Report of External Evaluation and Review

Tai Poutini Polytechnic

Confident in educational performance

Not Yet Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 7 December 2011

Contents

MoE Number: 6024

NZQA Reference: C05738

Date of EER visit: 19-23 September 2011

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

Location:	73-87 Tainui Street, Greymouth
Type:	Polytechnic
MoE Number:	6024
NZQA Reference:	CO5738
Number of students:	Domestic: 2,337 equivalent full-time students[1] International: 24 equivalent full-time students[1]
Number of staff:	194[1]
Sites:	Main campus: Greymouth; programmes also offered in Auckland, Hamilton, Christchurch, Palmerston North, Wanaka, and Invercargill; and on the West Coast in Westport, Reefton, and Hokitika[2]
Distinctive characteristics:	Tai Poutini Polytechnic is a national provider of specialist trades programmes (e.g. in scaffolding, industrial access, construction, and emergency management), a provider of specialist music programmes at its Music and Audio Institute of NZ (MAINZ) in Christchurch and Auckland, and a provider of employment-related programmes on the West Coast.
Recent significant changes:	A new Council was appointed in May 2010. There have been considerable changes to senior management of this polytechnic in the last two years, and there is currently an acting chief executive.

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[1] *Annual Report 2010* (2011). Greymouth: Tai Poutini Polytechnic. Student data on p. 16; staff data on p.27.
[2] *Prospectus 2011* (2011). Greymouth: Tai Poutini Polytechnic.

Previous quality assurance history:	A full academic quality audit of the polytechnic was undertaken in November 2007. A Mid-Term Quality Report was undertaken in October 2009, recommending the endorsement of Tai Poutini Polytechnic's Quality Assured status, and expressing confidence in the capability of the polytechnic to use effective self-assessment/evaluation, audit, and review processes to help maintain that status.
Other:	The polytechnic has a particular role in upskilling the existing workforce for a changing environment; in its national programmes in particular, students are older and more likely to study part-time than in other polytechnics.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Programmes for evaluation were selected from those specialist programmes offered nationally (including in one case a programme offered at more than one site), from the Music and Audio Institute of New Zealand (MAINZ), as well as programmes offered on the West Coast, to give a range of types of provision at a range of levels.

Programme	2011 EFTS	Location evaluated	Notes
Cluster: Certificate in Audio Engineering (Level 5) and Diploma in Audio Engineering (Level 6)	65 22	Auckland	MAINZ programme, offered at Auckland and Christchurch
National Certificate in Scaffolding (Level 3)	190	Auckland and Christchurch	Programme offered nationally at several sites
Certificate in Search and Rescue (Level 5)	164	Palmerston North	Long-standing programme; offered in association with external stakeholder
Certificate in Civil Plant Operation (Introductory) (Level 3)	160		24 EFTS in Palmerston North; programme offered nationally at several "Digger Schools"
Certificate in Carpentry (Level 3)	12	Greymouth	Pre-employment programme which includes theory components of apprenticeship
Certificate in Pre-Health Science (Level 3)	18	Greymouth	Developed in association with Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology; staircases to nursing and midwifery degrees, National Certificate in Veterinary Nursing etc.
Cluster: Certificate in Outdoor Education (Level 3) and Certificate in Advanced Leadership and Guiding (Level 4)	32 12	Greymouth	Flagship programmes; being redeveloped for 2012
Certificate in Health, Beauty and Grooming (Level 2)	22	Greymouth	Effectively a foundation programme, using HB&G to impart life skills and improve employability

In addition, agreed areas of focus across Tai Poutini Polytechnic were:

- Student support, including international students (principally at MAINZ) and library services;

- Governance, management, and strategy, including executive team, academic board, and Council.

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 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 external evaluation review was conducted by a lead evaluator and three external evaluators over a five-day period (19-23 September 2011). A two-person sub-team was deployed over two days (19-20 September) to evaluate music and audio programmes (MAINZ) in Auckland, and scaffolding programmes in Auckland and Christchurch. Another two-person sub-team was deployed on 20 September in Palmerston North to evaluate emergency management and civil plant operations. The full team convened in Greymouth on 21 September to evaluate West Coast programmes and non-programme focus areas, concluding the visit with a presentation to staff on the provisional findings of the evaluation on 23 September.

For each programme focus area, a series of discussions were conducted with programme management, academic staff, students, and external stakeholders (typically employers of graduates or members of advisory committees). For the focus area of governance, management, and strategy, meetings were held with the acting chief executive and the management team, the academic board, the chair and members of Council. For the focus area of student support, discussions were held with the managers of the area and front-line staff, and the evaluation of the effectiveness of those services was assisted through discussions with students in the programme focus areas. This evaluation process also included reviewing a range of Tai Poutini Polytechnic's documents.

Tai Poutini Polytechnic has had an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and submissions received have been fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Tai Poutini Polytechnic.**

The judgement of confidence in educational performance derives from the close monitoring of programmes by Tai Poutini Polytechnic's management, and the recognition by the Council for continuous improvement in this area. Such monitoring is aided by the increasingly widespread use of the continuously updated Performance Portal, which records enrolment and course completion and qualification completion data. Industry involvement reports are prepared by the deans (compiled from activities involving programme advisory committees and other stakeholder relationships at the programme level) and presented to the academic board and Council, while at management level a relationship marketing log is maintained. These activities provide the means by which management can be informed that programmes are relevant to industry, and that students who achieve the qualifications are work-ready.

