



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
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Report of External Evaluation and Review

Whitireia Community Polytechnic

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 3 September 2015

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Final Report

Purpose of this Report

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

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Whitireia Community Polytechnic (Whitireia)
Type:	Institute of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP)
Location:	Wi Neera Drive, Porirua
Delivery sites:	Auckland Campus: Level 2, 450 Queen Street, Auckland Kapiti Campus: Corner Milne Drive and Kapiti Road, Paraparaumu Porirua Campus: Wi Neera Drive, Porirua City Industry Training Centre: 12 Mohuia Crescent, Elsdon, Porirua City Media Training Centre: Level 2, 15 Dixon Street, Wellington Performance Centre: 25 Vivian Street, Wellington
First registered:	1986
Courses currently delivered:	Whitireia currently delivers a broad range of courses from levels 1-9. Approximately 45 per cent of enrolled EFTS (equivalent full-time students) are in courses at levels 7 and 8. The three largest programmes delivered are the Bachelor of Applied Business Studies, Bachelor of Nursing, and Bachelor of Applied Arts. Further details can be found at: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/course-accreditations.do?providerId=601420001&delSiteInd=0
Code of Practice signatory?:	Signatory for international students

Number of students:	Total: 4,236 EFTS (including 16 per cent Māori and 20 per cent Pacific) Domestic: 3,092 EFTS International: 1,144 EFTS
Number of staff:	Full-time equivalents: 408 Full-time equivalents combined with Wellington Institute of Technology (WelTec) (shared services): 29
Scope of active accreditation:	See list of full accreditation: http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/details.do?providerId=601420001
Distinctive characteristics:	Whitireia offers a broad range of programmes across multiple campuses to a diverse range of learners (16 per cent Māori, 20 per cent Pacific, 30 per cent NZ European/Pakeha, 25 per cent Asian, and 9 per cent other). Whitireia also operates in collaboration with WelTec, as outlined below.
Recent significant changes:	Since the last external evaluation and review (EER) in 2010, Whitireia has entered a collaborative strategic partnership (Student First Strategic Partnership) with WelTec. The collaboration has resulted in a joint Council and joint Academic Board. Each institution currently retains its own chief executive, management team and reporting requirements. Whitireia also owns Whitireia New Zealand Ltd (WNZL), a registered private training establishment. Whitireia and WelTec jointly administer Computer Power Plus within WNZL. The joint Council and joint Academic Board monitor the performance of WNZL.
Previous quality assurance history:	While the 2013 external moderation results showed some areas to be addressed, Whitireia had resolved similar assessment outcome results from the 2012 external moderation report. At the previous EER of Whitireia in 2010, NZQA was Highly Confident in the polytechnic's educational performance and Confident in its capability in self-assessment.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The scope of this EER relates solely to Whitireia Community Polytechnic. As WNZL is registered as a private training establishment (PTE), a separate EER was conducted for this PTE.

The focus areas for the EER included the mandatory focus area of governance, management and strategy. Given the demographic diversity of students at Whitireia, the second mandatory focus area – international student support – was extended to include academic support teams (Te Kete Wānanga, Poutama) as well as the Māori, Pacific and youth support teams (covering enrolments, pastoral care and careers). This was incorporated under the focus area of student support services.

Programme focus areas were selected to provide a reasonable representation of the broad range of programmes offered across the institution. A number of factors were taken into consideration in finalising the focus areas, including: programme levels, programme size, faculty representation, student demographics, domestic and international enrolment numbers, course completion rates, and the location/type of programme delivery. The focus areas selected are listed below (including 2013 enrolled EFTS).

- Postgraduate Certificate in Specialty Care (Level 8) (26 EFTS) Bachelor of Nursing (Level 7) (226 EFTS)
- Certificates in Office Administration and Computing (Introductory, Intermediate and Advanced) (Levels 2-4) (167 EFTS)
- Certificate in Beauty and Hairdressing (Level 3) (40 EFTS)
- Bachelor of Applied Arts (Visual Arts and Design) (Level 7) (63 EFTS)
Certificate in Work Skills (He Poutama Ako) (Level 2) (20 EFTS) Bachelor of Applied Business Studies (Level 7) (390 EFTS)
- Certificate in Foundation Education (strands in Health Science and Social Science) (Level 4) (181 EFTS).

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.

Whitireia submitted a number of documents prior to the on-site visit, including a self-assessment summary report, investment plan, strategic plan 2011-2016, operational plan 2014, qualification EFTS by campus and participation, performance data for the focus area programmes, governance and management policies and terms of reference documents, and the 2013 annual programme evaluation reports for each academic focus area. A pre-scoping meeting was held at Whitireia. Participants from NZQA included the Whitireia and WNZL lead evaluators, the ITP sector advisor, the principal evaluation advisor, and the capability development advisor. Participants from Whitireia included the deputy chief executive (academic), deputy chief executive (operations), and the academic quality manager.

A team of six evaluators was involved in the on-site visit, attending campuses at Porirua, Auckland and the Kapiti Coast over six days. During the visit, two members of the evaluation team were also involved in the WNZL EER. Interviews were conducted with: Council members; senior management; Academic Board members; academic support staff; support teams for Māori, Pacific, youth and international students; programme management teams; teaching staff; students; programme industry advisory groups; and programme partners. The EER team reviewed a wide range of documentation, both paper-based and online. These included achievement data, meeting minutes (at multiple levels of the organisation), internal and external assessment moderation reports, booklets and brochures, self-evaluation documents, student survey and course evaluation reports, graduate survey reports, joint programme portfolio document, and quality management policies/processes.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

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

Whitireia has high course and qualification achievement rates for domestic students at all levels, which have exceeded internal and external performance targets. In addition, Māori, Pacific and youth learners' course and qualification achievement rates all exceeded the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) performance targets. There has also been a significant improving trend in overall course achievement rates over the past few years, including for these three priority groups.

There is good evidence to show that graduates are acquiring the skills, knowledge, self-confidence and other attributes to prepare them for employment, further study and community engagement.

Graduate survey results for the period 2010-2012 showed very positive feedback with good levels of employment gained by graduates in their related field. There was good evidence to show that in the focus area programmes most graduates acquired relevant employment and/or continued their study in higher education programmes.

Whitireia is actively engaged with industry and its community at all levels of the organisation. Community engagement includes a number of strategic developments (known as the Choice Protocol) initiated through the collaborative partnership between Whitireia and WelTec. It is evident that the Choice Protocol strategy has resulted in a number of beneficial changes.

Teaching is highly effective, evidenced from student paper evaluations, student achievement rates, moderation results, graduation surveys and student interviews. Sufficient external moderation evidence was also provided to show that summative assessments are fair, valid and reliable.

