	Flagship programme for Whitireia Unique degree programme Focus on Pacific student achievement Meets the need for Pacific nurses in the health workforce
	Postgraduate Certificate in Nursing	Certificate	8	68	National delivery, with mixture of online and class-based teaching	Example of Postgraduate Certificate Level 8 programme Specialist area of expertise
Business	Bachelor of Information Technology[2]	Degree	7	282	Auckland and Porirua	High numbers of international students Delivery at different campuses Partnership agreements in Tonga Diplomas are taught together with degree
Arts	Bachelor of Applied Arts (Creative Writing)[3]	Degree	7	62	Porirua and Wellington City	Degree major Online and classroom deliveries Delivered nationally as well as in Wellington Diplomas are taught together with degree
	National Diploma in Journalism	Diploma	5	29	Wellington City Campus	National Diploma
	Diplomas in Publishing	Diploma	5	33	Wellington City Campus & delivered online nationally	Unique in NZ Online and classroom delivery
Service Industries	Certificate in Professional Cookery	Certificate	4	49	Porirua and Kapiti	Certificate in Professional Cookery: • City & Guilds
	Certificate in Café Service	Certificate	2	40	Porirua and Auckland	Certificate in Cafe Service: • Unit standards
Trades	Certificate in Plumbing, Drainlaying, Gasfitting and Roofing	Certificate	3	36	Delivered at Industry Training Centre, Mohuia Cres	Unit standard based Pre- apprenticeship with ITO links
	Certificates in Aviation (Helicopter)	Certificates (3)	4 - 5	21	Auckland (Ardmore Airport)	Contractual agreements with partner Historical problems
	Certificates in Aviation (Aeroplane)	Certificates (3)	4 - 5	12	Kapiti (Paraparaumu Airport)	Contractual agreements with partner

[1] In evaluating the Bachelor of Nursing (Pacific) conversations were also held with individuals and groups involved in the associated Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Nursing (Māori) degrees.

[2] Taught with Diploma, Level 5; Diploma, Level 6; and Graduate Diploma; Level 7.

[3] Taught with Diploma, Level 5; Advanced Diploma, Level 6; and Graduate Diploma; Level 7.

Service Focus Areas

It was agreed that Library services would be included as a focus area as it is a support service delivered across multiple campuses and has a Polytechnic-wide focus.

Mandatory Focus Areas

These have been pre-determined as: Governance and Management, and the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. The latter has been addressed in the context of the Information Technology focus area because of the high number of international students enrolled, particularly on the Auckland Campus.

Findings

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

For the programme-based focus areas identified above, discussions were held with a cross-section of those involved. This usually included the Faculty Deans, Programme Leaders, staff who deliver the programmes, a selection of students, graduates and representatives of employers or Members of Advisory Committees. In situations where not all stakeholders were available for interview (as in Aviation) judgements were restricted to those aspects of the programme for which the evaluation team was able to obtain sufficient information. In some cases (as in Nursing) conversations were also held with those involved in associated programmes. In addition to the eight teaching focus areas, Library Services and the mandatory focus area of Governance and Management were also reviewed. Consultations were also held with various student support staff in relation to the specific support provided for both international students and students generally. For the Governance and Management focus area discussions were held with Senior Management and representatives of Whitireia Community Polytechnic Council.

For each of these focus areas discussions centred around the key evaluation questions, and on this basis a rating was determined for each of these questions for each of the focus areas with respect to educational performance and capability for self-assessment. A subsequent synthesis process (conducted according to the "CORE" process described in the EER Guidelines) provided an overall rating for a particular focus area across all the key evaluation questions; and the same process provided an overall rating for a particular key evaluation question across all the focus areas.   Bringing these ratings together enabled the determination of a confidence rating for educational performance and a confidence rating for capability of self-assessment.

1.0 Key Evaluation Questions

1.1   How well do learners achieve?

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

Explanation

The retention and completion performance statistics across the focus areas is generally high indicating that most students are completing formal qualifications and are acquiring skills necessary for the workplace. In the majority of cases, the performance targets that Whitireia Community Polytechnic has set itself are being met or exceeded.