Students at Tai Poutini Polytechnic achieve good course completion rates (79 per cent in 2010, 73 per cent in 2009), exceeding the sector median (76 per cent in 2010, 70 per cent in 2009). There has been a tendency for the part-time students in industry training and students who are volunteers in the community and enrolled in emergency management programmes to be more focused on attaining skills and knowledge through courses, rather than necessarily completing qualifications. This is reflected in the qualification completion rates (47 per cent in 2010, 44 per cent in 2009) being lower than the sector median (57 per cent in 2010, 51 per cent in 2009), and is a matter that the polytechnic is seeking to address, in part through the redesign of its provision and programmes, especially "in those areas where students and stakeholders require smaller training in discrete steps rather than a whole qualification all at once".[3]

The value of Tai Poutini Polytechnic's programmes to students and stakeholders is high, with a close match between the needs of students and employers. Work-readiness skills, including time management, teamwork, and leadership are evident, together with the provision of additional technical skills to enhance employability. The polytechnic recognises that there is often more to achievement than meeting the specific requirements of a course or programme and is proactive in modelling employment-like behaviours and providing additional skills to students. With small numbers of graduates, it is comparatively easy for staff to have anecdotal knowledge of graduate destinations, but there is increasing recognition of the need to develop systems to collect and track such information over time, and several comprehensive databases in selected subject areas have already been compiled.

Teachers are dedicated, and students commented on the willingness of staff to provide academic support, both within and outside office hours. Students rate their teachers at Tai

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[3] *Faculty Summary 2010* (2011). Greymouth: Tai Poutini Polytechnic.

Poutini Polytechnic highly in the annual tutor evaluation, and also rate the student experience highly at the first impressions survey and at its re-running at later stages of the programme. The first impressions survey also provides an opportunity for students to self-identify any support services needed, which are referred to the appropriate staff for follow-up. With the significant number of programmes at level 3 and below, the polytechnic uses the online Tertiary Education Commission Literacy and Numeracy Tool at the start of these programmes, embeds literacy and numeracy in teaching, and has been able to demonstrate that students make significant improvements during some programmes.

Programmes are well resourced with fit-for-purpose facilities, and staff are well supported in professional development by their managers. While staff see the benefits of a largely informal review of their competence as teachers, this needs to be shifted to a more formal process integral to the polytechnic's self-assessment framework. The management team regularly reviews educational achievement in relation to targets determined annually. However, there was insufficient evidence to show that this process was identifying areas for improvement. Council has a strong commitment to ensuring educational achievement is high, but also that the programmes and courses offered continue to be relevant to the specialist needs of industry, both nationally and on the West Coast, and provide for West Coasters' employment and staircasing opportunities to the higher qualifications offered by other tertiary educational providers.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Not Yet Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Tai Poutini Polytechnic.**

Self-assessment is a process where informed understanding of achievement directly influences organisational decision-making, prioritising, planning, and actions. Tai Poutini Polytechnic is at the early stages of self-assessment. Central to the polytechnic's approach to self-assessment are the Programme Annual Self-Assessment (PASA) and the student satisfaction surveys, cited as "cornerstones" of the evaluative process, "neither [of which] are new – both are improved – courtesy of the six KEQ[s][key evaluation questions]".[4] These tools and the way they inform decision-making have the potential to be effective contributors to a polytechnic-wide self-assessment regime, but have only been used in the current form for about 12 months, so their effectiveness remains uncertain.

PASAs are reports prepared by staff involved in the programme, in which good practices are identified and action plans for improvement documented. The action plans from PASAs are referred to the appropriate dean and faculty academic committee for discussion and delegation for action. Issues arising at this level can be referred upward to the academic board, and to the chief executive or Council as necessary. In addition, an ad hoc review of a programme can be initiated by the manager educational services at any time to attend to educational performance or other issues affecting the programme, its students, or its viability.

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[4] Schuler, A. (2011). *Tai Poutini's Self-Assessment Process*. PowerPoint presentation.

The evaluation team could see a very clear change in the written form of the PASA from an essentially audit-focused, descriptive approach in the reports of 2009 and earlier to a more evaluative approach, based on the key evaluation questions in some programme focus areas. The systems and processes that have been developed are providing a foundation for continuing development of evaluative practice, using outcomes-focused information to inform meaningful improvement. However, at the programme level there is still some distance to travel, both in terms of being evaluative rather than descriptive of activities, and also in seeking, compiling, and using information that demonstrates the effectiveness of what has been done. The team heard much anecdotal evidence that attested to continual informal reflection on teaching practice and its effectiveness, and to changes made in the delivery of learning as a consequence.