There is strong evidence within the focus areas reviewed that Whitireia students benefit from consistently high levels of guidance and support for their learning and personal well-being, and this has been particularly effective for the priority groups (Māori, Pacific and youth). Overall, there was sufficient evidence of ongoing high performance for NZQA to be highly confident in the educational performance of Whitireia.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

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

Whitireia has established clear and effective systems for evaluating learner achievement and retention across the institution, including related processes for monitoring any subsequent changes initiated. Overall, staff and management have a good understanding of key factors that contribute to course and qualification achievements, which have led to a broad range of improvements being made. It is evident that these have had a positive impact given the noticeable increase in achievement rates for the priority student groups over the past few years.

Effective processes are largely being used for gathering and evaluating information from graduates and employers on the value of the outcomes at programme level.

Whitireia's commitment to meeting the needs of its priority learners – Māori, Pacific and youth – is evident from a wide range of strategies and actions initiated over the past few years. The overall effectiveness of these initiatives is apparent from the noticeable trend of a significant increase in completion and retention rates since the last EER.

Programme staff use information gathered through formal and informal processes to share good teaching practices and identify areas for improvement. The partnership approach with Te Kete Wānanga and Poutama academic learning staff has been an important contributor to maximising learner engagement and success, particularly for the priority learners. It is evident that these processes have led to effective pedagogical approaches being adopted to maximise student success.

An evaluative approach is used across the institution at all levels to analyse performance of programmes and related contributing activities, identify areas for improvement, and monitor actions initiated. The quality and validity of the information provided was consistently high, with strong evidence to show a broad range of improvements made.

Whitireia has established a clear strategic direction, which has resulted in a number of major projects being initiated through its Choice Protocol strategy, which are closely monitored and evaluated at governance and management levels on a regular basis to ensure successful outcomes occur or are making effective progress. This was confirmed from an independent case study conducted by the TEC that noted the Choice Protocol strategy is making good progress in strengthening provision of vocational tertiary education in the Wellington region.

Whitireia has established clear, robust and comprehensive self-assessment processes in recent years that have enabled it to achieve and maintain high levels of educational performance and ensure it continues to meet the needs of its learners and stakeholders. Overall, the evaluators consider that NZQA can be highly confident in Whitireia's capability in self-assessment.

Findings¹

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, Whitireia has high course and qualification achievement rates at all levels. As shown in Table 1, the 2013 course and qualification achievement rates for Māori, Pacific and youth learners have exceeded related internal EPI (educational performance indicator) targets. There is also a noticeable increase in overall course achievement over the past three years for the three priority groups, particularly for Māori learners.

	Course completion*			Qualification completion*		
	2011	2012	2013 (target) **	2011	2012	2013 (target) **
All students (4,236 EFTS in 2013)	79%	81%	82%	69%	76%	78%
SAC-funded students – All (2,701 EFTS in 2013)	80%	83%	84% (81%)	68%	77%	81% (75%)
SAC-funded Māori students (580 EFTS in 2013)	69%	76%	79% (72%)	48%	70%	73% (62%)
SAC-funded Pacific students (533 EFTS in 2013)	73%	77%	79% (76%)	60%	73%	68% (67%)
SAC-funded < 25 students (1,338 EFTS in 2013)	76%	80%	81% (70%)	63%	66%	79% (70%)
International students (1,151 EFTS in 2013)	79%	80%	79% (81%)	79%	83%	76% (83%)
* Rates calculated as a percentage of enrolled EFTS.						
** Based on Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) EPI targets for SAC-funded students, and internal EPI targets for international students.						

Whitireia identified a number of contributing factors to account for the increase in achievement rates, including investment in student support services (Te Kete Wānanga and Poutama), higher teaching hours, a focused attention on benchmark

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

targets (including the use of 'Tribal'² data), and operational strategies developed within the faculties (e.g. staff undertaking related professional development activities). In addition, it was evident across the focus areas that staff are aware that student attendance has a significant impact on successful achievement. This has led to a consistent focus on developing processes to minimise non-attendance.

A priority over a number of years has been to increase achievement outcomes for Māori, Pacific and youth learners. It is evident from the results that this has been successful. Whitireia attributes this success to a focus on its values, in particular manaaki (support and cooperation) for staff and students, identity (creating an inclusive learning environment), equity (achieving more equal outcomes), and integrity (maintaining the highest ethical standards). As noted later in this report, related strategies have been developed to enhance the outcomes for Māori, Pacific and youth learners.

International course achievements met the EPI targets set by Whitireia during 2010-2012, although they fell slightly below the target in 2013. While international qualification achievement (76 per cent) also fell below the ITP's EPI target (83 per cent) in 2013, Whitireia analysed this as part of its self-assessment processes, and noted that it was largely due to a decrease at levels 1-3. Subsequent changes have been initiated to address this.

In addition to achieving high completion rates, it was evident that students also acquire a broad range of useful skills and knowledge. In the lower-level programmes reviewed, it was noted that particular attention has been given to enhancing students' literacy, language and numeracy skills. It was also apparent that, in addition to acquiring relevant technical skills and knowledge, students also gain a broad range of soft/transferable skills. Common themes, particularly for students in the lower-level programmes, include an increase in communication skills as well as enhanced levels of confidence and motivation to remain in education and pathway to higher-level study.

There is a systematic approach to monitoring learner achievement against EPIs at all levels of the organisation. Initial reviews and analysis of course/paper results are done at programme level at the end of each semester. Boards of Studies also identify any trends and patterns across programmes within their faculty, which subsequently informs further discussions and actions at programme level. The joint Academic Board reviews overall achievement data against common EPIs across both Whitireia and WelTec, and it is evident that this collaborative arrangement has created a 'healthy competitive environment', motivating both parties to improve their own performance, by building on each other's strengths and related strategies.

Whitireia has effective systems in place for evaluating learner achievement and retention across the institution. Overall, staff and management have a good understanding of key factors that contribute to learner achievement, which is

² Data collated from ITPs across New Zealand.

evident from the noticeable pattern of increased achievement rates for domestic students over the past few years.

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**.

Whitireia has strong industry and community networks at all levels of the organisation. This enables it to gather and share information that is of value to all parties. A number of strategic initiatives have been developed over the past few years, which Whitireia believes have been and will continue to be of significant benefit for its key stakeholders and learners. A recent example provided included a collaborative project with WelTec, Victoria University and Massey University, which involves the development of strategies to recruit more international students into the Wellington region. This is viewed by all parties as being beneficial to the Wellington community and to the growth of the regional economy. A further example included an information technology project involving some Whitireia students, which led to the building of a compliance system for Mana Recovery.³ As noted later in this report, a number of other significant projects are now underway, which confirms that Whitireia has a commitment to adding value to graduates and the community it serves.

From documents viewed, together with interviews with management teams, staff, students and advisory committees, it was evident that most Whitireia graduates acquire relevant skills, knowledge, self-confidence and other attributes to prepare them for related employment or further study at higher levels.