Some programmes have consistently achieved excellent results, particularly those in the Nursing and Publishing areas even though student numbers have increased significantly in recent years. The success of students enrolled on the Cookery and Café Service programmes is also high but it was noted that the 2009 mid-year cohort was subject to high attrition. Performance results in the Certificate in Aviation (Helicopter) programme were only adequate and this accurately reflects recent issues for which procedures have been implemented to address.

The ability to self-assess across the faculties overall is good with some exhibiting excellent processes with a systematic and collaborative approach being adopted. However, for some programmes self-assessment processes are not always rigorous, consistent or universally applied.

The promulgation of self-assessment guidelines across Whitireia Community Polytechnic provides structure to the evaluative approach and this is evident in the structure of the mandatory Annual Performance Review of all programmes where the KEQ format is adopted.

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

The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is
Excellent.
The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is
Good.

Explanation

The value of outcomes for stakeholders is high across the focus areas reviewed. Many graduates have immediate employment opportunities and this is testament to the quality and relevance of the teaching and the close working relationship between Polytechnic staff and employers – particularly where work placement forms a core element of the programme.

Those students who had been on industry placements typically commented on how this experience had reinforced for them the value of their programme. Students were described by many employers as having the necessary 'work-ready' skills both in terms of relevant knowledge and in terms of more general work related attributes.

Students and staff collectively spoke of an increase in "mana" and an increase in confidence and self-worth gained through educational achievement. In addition, students directly benefited from the attainment of skills that lead to employment in the community.

Whitireia Community Polytechnic makes good use of programme advisory committees, and tutors typically have extremely close links with the relevant sector and local employers, with many also working within those groups. Members of these committees considered that the relationship was valuable and welcomed the opportunity to interact with staff of the Polytechnic and indeed saw the relationship as critical to their own workforce development. Industry stakeholders acknowledge that they have a real stake in the success of students.

Their acceptance of students on placement attests to their confidence in the programme and the quality of students.

Members of programme advisory committees generally felt that Whitireia Community Polytechnic was listening to the industry voice and responding accordingly. Feedback enables tutors to test the relevancy of programme content and this has led to some programmes being modified.

Although the outcomes derived from this close relationship between Whitireia Community Polytechnic and the employer community are clearly evident, in many cases teaching staff do not have formal processes in place to measure the benefits derived or capture ways in which the relationship may be improved in a structured way. Most programmes currently capture employment trends, employer needs and student destinations. Others do not. Capturing such information would strengthen sector and graduate relationships and develop the reach of the Whitireia Community Polytechnic "network".

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**.

Explanation

In most of the focus areas reviewed, work placements with employers form a substantial and valuable component of the programme content and this provides the opportunity to practise and reinforce the curriculum as delivered on campus. It was evident that Whitireia Polytechnic's programmes have been developed with the needs of both the learner and industry firmly in mind. This was reinforced by members of the programme advisory committees and employer representatives who commented favourably on the calibre of students who are able to demonstrate the relevant skills in a workplace setting. These views were reinforced by students who appeared satisfied that their learning is relevant to the workplace.

This close relationship benefits all parties and in many cases leads to employment opportunities and a continuance of the relationship. However, some programmes could make greater use of industry surveys, liaison during work experience, and formal feedback mechanisms between all parties post-placement to ensure that programmes continue to meet the needs of stakeholders and identify opportunities for enhancement.

Overall, the approach to self-assessment is generally good although consistency could be improved. While the Annual Programme Evaluation Report process provides a structured approach to programme review and assessment it should not be viewed as an event in isolation but rather as the mechanism by which ongoing and frequent self-assessment activities are consolidated.

1.4	How effective is the teaching?
	The rating for performance in relation to this key evaluation question is **Excellent**. The rating for capability in self-assessment for this key evaluation question is **Good**.

Explanation

The ratings for this KEQ were excellent across all but one of the focus areas. Teaching effectiveness on all programmes is assessed by student evaluations and informal feedback, the shared teaching of some papers, and staff actively and collaboratively working to improve practice.

Many staff have completed or are undertaking formal study in adult teaching and aspects such as literacy and numeracy to improve learning outcomes for students.