The student satisfaction survey is a survey of first impressions, mid-programme, and end-of-programme assessment by students of their experience at the polytechnic, complemented by confidential annual tutor evaluations. Implemented in this format for the first time in 2011, the information compiled from these surveys has been able to be used in addressing some immediate concerns as well as being incorporated into the annual PASA process. The first impressions survey provides an opportunity for the relevant service to respond directly to a learning need (or other pastoral need) identified by the student, with compiled data from the survey also being provided to programme management. Although it is too early to be certain of its effectiveness, this approach provides a means by which the timeliness and possible effectiveness of such interventions can be gauged. The three-stage survey also enables perceptions to be gained of whether the programme is meeting students' expectations at the start, middle, and end of the programme. If the survey can be used to identify factors that enhance or detract from students' engagement with the programme at various stages, it has a potential role to play in self-assessment. Although probably unrecognised by the students, the three-stage survey provides them with opportunities for reflection on their Tai Poutini experience, and thereby to participate in the polytechnic's self-assessment processes.

The three-stage student survey is complemented by a confidential tutor evaluation, in which students are invited to comment on the specific attributes of the tutor and to provide an overall rating. This information is made available to the tutor, but it has yet to be incorporated in a self-assessment process that would enable an assessment of the quality of teaching in a course or programme to be made in such a way that progressive improvement can be demonstrated.

In summary, the evaluation team saw strong evidence of processes appropriate for self-assessment having been developed by the polytechnic management, and being "rolled out" in 2011 to staff in the polytechnic through the modified PASA process and the student satisfaction surveys. While there is clear evidence of informal processes by which teaching and student support are enhanced, and engagement with industry, employers, and other external stakeholders is sustained, there remains a need to more formally compile and analyse such information at the programme level in order to determine whether changes are actually resulting in improved student achievement. From the evidence provided, this is likely to lead to more robust systems and processes, as well as leading to improved polytechnic-wide capability in self-assessment. Although these processes seem likely to

lead to a culture of continual improvement at the programme level, it is not currently possible to be confident that they influence the strategic direction and goals of the polytechnic.

TEO response

Tai Poutini Polytechnic has confirmed the factual accuracy of this report.

Findings[5]

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 **Adequate.**

Overall, course completion rates at Tai Poutini Polytechnic were 79 per cent in 2010, showing an increase from 73 per cent in 2009. Noteworthy too is the improvement in the polytechnic's ranking for course completions within the institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITP) sector, from seventh to fourth over the period. In contrast, qualification completion rates are modest, increasing from 44 per cent in 2009 to 47 per cent in 2010, while decreasing in rank in the ITP sector from fourteenth to fifteenth. This difference can in part be attributed to the higher proportion of mature and part-time students at Tai Poutini Polytechnic than at other institutes of technology, many of whom may be more focused on gaining skills and knowledge than on gaining a qualification. Nevertheless, the draft Investment Plan indicates the clear intention of the polytechnic to improve both course and qualification completion rates at all levels, and specifically those students targeted in the Tertiary Education Strategy: Māori, Pasifika, and those under 25 years of age.

In its provision on the West Coast, the polytechnic is committed to: "Maintain Levels 1-3 programmes to meet the basic needs of the region".[6] Half of the polytechnic's qualifications are at levels 3-4; no degree programmes are offered. This influences the extent of student progression to higher levels. In 2010 the progressions rate was 21 per cent (up from 18 per cent in 2009), which ranked eighteenth of 20 ITPs. The relatively high number of courses of short duration and the small number of pathways to higher qualifications at Tai Poutini Polytechnic also influences the retention rate: 32 per cent in 2010, 26 per cent in 2009 (both ranked nineteenth in the ITP sector).

Particularly in these lower-level programmes, there are other dimensions to student achievement that are not evident from completion statistics alone. Many students gain in confidence and self-esteem, acquire positive attitudes towards work, are introduced to participation in teams, and have opportunities to taste leadership. Two of the programmes evaluated show exactly these characteristics; in another suite of programmes students increase their capability in the volunteer community support sector

The template for programme annual self-assessment reports (PASAs) includes a prompt to evaluate learning achievement, but at this stage the reports tend to focus on descriptions of strategies for retaining students and improving teaching, with little analysis of the effect of these approaches on student achievement.

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

[6] *Strategic Directions 2009-2013* (2009, updated 2011). Greymouth: Tai Poutini Polytechnic, p. 13.

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 **Adequate.**

The most highly valued outcome for students is entry to the occupation for which the programme has provided relevant knowledge and skills. The comments of students and graduates, complemented by comments of employers, and supported, in some programmes, by comprehensive databases of graduate destinations, indicate that Tai Poutini Polytechnic enjoys considerable success in providing such an outcome. As previously mentioned, students at lower levels value not only the qualification achieved, but also the confidence gained from that success to enrol in a higher-level programme to which their completed qualification leads (e.g. Certificate in pre-Health Science leading to nursing or other health study), or to undertake an apprenticeship (e.g. the Certificate in Carpentry). For many students a significant gain in literacy and numeracy, attributed to effective embedding of these concepts in courses, is an unexpected but nevertheless valued outcome.

It is clear from members of programme advisory committees and employers that the polytechnic is adding appropriately skilled staff to the industry workforce. Moreover, suggestions made by the programme advisory committees and adopted by the polytechnic are evidence of increasing value to industry stakeholders. Examples include the inclusion of first aid and bus driver licence training within outdoor education courses, and additional driver experience and training in courses for digger operators.