Graduate survey results over the past few years show very high levels of satisfaction, indicating that graduates value the programme they completed. The 2013 survey results, with good response rates, showed that 99 per cent of graduates would recommend their programme to others and 95 per cent said they would study at Whitireia again. The results for the period 2010-2012 show that good levels of employment (66 to 70 per cent) were gained by graduates in their related field. In reviewing the results in more detail, Whitireia considered that this did not identify sufficient information to support worthwhile changes. As a result, and as part of the Students First Strategic Partnership (see Findings 1.6 for further

³ The purpose of this project was to meet the data-gathering and compliance reporting requirements of the Capital and Coast District Health Board and the Ministry of Health. A Whitireia student involved was subsequently employed by Mana Recovery, a local provider of vocational training.

details), survey practices will be aligned with WeITec's practices. At the time of the EER, this was still in development.

In most areas reviewed by the evaluation team, there was good evidence to show that graduates acquired relevant employment and/or pathways to higher education programmes. Examples also showed that industry values the skills, knowledge and attributes graduates bring to the workplace, as well as the students who undertake work placements as part of their programme.

While reasonable processes are being used in most areas for gathering information from both graduates and employers on the value of the outcomes, for some areas there is a reliance on obtaining anecdotal feedback with limited collation or analysis to determine any emerging patterns or trends. Whitireia is aware of this and is currently considering new processes for gathering graduate and employer feedback, although the nature and subsequent effectiveness of these processes remains uncertain at this stage.

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

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

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

Whitireia's active engagement with industry and the broader community, including Ngāti Toa Rangatira and other iwi groups, ensures its programmes remain current and of relevance to learners and stakeholders. A number of examples were provided of the collaborative arrangements with Ngāti Toa that are intended to serve the interests of both parties. These include: growing management capability in working with Māori entities; supporting Ngāti Toa to develop information technology infrastructure and expertise; and using its relationship with Te Wānanga o Raukawa to deliver its karanga programme for Ngāti Toa and Māori staff and students at Whitireia. As well as programmes using industry advisory committees to maintain currency, it was evident that many staff are also actively engaged with industry and community/iwi groups, as well as other staff within their faculty. This has enabled all parties to work together to have a clear understanding of students entering the programme, as well as the skills, knowledge and attributes needed to be developed within the programme. There was consistent feedback from students interviewed that programme content and delivery was meeting their needs and that they felt well prepared for employment or further study.

At governance and management levels, a number of collaborative projects are occurring with WeITec (as part of its Choice Protocol strategy). The Choice

Protocol strategy emerged from an extensive research project⁴ which was initiated to improve benefits to students. The Choice Protocol strategy includes developing a portfolio of programmes across both institutions that best accommodate the needs of learners, industry and the broader Wellington community. The joint Academic Board reviews all programmes annually across the two institutions, taking into consideration current research, areas of specialisation and current developments within the Targeted Review of Qualifications. The resulting information is used by the Board to create and recommend to the Council an annual portfolio of programmes that best meet the needs of learners and stakeholders. An important contribution to this was the recent change begun by Whitireia to its programme curricula, which involves the alignment of its course credit system with WelTec course credits (15 credit components). Such alignments are intended to create further study options for students across both institutions.

A further Choice Protocol project involves the creation of two centres of excellence. The first stage is now under way, which includes the development of a shared campus in Wellington to create a new Arts Centre of Excellence. This is intended to offer relevant programmes in the arts, media and creative industries at the same location, enabling students from both institutions to undertake the same courses. Overall, it is evident that the Choice Protocol strategy is making good progress.

Whitireia is also actively engaged with industry stakeholders in the development of two major roading projects in the Wellington region.⁵ Whitireia is working in collaboration with Ngāti Toa and WelTec to help meet the substantial demand for skilled construction workers that will be required over the next several years. Helping graduates pathway into related employment opportunities is a key focus for Whitireia.

Whitireia's commitment to meeting the needs of the priority learners – Māori, Pacific and youth – is evident from a wide range of strategies and actions initiated over the past few years. The overall effectiveness of these initiatives is apparent from the significant increase in course and qualification completion rates achieved in recent years for these priority groups. The upgrading of Whitireia's Porirua campus has been a recent major project, and has created a more open community ambience, with the purpose of maximising learner inclusion and engagement. There was evidence of positive feedback from students on these changes. As part of its commitment to making continuous improvements to ensure learner needs are being met, a Māori, Pacific and youth outcomes advisory group was recently set up, and will be used to provide advice about educational issues and to facilitate cross-faculty discussions and related initiatives.

⁴ WelTec – Whitireia (2011). Students First Project Report Executive Summary. Wellington, New Zealand.

⁵ Kapiti Expressway and Transmission Gully

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Teaching is highly effective, evidenced from student paper evaluations, course achievements, moderation results, graduation surveys and student interviews. As previously mentioned, tutors' active engagement with and knowledge of their industry and community has enabled programme content and delivery to remain current and relevant. Such engagement and the knowledge acquired occur in different ways, and usually relate to the nature of the programme. In the health sector, teaching staff have strong contacts with their local district health boards and medical centres/hospitals through clinical placements. In some programmes, staff are current practitioners/part-time employees in their specialist fields. In the case of lower-level/foundation programmes, most teaching staff have a background as school teachers and/or have strong connections with school and youth providers in the Wellington region.

A noticeable theme across programmes is the practical nature of the delivery methods adopted, which are contextualised to the needs of the learner as well as the industry in which the skills and knowledge will be applied. It was evident from staff, student and stakeholder feedback that the use of practical projects, case studies and work placements has been beneficial to learners and helped prepare them for employment and/or further study.

The contextualised nature of delivery is also used to ensure that the cultural values and needs of learners are met. It was evident that staff have a strong focus on finding ways to maximise the success of Māori, Pacific and youth learners. An example shown, resulting from related research undertaken, was staff use of a resource booklet on maximising the diversity of learners.⁶ In addition, it is evident that literacy and numeracy has also been a key focus, particularly for staff delivering entry-level/foundation programmes. Embedding literacy and numeracy into curricula was evident in level 2-4 programmes, with additional support provided to students where needed to maximise their success.

As well as having experience and knowledge in their specialist areas, it was evident from documents viewed that most tutors on degree and postgraduate programmes are appropriately qualified and research-active. In many cases, the research and related professional development activities have been used to inform teaching practices and content at all levels. For example, a joint research symposium is

⁶ The product of research funded through Ako Aotearoa.

used by Whitireia and WelTec, which has enabled good teaching practices and new methodologies to be shared.

Internal moderation processes are in place and are used at all levels. Feedback from students interviewed and from documents viewed, including external moderation results and student paper evaluations, showed that there is good evidence that summative assessments are fair, valid and reliable.