Good self-assessment practices were evident across most of the programmes. Examples include the frequent assessment of student performance and the moderation of results, satisfaction surveys of students on aspects of delivery, and employer feedback on the relevancy of programme content. However, in some areas the frequency and quality of self-assessment of teaching effectiveness were variable. Greater emphasis could be placed on assessing teaching delivery, the resources used, and the relevancy of content in order to maximise learning outcomes. There was limited evidence of measuring teaching effectiveness across cohorts (e.g. of on-line delivery as compared to face-to-face) or to determine and validate the before and after effect of changes being made and confirm whether they achieved the objective.

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**.

Explanation

This result reflects comprehensive, well-defined and accessible student support services across all faculties. The students interviewed were universally enthusiastic about the support they receive in order to achieve their learning objectives and were aware of the assistance on offer. Tutors are proactive in providing or facilitating support to students who are identified by a variety of means. Additional support services are tailored to the specific needs of Māori, Pacific, and International students. Comprehensive support for students with disabilities is provided in an integrated and accessible manner.

Assessment mechanisms have a formative aspect, they occur frequently and students are provided with clear feedback. Opportunities for additional tuition and/or support are readily available. Significant growth in student numbers on some programmes has meant that resources have been stretched and assessment feedback has not always been prompt, but modified practices have been implemented to address these occurrences.

In some programmes, diagnostic tools are frequently used to identify learning needs at enrolment, and individual learning strategies are then developed. Some teaching staff have modified the diagnostic tool to reflect the specific skill levels required of individual courses.

International students at Whitireia Community Polytechnic achieve high levels of academic success. Depending on their chosen campus the student experience will be different, but the support and services are equivalent. They are very well supported by both teaching and support staff to achieve their learning goals and in their adjustment to student life at Whitireia Polytechnic. Educational delivery is often customised to suit the educational and cultural background of students, without compromising educational quality. Students are encouraged to enhance their English language skills and are provided with a range of activities outside the classroom in a supportive environment.

Self-assessment practices in relation to student support are generally of a high standard. Frequent assessment and student feedback in a variety of formats determines how well students are progressing and where additional support, collectively or individually, is required. Better oversight of the delivery of the Aviation programmes, and in particular the support for students, would ensure improvement in the quality of these programmes.

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 **Good**.

Explanation

In meeting with Council members[4], it was evident that they have been actively engaged in setting the Polytechnic's strategic direction and have also been very closely involved with Whitireia Polytechnic's local communities. Council has taken a very close interest in student performance and set targets that challenge the organisation to perform, particularly with respect to Māori and Pacific students. The EER team were impressed by the way in which the Chief Executive and the senior managers of the Polytechnic have a clear sense of direction and note that considerable efforts have been made to improve systems that report on organisational performance in key focus areas.

---

[4] At the time of the visit the new Council had only recently been formed. Consequently information obtained concerning the Council's involvement with the educational direction of the Polytechnic relates to past practices.

The Council and Management have made considerable capital investment in teaching facilities in recent years. Teaching staff and Heads of Schools commented that resource funding was accessible where the need could be substantiated.

Whitireia Community Polytechnic management currently have a number of strategies under development. These include leadership development and a strategy to specifically improve the educational performance of Māori and Pacific students.

Considerable progress has been made to embed the self-assessment concept within the Whitireia Community Polytechnic environment. Initiatives include the development of self-assessment guidelines, workshops on implementation, and assistance with enhancing the Annual Programme Evaluation Report (APER) process that now incorporates the KEQ format. These initiatives provide structure and rigour to assist faculties and business units to embrace a polytechnic-wide culture of self-assessment.

There is clear evidence that self-assessment methodologies are in use in many areas of Whitireia Community Polytechnic and given the relatively short time within which this has been achieved, the commitment and effectiveness to date is encouraging. However, the approaches to self-assessment are not always consistent, structured, or universally applied.

2.0 Focus Areas

2.1   Focus Area 1: *Bachelor of Nursing (Pacific)*

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

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

Educational Performance

This programme achieves very high retention and completion results across all years of the degree. The EER team considers this can be attributed to a multitude of factors, all which centre on meeting the needs of students and health sector stakeholders alike. Highlights include the specifically Pacific focus of the programme that makes it attractive to students in the Porirua region, a substantial practical component to the programme, the setting of clear expectations and the use of a range of teaching methods and assessment types. A close relationship with sector stakeholders was evident.