Programme staff are well connected to their industry, which is of value both to students who may be required to seek work placements as part of their programme and to graduating students seeking employment. Such close and generally informal networks also benefit the design and modification of courses and programmes to reflect industry trends and changing practice (see also section 1.3 below).

While much informal, anecdotal information is collected and was available to the external evaluation team, the polytechnic needs to develop a more systematic and evaluative methodology in terms of analysis of the evidence, identification of trends, and consideration of outcomes.

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 **Good.**

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

Tai Poutini Polytechnic has strong links with the relevant industries to which its national provision in specialist trades training is directed, and with employers and other relevant external stakeholders on the West Coast. Such links are clearly evident from the stakeholder relationship log developed and maintained by the management team, and also through conversations with members of the programme advisory committees. Such links

are obviously particularly important when programmes and courses are being reviewed or redesigned. Examples include the redesign of scaffolding qualifications in association with Scaffolding and Rigging New Zealand (SARNZ), and the redevelopment of outdoor education programmes, for which it was clear there had been extensive engagement with the local West Coast tourism and guiding businesses, but also other polytechnic providers and off-Coast industries, in order to ensure that the revamped qualifications continue to meet the changing needs of industry.

While the emphasis of the polytechnic continues to be on lower-level programmes that serve the immediate needs of industry and West Coast learners, the organisation has formed relationships with off-Coast providers so that some Tai Poutini qualifications provide a pathway to higher qualifications elsewhere. An example of this is the Certificate in pre-Health Science, developed in association with Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT), which provides a pathway to nursing and midwifery degrees as well as other health-related qualifications offered at CPIT and elsewhere. In a further example, the redeveloped suite of outdoor education programmes offered by Tai Poutini Polytechnic will lead to a degree offered by CPIT or other more management-oriented programmes offered by the NZ Institute of Management. These examples indicate a commitment to match the changing needs of learners as their educational achievement increases, consistent with the aspirations of the strategic plan.[7]

The dispersed population distribution and that of potential students on the West Coast and, indeed, of students in the specialist industrial programmes offered nationwide, might appear to have made the increased use of blended delivery and online learning options likely. While many courses do use the Moodle platform for some online materials, the organisation has recognised the limitation of access to technology faced by some of its potential students, and its developments in this area are justifiably cautious.

There were only pockets of evidence where the data being collected and input from industry were being evaluated in order to gauge the effectiveness of such changes in bringing about improvements in student outcomes.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Students interviewed during the evaluation spoke highly of the commitment of teaching staff, and the tutor evaluations undertaken by students indicated a high level of satisfaction with the quality of teaching. The tutor evaluations also include the provision for students to make suggestions of how individual tutors could improve their teaching. Peer observation also provides teaching staff with feedback. In some programmes such feedback is widely shared and fosters a culture of continual, if informal, improvement in course delivery. The

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[7] A key outcome in the *Strategic Plan 2009-13* is to "continue to provide a range of pathways into tertiary education offering programmes from level 1 to 7".

extent to which teaching improvement strategies identified by such activities are included in annual performance appraisals of staff members varies across the polytechnic.

The connectedness of staff with their particular industry gives them an understanding of current trends and challenges in the industry, and enables minor changes to be made to courses on a continual basis, ensuring continued relevance of the material taught and the work-readiness of students. Staff indicated that their requests for professional development in their subject area were received favourably.

Newer staff described mentoring and "buddy" systems which introduced them to teaching practice, while at the same time undertaking study towards formal teaching qualifications, typically the National Certificate in Adult Education and Training.

Compilation of findings from the PASA and student satisfaction survey processes is used to identify some areas where teaching practice could be shared or changes implemented more widely, and these are discussed at regular "in the loop" sessions, meetings in which staff are able to participate either in person or via teleconference.

Nevertheless, there does not appear to be a coherent system for gathering evidence from a number of sources to determine the current effectiveness of teaching practice, or to monitor the effectiveness of changes implemented, or to assess the value added to teaching practice from formal teaching qualifications and professional development.

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 **Adequate.**

The polytechnic recognises the importance of providing effective support to students who are widely dispersed across the country and, accordingly, students are guided and supported in their learning by teaching staff and by specialist staff in student support services located in Greymouth or contracted from other providers for programmes offered in other centres where such services exist and are appropriate. The availability of such assistance is clearly indicated in the student handbook, together with advice about an 0800 number connected to the polytechnic for student support. This assistance is complemented by the Māori and Pasifika support person visiting all sites regularly and being available to provide guidance and support to students or put them in contact with the relevant people in their location.

The first impressions survey conducted at the start of each programme provides an opportunity for students to self-identify their need for learning support (and other pastoral care needs). Of course, this means that the survey is not confidential, but it has the advantage that these identifications of need are referred to the relevant staff in support services for follow-up, and their extent reported to programme management which can be used to identify patterns of needs that might be addressed through changes to teaching approaches.

The first impressions survey form is returned to the student mid-way through the programme and at the programme's end to build up a picture of the student's experience

throughout the programme. Compilation of this information will yield an informative view of the influences on the student experience and the ways in which that experience can be supported and enhanced, although it is still too early to be sure of the effectiveness of the survey instrument.