Programme staff use information gathered through formal and informal processes to share good teaching practices and identify areas for improvement. Ongoing reflective practices based on information gathered, including from regular professional development activities, are commonly used by programme staff to ensure their teaching is effective in meeting the needs of learners and maximising learner achievement. This is supported by the noticeable increase in student achievement rates over the past few years, particularly for the Māori, Pacific and youth learners who constitute a large proportion of Whitireia's students.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

There is good triangulated evidence to show that effective guidance and support for students is established at the earliest stages, with good processes in place (e.g. interviews, orientation and whānau engagement) to prepare students for their learning journey and for staff to gain a clear understanding of individual needs and related support that may be needed.

Information provided to the evaluators showed that good processes are used when recruiting international students, including the use of an English proficiency test which is moderated by Auckland University of Technology (AUT). Students are expected to meet minimum standards based on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or equivalent. There was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that students receive all required information and any related support following enrolment. The Code of Practice is reviewed annually, with full staff engagement. The evaluators were confident that Whitireia is compliant with the Code of Practice.

There is good evidence that Whitireia students benefit from consistently high levels of guidance and support for their learning and personal well-being, and this is particularly the case for priority groups (Māori, Pacific and youth). While it is difficult to identify causal relationships, it is evident that the high quality of guidance and support provided to students is contributing to widespread improvements in learners' educational performance, reflected in the EPI trend data and stakeholder feedback on the value of outcomes for students and the wider community. This

conclusion is also supported by internal and external research which affirms the approach being taken, particularly for Māori, Pacific and youth students.

An integrated approach to student support is effective in meeting learner needs. Central student services, such as Poutama, specialist staff for priority groups, and the international team (in Auckland) work alongside tutors to deliver targeted learning and pastoral support, such as co-tutoring to enhance students' academic skills. Advice and support is provided to build tutorial capability, for example in identifying effective strategies for engaging with youth learners or for literacy and numeracy, which has been embedded in all level 1-4 programmes over recent years. As mentioned, a resource has been developed to provide tutors with ideas for working more effectively with Māori, Pacific and youth learners.⁷ Specific programmes have been developed to meet the needs of priority groups, such as the Bachelor of Nursing Māori or the Pacific Leadership strand of the Postgraduate Certificate in Specialty Care, by fostering academic success with culturally appropriate pedagogy and support systems. The evaluators noted the priority placed on orientation and the early establishment of important relationships. Close monitoring of attendance and engagement with learning, and effective processes for identifying and supporting 'at-risk' students, ensure targeted support is available as required. It was evident that these approaches have been effective in supporting learner success.

Taken together, these initiatives represent a significant investment in learner support and guidance at Whitireia, and the continuation of a longstanding commitment to the local community. The investment is underpinned by significant strategic and planning documents, and widespread commitment at all levels. There is some evidence of purposeful self-assessment activities, such as the analysis of Poutama activity data to develop an understanding of usage patterns and an evaluation of initiatives to support the Youth Guarantee scheme. While anecdotal feedback about student support is generally positive, the 2013 student satisfaction survey showed a declining trend in relation to central learning services. Analysis of the survey findings was undertaken to identify key themes and conclusions. However, it is unclear how this analysis has been used to develop any specific improvement initiatives. Further work is required to evaluate the effectiveness of particular support initiatives in improving outcomes for students.

⁷ *Maximising the diversity of our learners – Māori, Pacific and youth*, Te Kura Matatini o Whitireia, 2012.

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**.

Whitireia has a clear direction and purpose, created through its Student First Strategic Partnership with WelTec. The collaborative partnership has been a significant development at Whitireia in recent years, with the two institutions establishing a joint Council and Academic Board, with shared services, information technology management, procurement, and academic policies and procedures currently under development. There is a clear commitment to provide a 'flexible, responsive and sustainable network of vocational tertiary education' that will be of benefit to the Wellington community and its key stakeholders. In the longer term, the partnership is also expected to reduce institutional costs and thereby increase available resources and facilities for staff and students.

As noted earlier, the strategic partnership is being developed through the concept of the Choice Protocol, which involves a number of strategic projects overseen by the Council. A case study recently undertaken by the TEC confirmed that the Choice Protocol initiative is creating a positive cultural change across the two institutions, with good progress being made within the collaborative projects being developed. The collaborative arrangements are recognised by all parties as being an evolving and ongoing process, which has been challenging and disruptive for Whitireia. This has required a review of its current strategic plan (2011-2016) and the related operational plans. Whitireia is currently attending to this by incorporating the Choice Protocol strategic projects into its 2015-17 investment plan, enabling a clearer connection to be made with its related business and operational goals. All high-level action plans are intended to be monitored and involve 'closing of the loop' through evaluating the effectiveness of changes made and reporting relevant information back to internal and external stakeholders.

It was evident from interviews conducted that staff believe they have good support from, and communication with, their managers. As noted earlier, it was also evident that Whitireia has invested heavily in its student support services in recent years, which has clearly had a positive impact for its priority learners and their subsequent success. Overall, no significant issues were raised by staff about the resources and facilities available to them. Effective processes are in place to support relevant professional development activities.

Whitireia has established a systematic evaluative process across the faculties, Te Manawa/Te Wānanga Māori, and the academic support service areas to monitor performance and identify areas for improvement. An annual programme evaluation report incorporating responses to the standard key evaluation questions is used by all programmes, which is subsequently reviewed by the faculty board of studies.

The processes used to inform and complete the annual programme evaluation report, together with other evaluative processes used on an ongoing basis, are determined by each manager and their teams. While the effectiveness of these evaluative approaches differs to some extent across the institution, with a few gaps in how data is collated and used, overall – as noted in the focus area reports – these gaps were not significant, with clear evidence of wide-ranging improvements being made.

Whitireia has good management processes in place for evaluating its self-assessment practices. At the time of the EER visit it was evident that the Academic Committee was reviewing the effectiveness of self-evaluation activities across the organisation to identify areas for improvement and to address any gaps. At governance level it is evident that the Council has effective processes that are used for the ongoing monitoring of the polytechnic's performance and its strategic projects, although no evidence was able to be provided to show that the Council periodically evaluates its own collective and individual performances.

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 **Good**.

Refer to key evaluation question 6 for findings.

2.2 Focus area: Student support 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**.

As noted in the scope of the EER in the Introduction to this report, the mandatory focus area of international student support was extended to include domestic student support. The overall findings are incorporated into key evaluation question 5. Where relevant, further specific components are included in other key evaluation questions and focus areas.

2.3 Focus area: Postgraduate Certificate in Specialty Care (Level 8)

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

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

Learner achievement in this programme is very high, consistently exceeding Whitireia targets for course and qualification completion (Table 2). There is good evidence from a variety of sources that, in addition to acquiring useful skills and knowledge, which enhance their clinical practice, students are also making significant gains in relation to their communication and leadership abilities.