Discussions were also held with Programme Leaders and Tutors of the Bachelor of Nursing (Maori) programme and the Bachelor of Nursing programme.

The first cohort of students enrolled on the Bachelor of Nursing (Maori) is currently studying and this discussion provided valuable insight to the development process followed by the School of Health. Discussions with the Programme Leader and a member of the teaching staff of the Bachelor of Nursing programme also provided useful context in relation to the high quality results being achieved.

Capability in Self-Assessment

The performance of the programme is effectively assessed through good use of the Programme Advisory Committee and input from other industry stakeholders, as well as frequent on-going conversations amongst staff at all levels. Good use is made of the information available from the Polytechnic's annual student satisfaction survey as well as student surveys undertaken internally to the programme. Good quality feedback regarding student outcomes is obtained through regular contact with employers.

2.2   Focus Area 2: *Postgraduate Certificate in Nursing*

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

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

Educational Performance

The programme demonstrates excellence in teaching and is clearly meeting the needs of local employers and nursing graduates in providing highly valuable transition-to-work support in combination with the acquisition of advanced skills and knowledge. The employers are highly appreciative of the programme's contribution to ensuring the competence and safety of newly graduated nurses and the partnerships that they have with the programme. Students appreciate the high calibre of support available to them from programme staff.

Capability in Self-Assessment

Self assessment is carried out on an on-going basis using a number of formal and informal mechanisms. Programme staff share ideas and experiences including feedback from external clinical assessors, from which improvement opportunities arise. The Annual Programme Evaluation Report provides the mechanism to synthesise this ongoing evaluation in order to capture what is working well and areas where improvements are needed. An internal Programme Review was carried out in August 2009.

2.3   Focus Area 3: *Bachelor of Information Technology*

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

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

Educational Performance

This successful programme is offered to two different cohorts: mainly domestic students at the Porirua campus and international students at the Auckland campus. In both locations, there is a commitment to professional development in tutors' specialist areas and to a collegial approach to the improvement of teaching. There are strong linkages between the teaching staff at both campuses, including visits to peers teaching similar areas, videoconferencing and on-going, planned moderation activities. Staffing for the programme reflects the diverse cultural and language backgrounds of the students, particularly on the Auckland campus.

Teaching and support staff demonstrate a genuine interest in supporting student success, and employ a range of activities to achieve this.

A comprehensive range of strategies have been introduced with the objective of improving on past results for the programme.

Industry representatives spoke very highly of the teaching staff, and had maintained a working relationship with the programme over a number of years. Student's final year projects require a linkage with industry, and this clearly enhances the connection between the programme and the needs of industry as well as giving teaching staff an opportunity to gain industry feedback on the skills and knowledge of the students.

The new first year cohort for 2009 at the Porirua campus was significantly larger than anticipated, and this led to some pressure on resources. However, additional staff were recruited and additional information technology resources were deployed during the first semester.

Capability in Self-Assessment
Feedback from student surveys, student representatives and local programme advisory committees inform the development and delivery of the programme, and the programme results committee closely evaluates retention and success data. Self-assessment could be better informed by closer analysis of the sub-cohorts of students and a wider engagement of teaching staff. The programme is clearly connected to the various IT educational fora in New Zealand and the needs of the local IT industries (particularly in Porirua). International benchmarking is also being considered. There has also been significant work on curriculum alignment and the development of a collegial relationship between the programme and related programmes at partnership institutions.

2.4   Focus Area 4: *Bachelor of Applied Arts (Creative Writing)*

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

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

Educational Performance
Compared with most of Whitireia Polytechnic's programmes, the vocational outcomes upon completion are not always immediately apparent, and not necessarily relevant to the aspirations of the students. However, there is evidence that a significant number of past students have been successful in having work published and in achieving on-going industry and public recognition. All stakeholder groups saw the teaching as being of high quality and the teachers as providing high levels of support for students.

When considering the educational performance of the degree programme (as distinct from that in the diplomas of which it is comprised), of particular note is the fact that completion and success rates have dropped over the past two years. However, it is noted that the enrolled number of students is small.

It is also acknowledged that these results reflect some students "opting out" early, having met their own aspirations in attaining a Diploma or Advanced Diploma, rather than continuing on to complete the degree. Relatively low student numbers, the diversity of students' motives for undertaking the programme and the way in which the degree is structured also influence these results.