Staff are very aware that learning progress can be affected by literacy and numeracy issues, and generally use the Tertiary Education Commission online diagnostic tool at enrolment to identify needs in this area. Tutors described subtle techniques through which aversion to mathematics, in particular, could be countered, and ways in which literacy barriers could be circumvented during a course, while also encouraging the student towards becoming competent in reading. Some programme staff reported significant gains in literacy and numeracy as determined from using the online tool at the start and end of the course.

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

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

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

The Council and management of the polytechnic have a clear commitment to improving educational achievement, and the polytechnic's planning documents provide clear evidence of this. The educational performance indicators for 2009 and 2010 imply that recognition of difficulties in provision, and response to that recognition, has influenced course completions favourably, but has not had the desired effect in lifting qualification completions. However, the management team has recently redeveloped its annual programme self-assessment report system and a student survey system so that reports and action plans are developed at programme level, and are progressively compiled "upward" for presentation at faculty and academic board levels, and ultimately in summary form to the polytechnic's Council. This approach provides the polytechnic's governance and management with continually updated information about educational achievement (indeed, the deans' 2010 Faculty Summary notes, "Council is much more informed on the performance of the organisation than at any time in the past – and will be able to provide more effective governance guidance as a result"). The information also enables interventions to be initiated where necessary or appropriate to address issues of concern. The PASA system includes an ability to intervene within the annual cycle, and evidence of this process occurring was provided for several programmes. This is "intervention resulting from further assessment of self-assessment", but whether it contributes to improved educational outcomes needs to await the next PASA. Although these processes seem likely to lead to a culture of continual improvement at the programme level, it is not currently possible to be confident that such processes influence the strategic direction and goals of the polytechnic.

The polytechnic has also recently developed a Report Portal which is updated continually to show enrolment and achievement data, and is used by senior managers as well as being available to all staff. Apart from the obvious benefit of providing accurate and timely performance data for programmes, the Report Portal offers the potential for quantitative

comparison of educational performance at various sites at which programmes may be offered, complementing anecdotal comparisons gathered either from students who change delivery sites as a consequence of changes in employment or other circumstances, or from staff observations and inter-site meetings. However, its effectiveness cannot be evaluated until it is fully implemented.

Mention has previously been made of the stakeholder relationship log, which indicates the management team's commitment to fostering and maintaining links with external stakeholders. This mirrors involvement by staff with the industries relevant to their programmes. The annual report lists 14 appointments to boards and other industry recognitions achieved by the staff and management team, indicative of this connectedness, and vital to ensuring the industry relevance of the education offered. Council members are also actively involved in a number of enterprises, boards, and organisations on the West Coast. Management and Council clearly recognise that relationships with on-Coast and off-Coast stakeholders are of a different character, but each is of vital importance to the financial and academic viability of the polytechnic.

Programme managers noted that they were well supported in their role by heads of department and by deans (the latter of whom are on the management team).

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Certificate in Audio Engineering (Level 5) and Diploma in Audio Engineering (Level 6), Music and Audio Institute of New Zealand, (Auckland)[8]

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 for the certificate (66 per cent and 53 per cent respectively) are lower than those for the diploma (82 per cent and 79 per cent respectively). Although the graduates of the certificate programme can and do proceed to employment, many proceed to other Tai Poutini Polytechnic programmes, including the Diploma in Audio Engineering. Indeed, most students enrolling in the diploma are graduates from the certificate.

Staff teaching on the programmes enjoy effective relationships with the Auckland music industry, which also ensures their knowledge remains current, and there is an active programme advisory committee, valued for bringing new developments in the industry to the attention of staff. That said, some students and external stakeholders believed the programmes should include some emphasis on post-production activity, since that was a perceived area of increasing employment prospects. The teaching facilities are of high standard, and MAINZ is an authorised training partner for the industry recording standard Pro Tools. MAINZ has established a comprehensive database of graduate destinations which clearly shows that the majority of graduates are still working within the industry some years after achieving MAINZ qualifications, thereby confirming the relevance and effectiveness of the programmes, especially the diploma.

Tutor evaluations and discussions with students indicated a high level of satisfaction with the industry knowledge and teaching competence of staff, who also provided assistance in gaining the limited work placements required by the programme and in gaining subsequent employment. Library resources and a Moodle site are available to students. Recognising the importance of consistency between delivery sites, moderation occurs between staff based in Christchurch and Auckland. Although these programmes are beyond level 3, numeracy and literacy issues have been identified in some students, and are being addressed through the students writing reflective journals, which is reported as helping their essay-writing skills.

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[8] Sites at which the programme was evaluated are shown in brackets.

Students are primarily supported in their learning by MAINZ staff,[9] although pastoral care services can be accessed through the adjacent Auckland University of Technology (AUT). A review conducted into the use of learner support services contracted through AUT indicated that there was little use of the service and so it was discontinued. However, support staff at MAINZ are proactive in support of the students and keep records of the students with whom they engage so they can follow up as appropriate, providing an indication of the effectiveness of their interventions. These staff have also successfully initiated the development of a MAINZ Runanga and negotiated for an associated whānau room for the increasing numbers of Māori and Pasifika students enrolled in the MAINZ programmes in Auckland.