	Course completion*			Qualification completion*		
	2011	2012	2013 (target)	2011	2012	2013 (target)
All students (n=26 in 2013)	90%	92%	99% (78%)	107%	88%	106% (63%)
Māori students (n=2 in 2013)		100%	100% (64%)		67%	80% (57%)
Pacific students (n=20 in 2013)	100%	90%	100% (64%)	100%	86%	102% (57%)

* Rates calculated as a percentage of enrolled EFTS

The three strands of the programme (Advanced Paramedic Practice, Pacific Leadership, and Mental Health) have been developed in consultation with health sector partners to meet specific workforce and community needs. Ongoing funding by central government of the Pacific Leadership strand, together with an independent evaluation report⁸, provides strong evidence of the significant value of the programme, which is contributing to improving the health of Pacific by addressing a national shortage of Pacific nurses in leadership with advanced qualifications. Other key stakeholders (including providers of ambulance services and local forensic health services) confirm that the programme is highly valued for developing professional capability within their specialty areas.

Regular stakeholder engagement ensures that the content is current and relevant and that the programme delivery matches the cultural and learning needs of the students. Strong communities of learning are developed through a combination of the Talanoa online learning model and face-to-face delivery and engagement, which encourage student motivation and support success. Additional learner support is provided as required either online or in person. Tutors are innovative and adapt their approach to the needs of each cohort. They are highly qualified and actively engaged in research and/or are current practitioners in their specialist area, which ensures activities are meaningful and reflect the specialist context.

Excellent educational performance is underpinned by effective and regular self-assessment. Management and staff have a good understanding of factors contributing to learner achievement. They are actively engaged in collecting and analysing information which is used to identify improvements to programmes and activities, and this is confirmed by stakeholders, including students. While there is anecdotal evidence of outcomes for graduates, a more systematic approach to gathering and analysing employment data could provide greater evidence of the value of the programme for career development and/or progression to higher-level Study.

2.4 Focus area: Bachelor of Nursing (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**.

As shown in Table 3, overall course completion rates have been consistently high over the past three years (90 per cent or above), and remain higher than the internal EPI targets (78 per cent). Māori, Pacific and youth course completion rates are all above Whitireia's EPI targets, with Māori and Pacific learners also achieving above other learners. Māori qualification completions dropped in 2013. However,

⁸ Mahony, F. 2013. Evaluation of the Aniva Programme.

it is recognised that increased enrolments in year 1 may have distorted the data because of the standard calculation methods used.⁹

Students who are immigrants and/or refugees now account for 15 per cent of enrolled nursing students. Specific support is provided for students with English as an additional language (EAL), and for students who have learning difficulties, which was validated by students interviewed.

Table 3. Course completion and qualification completion rates for the Bachelor of Nursing, 2011-2013

	Course completion*			Qualification completion*		
	2011	2012	2013 (target)	2011	2012	2013 (target)
All students (n=226 in 2013)	92%	90%	90% (78%)	75%	80%	81% (63%)
Māori students (n=28 in 2013)	89%	85%	90% (64%)	90%	78%	43% (57%)
Pacific students (n=7 in 2013)	82%	89%	92% (64%)	57%	114%	138% (57%)
< 25 students (n=124 in 2013)	90%	92%	87% (73%)	69%	64%	77% (50%)

* Rates calculated as a percentage of enrolled EFTS.

There is good evidence to demonstrate that the outcomes are of value to learners and stakeholders. In order to become a registered nurse, graduates must successfully complete the Nursing Council of New Zealand state final examination, which requires graduates to demonstrate that they have a broad range of relevant skills, knowledge and attributes (including physiological and psychosocial integrity). Since 2010, 100 per cent of Whitireia graduates (including EAL students) who sat this exam were successful. The results of the 2014 Nurse Educators in Tertiary Sector graduate destination survey, conducted at the graduation ceremonies, also showed that 70 per cent of Whitireia’s graduates gained employment in nursing jobs (slightly above the tertiary sector average of 69 per cent).

Whitireia has strong connections with the health sector, which have been used to ensure the programme and its delivery remain relevant and up-to-date. Active involvement in the local sub-regional district health board steering group for workforce development has enabled collaborative projects to be initiated to best serve the interests of all parties. An example of a recent project included the use of an evaluative 360-degree approach for gaining feedback from students and industry providers on their clinical learning experiences. The data was subsequently analysed and used to identify areas for improvement, with a subsequent action plan created.

⁹ If enrolment patterns significantly change in any one year, this can have an impact on the qualification rates because of the calculation method used – refer to the TEC website: <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Site-information/Search/?q=calculating+qualification+completion+rates>

To further strengthen the alignment of the programme with the needs of nursing practitioners, a research-informed project included the development of an integrated curriculum across the degree. This involved the merging of courses (papers) within each year, enabling the integration of the theory and practical components to be contextualised to a nursing environment. Although still in its final stage, staff and students interviewed considered the integration to be working well so far, improving learner engagement and providing a better link to clinical experiences and practices.

It is apparent from student survey results, and from staff, students and stakeholders interviewed, that teaching and student support are highly effective. To pathway students to higher levels of learning there has been a strong focus on year 1 students. This includes co-teaching sessions with the Poutama academic learning services, and increasing the challenge of assessments. In addition, in order to maximise the progress and future success of second-chance learners, a goal is set that all students will achieve a B-grade average at the end of each year. While most students achieve this, those who do not are identified and a support strategy put in place for their coming year. Some of the students interviewed felt further changes could be made to the year 1 programme to ensure the transition to year 2 was a little easier.

A self-evaluative culture is evident across the programme (staff and management), with performance viewed at both individual and programme levels, with areas for improvement being well informed through multiple sources. From interviews and documents viewed, it is evident that changes initiated are monitored to gain a good understanding of their impact and any subsequent actions that may be needed.

2.5 Focus area: Certificates in Office Administration and Computing (Introductory, Intermediate, Advanced) (Levels 2-4)

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

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

Learner achievement within the suite of programmes offered in the Certificate in Office Administration and Computing is generally strong. At the Introductory and Intermediate levels, achievement rates for course and qualification completions have consistently exceeded the polytechnic's EPI targets, including the TEC priority groups of Māori, Pacific and youth. However, in the Advanced programme, overall learner qualification completions since 2012 have not met the set EPI targets. Reviews conducted by staff indicate that, as learners become work-ready following the Introductory and Intermediate programmes, attendance and engagement in the programme decreases. Changes in the course structure and learning environment, as well as a greater emphasis on preparing for work, are examples of strategies used to address some of these issues. Within the priority learner groups, Pacific learners were the only group to meet the EPI target in 2013, even though the

individual group EPI targets were considerably lower than for the total learner group.