Capability in Self-Assessment
The effect of the composite structure of the course and the challenges this presents has been noted for some time. The EER team consider that analysis of the performance data and information from exiting students over an extended period would assist in determining

the root cause of the declining student completion and success rates. A comparison between the achievement results for classroom versus on-line students could also provide useful insights. A more systematic analysis of teaching efficiency and effectiveness would provide a better basis for the evaluation of the quality of programme delivery. While a series of self-assessment activities and resulting improvement initiatives have been identified and are being implemented it is too early to determine if they will have the desired effect.

2.5   Focus Area 5: Communications Cluster comprising the National Diploma in Journalism and the Diplomas in Publishing

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

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

Educational Performance
Following some earlier difficulties with the Journalism programme, a revision of the content and delivery over the past two years has resulted in innovations leading to improved completion and success rates.

The programme is now highly regarded across the industry and seen as a leader in contemporary multi-media journalism education. Recruitment criteria provide opportunities for students who might not be eligible for other journalism programmes to achieve at a high level and find employment because of the strong support from programme staff. The need for particular technology resources and infrastructure for the Journalism programme will continue to provide challenges for management.

The Publishing programme is consistently considered to be excellent by both students and members of the industry. The industry recognises that the programme produces skilled and work-ready publishers by employing virtually all graduates, including those from the online programme. The teaching methods are exemplary in using industry resource, peer support and individualised tutoring. The structure of the programme and the ability for students to compile actual published works provides quality hands-on learning, as well as facilitating the building of professional skills and the ability to operate independently.

In both programmes, staff work with students to ensure that all graduates of the programme who are seeking a job secure one.

Capability in Self-Assessment
Journalism Programme staff regularly use feedback from a variety of sources, including an active Programme Advisory Committee, student representatives, regular Whitireia Community Polytechnic student surveys and programme-specific surveys. These mechanisms are used to progressively fine-tune all aspects of the programme to meet the needs of both students and industry.

The results of the assessment of all components of the Publishing programme are systematically incorporated into programme delivery. Industry representatives and students are integrally involved in programme planning, review and on-going refinement, using both formal and informal processes. Close contact with the publishing industry ensures that the programme remains relevant.

2.6 Focus Area 6: *Service Industries cluster comprising the Certificate in Professional Cookery; and the Certificate in Café Service*

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

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

Educational Performance

Students from the Certificate in Café Service programme can and do progress immediately to entry-level hospitality positions or on to the Certificate in Professional Cookery. On both programmes tutors support the learning of specific skills through embedding literacy and numeracy, and fostering professional attitudes required for employment.

Those students who complete the various course qualifications have achieved impressive results. Of particular note is the Cookery students' success in external City and Guilds examinations, to which the programme is contextualised. However, discussions with the cookery programme Tutors identified that retaining students through to completion of the qualification was proving increasingly challenging. This was evidenced by a number of the mid-2009 cohort of students who left the programme to enter hospitality related employment or apprenticeship training.

Tutors employ a 'team teaching' approach, and adopt a range of personalised assessment techniques. All students participate in 'simulated' and structured work placement, and this provides a valuable feedback mechanism. Work placement also establishes links with the industry which often lead to employment opportunities. Employers spoke highly of both programmes.

Capability in Self-Assessment

A range of approaches to self-assessment is being used effectively, with additional strategies planned. Data on retention and completion are distributed among staff. Data gathered at enrolment are also being utilised at programme level to understand individual student needs (e.g., level of previous qualification). At present there is no pre/post comparison of literacy and numeracy gain occurring so teaching effectiveness of that component cannot be validated. Tutors are aware of the workplaces where graduates are now employed but report limitations in being able to track and gather information owing to mobility. Information from both work placement employers and student performance in class are used to improve the delivery of the programme.

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

2.7 Focus Area 7: *Certificate in Plumbing, Drainlaying, Gasfitting and Roofing*

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

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

</div>

Educational Performance

The programme is strongly focused on meeting the needs of students, industry and the local community to train students to a level where they are work-ready with essential skills in all four trades, and have demonstrated both the motivation and the ability to undertake an apprenticeship. Programme outcomes reflect excellence in the programme's management and teaching, and in high quality and timely provision of support services to students. Students acquire vocational skills as well as life skills, confidence, a sense of direction in life, and personal pride.   The rapid increase in class numbers presents additional challenges for tutors to ensure that educational performance outcomes are maintained.