The links with industry and the graduate destination survey are used in a self-assessment of the programmes. There are the beginnings of a self-assessment approach through the PASA; however, there does not appear to be a linkage of the educational performance data to other outcomes, nor is there evidence of their use in evaluative conversations that would lead to improvements. There is also no evidence of the systematic linkage of information from student experience or tutor evaluation surveys to the quality of learning and teaching gained from peer observations of teaching and other activities.

2.2 Focus area: National Certificate in Scaffolding (Elementary) (Level 3) (Auckland and Christchurch)

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

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

For this qualification, students undertake block courses during one week per month over three months, followed by on-job assessment. Students generally take more than a year to complete this qualification. When that is taken into account, the qualification completion rate in 2010 exceeded 90 per cent. The qualification enables students to achieve the industry's Certificate of Competency. This programme meets the needs of industry through its association with Scaffolding and Rigging New Zealand (SARNZ) in the design of this programme[10], the first in a staircased series of qualifications being developed in consultation with the scaffolding industry, SARNZ, and the Department of Labour.

The programme is offered at several sites throughout New Zealand. Despite this, staff visit other sites and observe each other's approaches to teaching and assessing students. Students who have moved employer or location report a consistency of teaching between sites, but this could be usefully demonstrated by considering subsets of educational performance data. Staff engage in monthly meetings or teleconferences and also participate

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[9] MAINZ provided comprehensive statistics for the use made of the library, student support services, and mentoring services, and the trends in enrolment for international students and students with disabilities.

[10] The programme staff were involved in the preparation of *Best Practice Guidelines for Scaffolding in New Zealand* (2009). SARNZ [and approved by the Department of Labour].

in polytechnic-wide activities and meetings via videoconference. Professional development for teachers to maintain industry currency is encouraged, although it does seem that some tutors are taking rather a long time to complete their teaching qualification.

Students are mainly supported by their tutor. From 2012, all students will use the online national literacy and numeracy assessment tool in their first block course, which will assist in the identification of language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) needs. Currently, these – and pastoral care – needs are self-identified by students in the first impressions survey, and followed up from Greymouth.

Competent self-assessment is most evident in the development of the programme, resulting in setting the industry standard for training and practice. However, there is no evidence of self-assessment being directly linked to educational performance indicators, or to a programme-wide analysis of the quality of teaching or learner support. Additional assistance in sustaining a self-assessment culture was provided to this programme by an internal evaluation in 2011.[11]

2.3 Focus area: Certificate in Civil Plant Operation (Introductory), "Digger School" (Palmerston North)

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

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

Course completion and qualification rates (89 per cent and 71 per cent, respectively in 2010) well exceed those of Tai Poutini Polytechnic averages (73 per cent and 47 per cent, respectively, in 2010). Almost all students gain employment at the end of the programme; those interviewed commented on gaining in confidence with machinery generally, with work-readiness and enhanced self-confidence as additional attributes. Employers confirmed the work-readiness and practical skills of graduates, as well as their achieving of licence endorsements as part of the programme. The positive response to employer requests for the inclusion of training to load diggers onto trucks was highlighted as an example of staff willingness to extend further the existing practical skills of the programme.

All tutors have been employed in the industry, and after engagement by the polytechnic are required to undertake qualifications in adult teaching and learning, and numeracy and literacy education to complement their technical skills. New tutors are well supported by programme management and through being paired with an experienced "buddy". There is effective communication between the "Digger School" sites, with regular newsletters, team meetings for lead tutors, and an annual conference for all tutors. While these mechanisms are likely to engender consistent teaching between sites, there are no internal (i.e. inter-site) comparisons to substantiate this.

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[11] Pettengell, R., & Quigley, J. (2011). *Scaffolding Programmes. Report on Internal Evaluation.* Greymouth: Tai Poutini Polytechnic

Teaching staff support students in their learning using a range of innovative teaching and feedback strategies, and are available to students on an as-needed basis. Students interviewed found their tutors supportive, noting that they also had access to student support services if required.

There is a strong focus on ensuring support for students, and a culture of "making things happen" as soon as a need is identified. However, this has tended to occur to the detriment of a culture of systematic self-assessment leading to identifiable improvements that are assessed as effective. Areas in which this has yet to occur include: collation and monitoring of the match of the programme to employer needs (although the industry training organisation commented on the effectiveness of the programme in preparing graduates for the industry), recording and analysis of graduate destinations, the use and monitoring of the online Tertiary Education Commission's LLN online assessment tool, and systematic staff appraisals. This is an example of a programme where the polytechnic's model of self-assessment has yet to be effectively implemented.

2.4 Focus area: Certificate in Search and Rescue (Palmerston North)

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

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

The students, who are volunteers for the New Zealand Land Search and Rescue organisation, study this programme on weekend blocks, and through the courses undertaken aim to improve their usefulness to emergency management services. This programme achieves high course completion rates (84 per cent in 2009 and 2010), but very low qualification completion rates (8 per cent in 2009, 1 per cent in 2010). Feedback from students – who are principally middle-aged volunteers – placed high value on the courses ("short awards"), although many indicated that they did intend to complete a qualification, but over a longer time. Students interviewed seemed unaware of the new structure of the search and rescue programmes to which this programme now contributes. Demographic changes are projected to bring in younger students who may be more used to the expectations of qualification completion.