Table 4. Course completion and qualification completion rates for the Certificates in Office Administration and Computing (Advanced) (Intermediate) (Introductory), 2011-2013						
	Course completion*			Qualification completion*		
	2011	2012	2013 (target)	2011	2012	2013 (target)
All students:						
Advanced L4 (n=25 in 2013)	82%	67%	73% (78%)	76%	62%	56% (63%)
Intermediate L3 (n=50 in 2013)	80%	68%	82% (71%)	76%	61%	77% (53%)
Introductory L2 (n=92 in 2013)	73%	76%	79% (71%)	68%	71%	74% (53%)
Māori students:						
Advanced L4 (n=6 in 2013)	50%	64%	63% (64%)	35%	59%	41% (57%)
Intermediate L3 (n=9 in 2013)	60%	58%	81% (60%)	51%	55%	80% (46%)
Introductory L2 (n=19 in 2013)	58%	67%	77% (60%)	49%	65%	70% (46%)
Pacific students:						
Advanced L4 (n=14 in 2013)	83%	49%	70% (64%)	71%	45%	55% (57%)
Intermediate L3 (n=17 in 2013)	80%	63%	77% (60%)	77%	56%	67% (46%)
Introductory L2 (n=25 in 2013)	72%	83%	68% (60%)	69%	76%	63% (46%)
< 25 students:						
Advanced L4 (n=13 in 2013)	80%	53%	65% (73%)	70%	50%	46% (50%)
Intermediate L3 (n=27 in 2013)	80%	65%	78% (65%)	70%	59%	71% (52%)
Introductory L2 (n=33 in 2013)	72%	71%	73% (65%)	69%	62%	66% (52%)
* Rates calculated as a percentage of enrolled EFTS						

Despite achievement rates in the Advanced programme not meeting their EPI targets, learners throughout the suite of programmes were gaining new skills and knowledge in preparation for employment and higher learning. Numerous examples demonstrate how learners are becoming familiar with computer software packages, working in a business environment, improving personal grooming and presentation, customer service, and project planning and office administration. In addition, learners get opportunities to work with local employers, providing them with practical experience in a real office setting. Expected post-programme pathways include receptionist, office administrator, support worker, customer service representative and, at the advanced level, office manager, team leader, secretary and personal assistant.

The confidence gained through acquiring new skills, interacting with other learners, operating in a safe learning environment, and gaining opportunities to set and pursue realistic employment and study pathways gives learners the most value. Employers collectively commented that they value the skills of learners from this programme. They have observed that the learners consistently set high work standards, which gives them the confidence to consider offering them employment or referring graduates to other agencies. At the Introductory level 76 per cent of

graduates from the July 2013 intake stair-cased to higher-level study at Whitireia. In addition, for those completing the Intermediate and Advanced certificates, a number of examples were provided of graduates gaining employment across multiple industries.

There is a strong sense of unity within the teaching staff which has created a culture of support and knowledge-sharing within the team. The team share a collective passion for teaching learners at foundation levels. The development of the Rangituhi Hub (a simulated office environment) was brought about by staff reviews and input into creating a real-world office learning environment, enabling learners to gain experience within a safe learning setting under tutor supervision. Learner feedback about the hub indicated a renewed passion for learning and a greater sense of appreciation for what is required in this type of work. The scheduling of the teaching staff across the suite of programmes enables staff to have greater engagement with learners to build better relationships and to work more effectively with those who have learning or personal challenges. Learners found that staff were approachable and helped build their confidence to stay engaged in their learning.

Self-reflection and self-evaluation are occurring within the faculty, through weekly staff meetings where learner achievement data is discussed, including attendance rates. There are strong indications that the staff are addressing issues relating to attendance, course and qualification completions, and providing appropriate pathways for employment or higher education. The development of the Rangituhi Hub is a good example of the staff, led by the programme manager, reviewing teaching delivery and devising a more integrated approach that offers learning in a real-world context. Staff visits to potential employers and whole-day observation of the working environment provide valuable feedback to ensure relevant content is taught on the programme. Stakeholder relationships are also enhanced during these visits. Overall, programme staff have a good understanding of learners who enrol on their programme and the learning issues that many bring with them. Much work is taking place at the Introductory and Intermediate levels of the programme, and the positive EPI targets are an indication of success. Work on understanding the issues across the three priority target groups at the Advanced level is still ongoing.

2.6 Focus area: Certificate in Beauty and Hairdressing (Level 3)

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

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

Learner achievement in this programme has improved steadily over 2010-2013 within all categories of learners and overall (Table 5). In 2013, all priority groups exceeded the Whitireia targets, although the overall course completion rate is slightly lower than the target. Achievement rates are significantly affected by the number of withdrawals (36 per cent in 2013), which are persistently high despite

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ongoing efforts to address contributing factors. All of the 18 graduates from the 2013 cohort also gained the City & Guilds Diploma in Beauty.

Table 5. Course completion and qualification completion rates for the Certificate in Beauty and Hairdressing, 2011-2013								
	Course completion*				Qualification completion*			
	2010	2011	2012	2013 (target)	2010	2011	2012	2013 (target)
All students (n=40 in 2013)	36%	65%	65%	69% (71%)	31%	58%	62%	60% (53%)
Māori students (n=13 in 2013)	23%	42%	64%	64% (60%)	19%	29%	62%	46% (46%)
Pacific students (n=4 in 2013)	24%	77%	50%	77% (60%)	19%	75%	50%	75% (46%)
< 25 students (n=37 in 2013)	33%	59%	61%	68% (65%)	28%	50%	58%	59% (52%)
* Rates calculated as a percentage of enrolled EFTS.								

The programme incorporates a variety of generic unit standards, which help ensure that in addition to acquiring a basic level of skills and knowledge in beauty and hairdressing, students are also gaining important skills and attributes (including communication and interpersonal skills, personal presentation, and self-management) which prepare them for entry-level jobs or further study. There is also evidence of gains being made in language, literacy and numeracy. Graduate destination information shows a variety of outcomes with a significant number of graduates progressing to high-level beauty, hair or related programmes, and a smaller number securing hairdressing apprenticeships.

The improving rates of achievement reflect a variety of effective strategies for fostering student success, including the provision of targeted pastoral and learning support and increasing tutorial capability in language, literacy and numeracy and working with youth. Attendance is closely monitored and practical support and encouragement is provided to maintain the motivation of students who are identified as at risk. The programme has a strong practical component which provides opportunities for students to apply their skills and knowledge in a variety of contexts (such as salon days, competitions, and providing hair and make-up services for local events).

Learners benefit from the industry experience of a small collegial tutorial team, who in addition to being qualified in adult education are all experienced and current practitioners in either beauty or hairdressing. Tutors gather feedback from stakeholders, including learners, share information and reflect on their effectiveness regularly to identify changes to the programme and their teaching practice.