There are strong links between the programme and the industry, evidenced by the two days per week placement of students in the trade where the practical component of the course is reinforced. This on-the-job experience is supplemented by many on-campus opportunities for practical assessment.

Capability in Self-Assessment

On-going self assessment is embedded in the culture of the programme staff at all levels. The collegiality of the teaching team in supporting each other was also evident. Staff effectively use formal and informal feedback from students and stakeholders to enhance teaching practices and programme delivery. All staff were actively involved in conducting on-going self evaluation activities which informed the Annual Programme Evaluation Report and resulting Action Plan.

Very close relationships with industry were evident and this provides a valuable source of improvement initiatives to maximise teaching effectiveness.

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

2.8 Focus Area 8: *Aviation cluster comprising Certificates in Aviation (Helicopter); and Certificates in Aviation (Aeroplane)*

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

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

</div>

It should be noted that those interviewed in relation to the Aviation cluster focus area are not necessarily representative of all stakeholders of this programme. For those KEQs where there was insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion, no rating was given.

Educational Performance

The helicopter pilot training programme at Ardmore is in recovery mode following difficulties with the provision of the flight instruction component of the programme in 2009. These difficulties resulted in some students not completing the programme in that year and are reflected in the educational performance statistics. The EER team understands that some of the students from that intake have subsequently completed the programme and attained the Certificate.

Whitireia Community Polytechnic's response to the resourcing and delivery deficiencies occurring on this programme in 2009 was prompt, managed effectively and most students have now completed these courses successfully. Interventions have included a closer oversight and monitoring by the Polytechnic of the performance of the newly contracted provider, and the appointment of a Whitireia Community Polytechnic staff member at the Ardmore site. It is too early to gauge the effectiveness of the intervention in addressing these issues.

The suite of fixed wing aviation local Certificate programmes based at Kapiti has been redeveloped from a Diploma qualification during the last two years. As a consequence student success in this programme has improved. Delivery of the training is flexible to meet the learning needs of each individual, and features one-to-one flight tuition as well as classroom theory sessions. Truck licensing and hazardous good handling training has been incorporated with a view to employment pathways into the aerial topdressing industry. Proximity to the Kapiti Campus affords students with opportunities to utilise student support services, although it was unclear how much uptake occurs.

Capability in Self-Assessment

Employers of graduates of the helicopter programme have not been formally surveyed in relation to the programme delivery and students outcomes since 1999. However, regular cycles of student evaluations are occurring for both programmes and an independent evaluator has made two visits to Ardmore in 2010 to evaluate and provide feedback on the training and instructor level skills. Self assessment including consideration of student results over a five-year period, and consideration of performance against the six Key Evaluation Questions has also occurred in 2010.

2.9   Focus Area 9: *Governance and Management*

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

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

Educational Performance

Whitireia Community Polytechnic Council members[5] have been actively involved in the development of the Polytechnic Strategic plan. The plan includes specific educational achievement targets (with a particular emphasis on Māori and Pacific students) that challenge the organisation to perform. Whitireia Community Polytechnic Management reports progress against the Strategic Plan to Council on a monthly basis. Council also has a sub-committee structure (such as Audit & Risk) for the consideration of key issues and also completes an annual review of the performance and effectiveness of its members.

Council and Polytechnic senior management are also actively engaged with local representatives of Ngati Toa and the many Pacific Island community groups.

Staff on the Wellington City campus have reported issues regarding technology and technology-support to Senior Management. While it is not evident that these issues have had a detrimental effect on student performance, a failure to resolve may impact future performance as technology-based resources become integral to course delivery.

Difficulties were experienced with the delivery of the Aviation (Helicopter) programme in 2009 as a result of the inability of the contracting provider to fulfil its contractual obligations to Whitireia Community Polytechnic. This situation had not been foreseen by Whitireia management, but a number of initiatives were subsequently introduced to address the problems experienced. The EER team understands that the effect of these initiatives has been positive.