All staff are part-time, teaching materials are provided by the Search and Rescue Institute of New Zealand (SARINZ), which the staff interviewed rated highly. Students interviewed indicated a high level of satisfaction with the quality of teaching and the balance between practical and theory components, supported by 95 per cent satisfaction ratings from student evaluations of teaching.

This is a programme that has been beset by management difficulties in recent years, which seem likely to be resolved with the polytechnic relocating the programme to its emergency management department in Palmerston North, and introducing a new management structure to implement more robust processes and practices, as foreshadowed in the 2010 PASA, and subsequently confirmed.[12] Against this background, it is not surprising that programme

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[12] Pettengell, R., & Ritchie D. (2011). *Land Search and Rescue Programmes. Report on Internal Evaluation*. Greymouth: Tai Poutini Polytechnic.

staff are at an early stage of embedding an evaluative approach; some structures and processes have been developed, but these are not yet comprehensive or systematic.

2.5 Focus area: Outdoor recreation leadership and guiding programmes (Greymouth)

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 Certificate in Outdoor Education (COE) leads to the Certificate in Advanced Leadership and Guiding (CALG), and about 60 per cent of students make the transition from COE to CALG. Course completion rates are very high (in 2010, COE 97 per cent, CALG 95 per cent) and there are high qualification completion rates (in 2010, COE 90 per cent, CALG 83 per cent). Students commented particularly on the gaining of generic business skills and team and leadership skills which made them more employable.

Students, who come from throughout Australasia, rated the value of the qualification highly, citing the learning experience and the tutors' reputations as particularly important to this. Employers spoke highly of the quality of the programme and the positive responsiveness of the staff to suggestions made for further improvements (e.g. the addition of first aid and P-endorsement of driver licences as a part of the programme). A measure of employability is that employers are prepared to hold positions for COE graduates while they undertake CALG.

The programme advisory committee had a strong involvement in the redevelopment of the programmes, and was keen to have a progression of programmes that recognised that tour guides (as employees) from the programme eventually became business owners or employers. The redeveloped programme will also staircase to a CPIT degree (Fig. 1). Staff recognise the value in combining with other polytechnics in the provision of programmes in the outdoor recreation/education area, and are already taking a leadership role in this. The Tai Poutini Polytechnic Council also sees merit in such collaboration among South Island polytechnics.

Students rated their tutors highly in satisfaction surveys. These surveys are complemented by a strong culture of comprehensive reflection on tutors' teaching performance, including peer observation, team teaching, and 360-degree feedback activities. It is less clear that these activities feed into a systematic approach to monitoring and improving teaching practice. Staff are qualified as teachers, but expressed some dissatisfaction with the applicability of the NCAET[13] programme to their area of activity.

In these residential programmes, students use the facilities and equipment of the polytechnic at all hours, including when at leisure. Students praised highly the availability and accessibility of staff and their support in improving study skills, but it was also clear that students knew of the availability of specialist help if required. As mentioned

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[13] National Certificate in Adult Education and Training (NCAET) is available at levels 4 and 5.

previously, success rates in these programmes are high; nevertheless, there has been some analysis undertaken of the reasons for student withdrawal or lack of success, but this has not to date been used to effect changes to the programmes.

The development of the new suite of programmes in this area (Figure 1) has clearly involved self-assessment of the existing programmes and extensive consultation with stakeholders, probably to a greater extent than that observed in other programmes, but the concordance of this process with the polytechnic's model of self-assessment is less clear.

Figure 1. Redeveloped pathways in Outdoor Education programmes at Tai Poutini Polytechnic
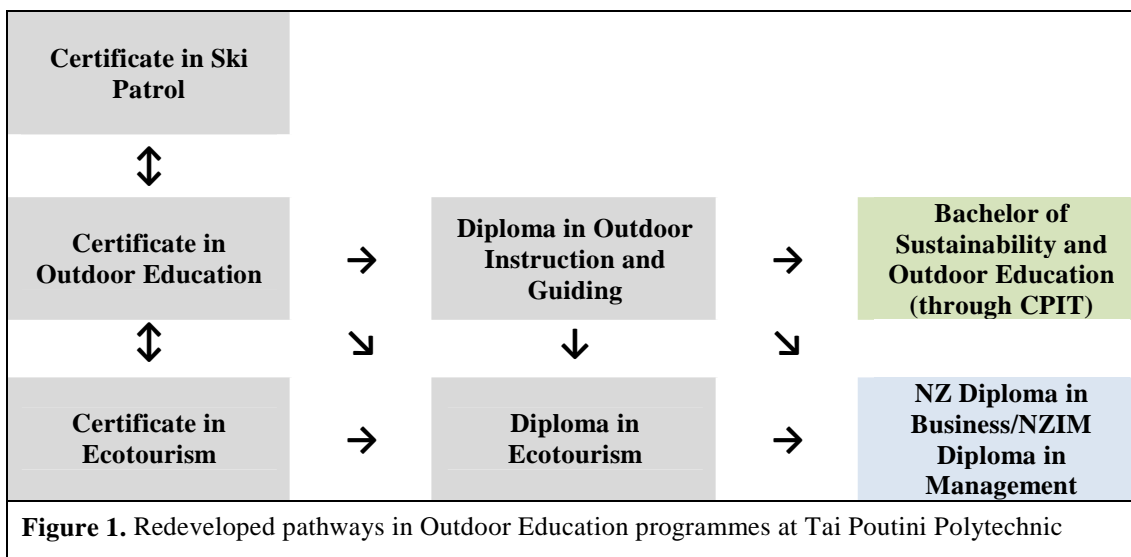
2.6 Focus area: Certificate in Pre-Health Science (Greymouth)