There is good evidence that management and staff are using information gathered both formally and informally to understand educational performance in the

Certificate in Beauty and Hairdressing and to identify areas for improvement. This includes analysis of achievement rates across the two delivery sites and by funding category. Tutors have developed strategies to be more effective in responding to the needs of their learners, which are key contributing factors to improving achievement rates. More focused engagement with other stakeholders and graduates could enhance understanding of industry needs and graduate outcomes. In addition, while it is recognised that reasons for withdrawals can be unpredictable and often beyond the control of the programme team, the high numbers of withdrawals remain an issue. Enhancing the current processes used to better understand likely causal factors and finding ways to mitigate and address them will be beneficial.

2.7 Focus area: Bachelor of Applied Arts (Visual Arts and Design) (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**.

Learner achievement rates are high in the Visual Arts and Design major of this degree programme. Course completion rates across the major have consistently surpassed Whitireia targets since 2011, including Pacific and youth priority target groups. After recording a decrease in completion rates for Māori in 2012, a collaborative effort within the faculty in understanding appropriate support for Māori learners led to significant improvements in completions. Similarly, qualification completions since 2012 show steady continuous improvements for Māori and Pacific students in meeting EPI targets, while in 2013 youth rates (<25 years) showed dramatic increases. Much of the improvement to EPI targets is attributed to improved and streamlined management of the programme and a concerted effort across the faculty to ensure appropriate learning guidance and support is provided by or easily accessed from the polytechnic.

	Course completion*			Qualification completion*		
	2011	2012	2013 (target)	2011	2012	2013 (target)
All students (n=63 in 2013)	84%	80%	92% (78%)	47%	82%	118% (63%)
Māori students (n=11 in 2013)	81%	59%	99% (64%)	22%	78%	108% (57%)
Pacific students (n=7 in 2013)	97%	97%	85% (64%)	0%	183%	85% (57%)
< 25 students (n=29 in 2013)	81%	80%	94% (73%)	29%	48%	115% (50%)
* Rates calculated as a percentage of enrolled EFTS						

In addition to meeting EPI targets, good evidence sourced from tutors, stakeholders and examples of student work demonstrate that learners are gaining valuable skills.

These include increasing technical skills relevant to their chosen programme¹⁰, planning and staging exhibitions, acquiring project management skills, gaining work experience through the provision of support to local businesses, and increasing networks. The value to learners of increasing their networks has led to some graduates gaining employment and word-of-mouth referrals, with others having the opportunity of learning from their connections with high-profile companies. In the main, learners commented that the real-world learning context of the programme gave them invaluable work experience and exposure to industry experts and opportunities to set up their own business and range of products.

Teaching is highly effective. Many of the teaching staff have experiential credibility within the industry and have the reliable networks to ensure students have good access to industry experts. These contacts provide learning opportunities, industry standard critiques and a level of realism about what is expected from the industry post-graduation.

The faculty has a strong emphasis on ensuring students are fully supported throughout their studies. The structure of the programme requires first-year students to provide support to second and third-year students preparing for exhibitions. This enables first-year students to gain experience of preparing for an exhibition and gives them exposure to the requirements of exhibiting. The small class sizes encourage students to work in groups and be more engaged in class, as well as allowing for tutors to spend greater time with learners and to offer ongoing, in-depth support. This was viewed positively by learners, who commented that they benefited from having individual support from their tutors.

The management of the programme is effective, with consistent monitoring by staff, senior tutors and faculty management of learner achievement, retention and attendance statistics. The consistent monitoring, combined with staff knowledge and experience of the industry, provides good understanding of the support and guidance needed to enable students to progress successfully through the programme and within the industry. Numerous examples were provided of graduates gaining national and international exposure and success in their craft.

2.8 Focus area: Certificate in Work Skills (He Poutama Ako) (Level 2)

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

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

The course and qualification completion rates of 75 per cent for all students enrolled exceeded Whitireia internal targets set for levels 1 and 2 foundation programmes and the TEC EPI target of 71 per cent (Table 7). This is very good

¹⁰ Strands of the Visual Arts and Design programme include visual arts, photography, jewellery and digital design.

given the limited educational experience of most of the students, where in 2013, 60 per cent enrolled with little or no formal secondary school qualification. Māori and Pacific student achievement rates also exceeded their targets.

Table 7. Course completion and qualification completion rates for the Certificate in Work Skills (He Poutama Ako), 2013*		
	Course completion** (target)	Qualification completion** (target)
All students (n=20)	75% (71%)	75% (53%)
Māori students (n=14)	64% (60%)	64% 46%
Pacific students (n=6)	100% (60%)	100% (46%)
< 25 students (n=18)	72% (65%)	72% (52%)
* Delivered for the first time in 2013		
** Rates calculated as a percentage of enrolled EFTS		

Compared with other, similar foundation courses delivered by Whitireia, He Poutama Ako had the second-highest qualification completion and the third-highest course completion rates. In addition, students acquire meaningful skills that have supported them in transitioning to other future pathways, including employment and higher-level studies. These include: strong personal growth through increased communication skills; confidence, self-esteem and respect not only for others but also for themselves personally; improved leadership qualities; and high levels of trust and responsibility. These were evidenced through formal/informal staff, student and stakeholder feedback, retention and attendance rates, and satisfaction survey comments. Examples provided by staff and stakeholders included improved class participation and interaction with other students and staff, not only with the programme but with the wider polytechnic.

The positive achievement rates of the course can be attributed to the effective level of support provided by Te Wānanga faculty and, in particular, the head tutor. The tutor brings a diverse range of teaching skills and networking abilities that are well suited for working with youth and second-chance learners. The tutor has a strong understanding of how to engage effectively with youth and undertakes relevant activities that include embedding literacy and numeracy into the programme, sharing resources with other faculty at Whitireia, networking with external youth providers in the wider Wellington region, and undertaking youth and teaching-related professional development seminars and symposiums. Te Wānanga faculty includes professional and cultural support for both the tutor and the programme. The use of teaching models underpinned by Māori cultural values provides a cultural dimension that resonates with learners and supports their engagement with learning. Values include whanaungatanga (interpersonal relationships), manaakitanga (caring for others), rangatiratanga (taking responsibility and leadership), and aroha ki te tangata (respect).

As a relatively new programme, He Poutama Ako through Te Wānanga undertakes various self-assessment activities that provide a good understanding of how

students achieve, what gets in the way of their learning, and how to improve learner support. This includes greater engagement with whānau so they become more involved in supporting the learner¹¹; regular Te Wānanga staff meetings enabling staff to collectively analyse data and share ideas; and developing individual learner plans to monitor learner progression and identify in-class issues. Stakeholder engagement by the tutor – not only internally with other Whitireia staff but also in the wider community – allows for the sharing of ideas on best practice and improving programme design.

There are good examples of self-assessment processes being used that are likely to have contributed to current educational performance. The robustness and effectiveness of these processes remain uncertain at this stage, with insufficient evidence to demonstrate that these processes were sufficiently comprehensive to reach a rating of Excellent.