Capability in Self-Assessment

Whitireia Community Polytechnic has demonstrated a motivation and commitment to adopt rigorous self-assessment practices. The Annual Programme Evaluation Report is used to assess whether stakeholder needs are being met, and is incorporated into the self-assessment regime. A wide variety of self-assessment mechanisms and formats is used across the Polytechnic. While self-assessment is becoming more widespread, practices are varied, inconsistent and not always linked to improvement actions.

The EER team was impressed with the way in which the Chief Executive and the senior managers of Whitireia Community Polytechnic have a clear sense of direction and have made considerable efforts to improve systems that report on organisational performance in key focus areas. For example, structured processes are in place for the review of those programmes where performance is not meeting the required standard. This focus leads to remedial efforts to address issues as they are identified.

While good quality and comprehensive statistics are gathered for those students who successfully complete courses, more structured data highlighting the reasons for the early exit of some students could prove valuable. This information may contribute to enhancing educational quality and thereby improve outcomes. The tracking of graduates,

---

[5] At the time of the visit the new Council had only recently been formed. Consequently information obtained concerning the Council's involvement with the educational direction of the Polytechnic relates to past practices.

development of staff surveys and the inclusion of self-assessment competencies within individual performance development plans might also prove useful.

A range of specific strategies are currently being developed. The inclusion of the means of assessing each strategy's effectiveness in its development, as well as a baseline and targets in order to determine causal effect would enhance this process.

2.10   Focus Area 10: *Library Services*

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

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

Educational Performance

Library services to students and staff at the Polytechnic are comprehensive, well resourced and professionally staffed. The library at the Porirua Campus is welcoming to staff and students and functional in terms of user needs. The co-location of a range of learning support services clearly adds value and allows a connected approach to supporting student learning. Staff actively network with and respond to the needs of the Faculties.

Professional development of staff is appropriate and clearly linked to understanding and enhancing the student and staff experience and use of library services. Staff described a number of strategies, resources and tools which enhance their services for students with children, students with a first language other than English, disabled students and students with specific literacy needs. In particular, the Library is also responding pro-actively to the requirements of the literacy and numeracy embedding strategy.

Capability in Self-Assessment

Self-assessment is actively occurring and is based on a range of data gathering techniques including benchmarking against statistics gathered by other ITP Libraries across the country. Feedback from students is gathered as part of Whitireia Polytechnic's student survey reporting process, and staff also use their own internal processes to seek formal and informal feedback from library users. Students have also contributed directly to a number of library initiatives (e.g. Wireless networking). The library services relate closely to the learning skills staff and there is opportunity for more joint self-assessment. Self-assessment activities could be improved by a more close involvement of the Auckland staff. This would create an opportunity to gather specific self-assessment data from International Students.

> **2.11 Focus Area 11: *Pastoral Care of International Students***
>
> The rating in this focus area for educational performance is **Excellent**.
>
> The rating for capability in self-assessment for this focus area is **Excellent.**

Educational Performance

International students at Whitireia Community Polytechnic achieve high levels of academic success. Depending on the students' chosen campus their student experience will be different, but the support and services are equivalent. They are very well supported by both teaching and support staff to achieve their learning goals and in their adjustment to student life in New Zealand. Educational delivery is often customised to suit the educational and cultural background of students, without compromising educational quality. There are positive impacts for international students resulting from the Polytechnic's strategies for embedding literacy and numeracy into programmes and related tutor professional development. Students are encouraged to enhance their English language skills and provided with a range of activities outside the classroom in a supportive environment. A comprehensive orientation and induction programme is provided to all international students, and the process from initial enquiry, accommodation assistance and programme commencement is tracked closely.

Students interviewed on the Auckland campus came from a wide range of countries and were complimentary about the support and pastoral care with which they are being provided, and in particular the student/tutor relationship and accessibility of tutors. Overall, students were very happy with the types of teaching and learning they were experiencing.

Capability in Self-Assessment

Over recent months there has been an operational review and an internal self-assessment of the student learning services. Student survey ratings and comments have been collated and distributed to all service areas for consideration and action. Evaluative data are also being gathered and analysed to monitor teaching effectiveness.

Aspects of the structure and delivery of support services to international students have been modified as a result. The current policy for the monitoring and follow-up of attendance was re-developed after evaluation of the previous system, and re-introduced in late 2009.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations.

Further Actions

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