2.9 Focus area: Bachelor of Applied Business Studies (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 **Good**.

Overall course and qualification completion rates have remained consistently high for this programme, with Whitireia exceeding all its EPI targets over the past three years (see Table 8 below). Māori course completion rates are on a par with all students, although numbers are very small, so the performance of the individual student disproportionately affects the achievement rate.

Student achievement is closely tracked weekly, monthly and overall by semester and year. Staff closely monitor those at risk through poor attendance or achievement, drawing up an agreement with students to address issues. This is an effective process. Paper achievement rates are analysed at 'marks meetings' and reviewed, for example to detect patterns and the spread of marks to identify any irregularities in programme design and delivery.

¹¹ A formal induction ceremony that included whānau was introduced in 2014 to actively engage whānau.

	Course completion*			Qualification completion*		
	2011	2012	2013 (TEC target)	2011	2012	2013 (TEC target)
All students (n=390 in 2013)	83%	86%	84% (78%)	88%	113%	95% (63%)
Māori students (n=8 in 2013)	90%	83%	85% (64%)	0%	176%	112% (57%)
Pacific students (n=12 in 2013)	69%	83%	86% (64%)	114%	109%	203% (57%)
< 25 students (n=299 in 2013)	83%	85%	83% (73%)	81%	101%	85% (50%)
International students (n= 340 in 2013)	84%	86%	84% (internal target 81%)	88%	110%	93% (internal target 83%)
* Rates calculated as a percentage of enrolled EFTS						

There was evidence of students gaining a wide range of soft skills through the 'applied' nature of the programme, through activities such as case studies, group projects and the 'Shark Tank', where students propose a business case to a panel.

Some graduates gain employment or move on to higher study. While actual numbers are unknown, anecdotal information and success cases are collected and shared with students. While Whitireia collects or receives this information, there is no collation or analysis to determine any emerging patterns or trends.

A 'first impressions' survey has been introduced to collect students' initial feedback, and while results are positive this is a new tool from WelTec that is currently being trialled by two faculties, and it is too early to judge its effectiveness.

Employers from the industry advisory group said the programme matches industry needs very well, and they are listened to and changes are made to the programme as a result.

Staff have a wide range of business experience and are required to have or gain qualifications in adult teaching; a good rapport and respect was noted between staff and students. Research outputs are growing, as is a developing research culture.

The programme is well resourced and the content appropriate to the level; there are good library facilities and access to relevant academic databases. Auckland teaching staff and management reported receiving strong and regular support from the Porirua main campus.

2.10 Focus area: Certificate in Foundation Education (strands in Health Science and Social Science) (Level 4)

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

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

High course and qualification completion rates were achieved in 2013, with all of them above EPI targets. There was a noticeable and consistent increase in completion rates over the past few years, particularly for the three priority groups. While Pacific course achievement in 2013 dropped slightly, it remained above the EPI target. In addition, results for semester 1, 2014 show that Pacific course achievement had subsequently increased to 81 per cent, which staff consider to be the result of an increased focus on Pacific learner support. Student attendance is also recognised as being a key factor in successful achievement. Particular attention has been given to this in recent years, with related monitoring and follow-up actions used to maximise attendance.

Table 9. Course completion and qualification completion rates for the Certificate in Foundation Education (strands in Health Science and Social Science), 2011-2013						
	Course completion*			Qualification completion*		
	2011	2012	2013 (target)	2011	2012	2013 (target)
All students (n=181 in 2013)	74%	81%	85% (78%)	63%	76%	87% (63%)
Māori students (n=30 in 2013)	71%	75%	90% (64%)	68%	76%	86% (57%)
Pacific students (n=37 in 2013)	57%	71%	68% (64%)	61%	71%	89% (57%)
< 25 students (n=121 in 2013)	71%	81%	86% (73%)	53%	58%	68% (50%)
* Rates calculated as a percentage of enrolled EFTS						

The aim of the course is to provide diverse learners an introduction to tertiary education and a pathway to higher education programmes. There was good evidence to show that students develop a broad range of skills, including literacy and numeracy, as well as increased levels of confidence and communication skills, to prepare them for higher-level study. Very positive feedback was received from the 2013 graduand survey, although it is recognised that the survey timing only provides feedback on students' intended, rather than actual, destinations. However, data provided showed that most graduates go on to further study, with those who remain at Whitireia completing a degree within three to five years.

It was evident that staff and management have strong connections with key stakeholders and the broader community, enabling the programme to remain fit for purpose. A structured process is also used by programme managers to enable all key stakeholders to have input into the programme design, enabling a clear understanding of students entering the programme, as well as the skills, knowledge and attributes needed to be developed within the programme to prepare students for further study. The advisory committee plays an important role in such engagement, enabling all to have a clear understanding of the value of the

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programme to potential learners, graduates and the communities served. It is evident that there is a strong relationship with local schools to help pathway students to higher-level study and intended careers. In addition, there is a good understanding across the faculty of learner characteristics and the linkage between the foundation programme and higher-level programmes.

From sampled survey results viewed and from student, staff and stakeholder interviews, it was evident that the quality of teaching is highly regarded. Most students enter the programme from colleges. As most tutors have a background in secondary school teaching, this enables them to have a good understanding of students' backgrounds and learning needs. There is a clear focus on ensuring content and delivery approaches are contextualised to meet the learning needs of students. Literacy and numeracy is a key focus, with relevant pedagogical and content approaches adopted to develop these skills. Literacy and numeracy is embedded in the strands. Self-directed learning of students is also encouraged and developed to help pathway students to higher-level programmes.

There is a strong commitment to providing learner support. Good processes are used to identify and respond to students who may need support, including literacy and numeracy interventions, pastoral care conversations, development of individual action plans, attendance at weekly tutorials, and involvement of the Poutama support staff. Examples of changes made to student support that have been beneficial were evident from student feedback, including addressing interactive challenges arising from the environment of the new Wikipiria Katene building.

Ongoing self-evaluation is an important component of staff and management activities, which have been important contributors to the high learner achievement levels. It is clear that an evaluative framework is used to ensure teaching practices promote student success, and that self-assessment is used as a continuous improvement process by all staff. Both informal and formal feedback mechanisms are used to gather and analyse information to make informed decisions on areas for improvement. Ideas and intentions for change to the programme go through a robust process, including engagement with and support from the advisory committee. The only current areas for improvement recommended by students interviewed related to assessments being returned to them within agreed timeframes and having better Wi-Fi access across the Porirua Campus.

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Whitireia Community Polytechnic:

- Develop a more robust and consistent approach to gathering and evaluating the value of outcomes for graduates, employers and other key stakeholders.
- Enhance its processes to ensure that self-assessment practices are being used effectively on a regular basis, across and at all levels of the organisation.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

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

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQA 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).

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

www.nzqa.govt.nz

Final Report