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

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

This programme was developed by the polytechnic with the collaboration of CPIT and the West Coast District Health Board to enhance employment opportunities for trained heath workers on the West Coast, and to provide a pathway to health-related programmes such as degrees in nursing or midwifery and programmes in mental health support and enrolled nursing. The 2010 PASA notes that 44 per cent of graduates progressed to a nursing degree, 17 per cent to other study options, and 28 per cent returned to employment.

The local aged care industry valued the knowledge and skills gained by participants in the programme while still engaged with the industry. Nevertheless, in terms of meeting the needs of those using the qualification as a pathway, the educational achievements are modest: in 2010 the course completion rate was 68 per cent (an improvement from 45 per cent in 2009), and the qualification completion rate was 31 per cent (an improvement from 10 per cent in 2009). However, self-assessment has been linked to the recent increased educational performance indicators through a range of innovative strategies. These strategies include: contextualising the content for exercise science, identification of student learning styles early in the programme and adapting course delivery and activities in response, use of the LLN diagnostic tool to identify and provide support as needed. Further to this, the polytechnic has successfully explored collaboration with CPIT and local high

schools to obtain additional teaching and resources for the chemistry and therapeutic communication components of the programme.

Staff are provided with professional development opportunities. Further training needs are identified through the tutor evaluations and staff feedback from peer observation of teaching and participating in "in the loop" meetings where teaching strategies and approaches to classroom management are shared. Students rated the principal tutor highly, and commented favourably on the rapid response by staff to issues raised in surveys and about their receiving feedback on changes implemented.

This programme has had a post-PASA evaluation to clarify the value to students, the relationship with CPIT, and its attention to the KEQs.[14] While this report confirmed much of the PASA, it provided the opportunity to further progress the development of a culture of self-assessment within the programme. It was evident that progress is being made towards a more systematic and evaluative approach to self-assessment. However, there has been insufficient time to monitor the outcomes and to implement improvements as a result.

2.7 Focus area: Certificate in Hair, Beauty and Grooming (Greymouth)

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

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

This programme uses elementary hairdressing to impart work and life skill to students. Students and graduates value their improved confidence and self-esteem and improvements in literacy and numeracy. The polytechnic considers the course completion rates (86 per cent in 2009, 88 per cent in 2010) to be excellent for an entry-level programme. Qualification completion rates are also high (82 per cent in 2009, 89 per cent in 2010). Of 23 graduates, 20 enrolled in further training or entered apprenticeships (87 per cent), five took up hairdressing apprenticeships (22 per cent), and 15 went on to further training or study. Although this is an elementary programme, staff maintain their currency of practice through attendance at hairstyle workshops and product seminars, and there is a valued relationship with industry and employers. Indeed, all apprentices in local salons are graduates of this programme. The principal tutor was an "early adopter" of literacy and numeracy initiatives, and analysis of the results from the use of the online assessment tool shows increases for some students in the programme. Teaching strategies and materials are adapted to meet the needs of learners, and peer tutor observations are undertaken to inform improvements to teaching practice.

The highly rated principal tutor is dedicated to her students, providing pastoral support in addition to her teaching, including attending Child, Youth and Family and group conferences that involve her students. She has also been instrumental in introducing the

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[14] Schuler, A., & Jamieson, J. (2011). *Certificate in Pre-Health Science. Report on Internal Evaluation.* Greymouth: Tai Poutini Polytechnic

DARE programme into the curriculum,[15] which has assisted students gaining support from external agencies. There is a strong commitment by the programme management and the polytechnic to this programme.

Informal and regular conversations among staff and with the programme advisory committee lead to ad hoc improvements, but there is little evidence of a systematic approach to self-assessment. However, that in no sense denies the value of the programme.

2.8 Focus area: Certificate in Carpentry (Residential and Commercial) (Greymouth)

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

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

This is a successful programme with good rates of course completions (78 per cent in 2010) and qualification completions (75 per cent in 2010). Equally important is the intention of the programme to make students work-ready by "replicating procedures that are found in the majority of workplaces that graduates are likely to find themselves in. Simple things that students can do that will be of immediate worth to employers are focused on", as described in the PASA and confirmed by a member of the programme advisory committee. The Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation is supportive of the programme, since all units count towards the level 4 National Certificate in Carpentry, so that when students obtain an apprenticeship only the practical units remain to be completed. Students gain practical skills by building a small house on campus; this also gives experience in communication skills, e.g. with clients, building inspectors etc. Staff also find opportunities to involve students in local building projects.

The staff are dedicated tutors and this is recognised in their being described as "awesome" by students. High course completion rates might imply good teaching, and the tutor evaluation ratings from students support this. Staff recognise the students' need for literacy and numeracy skills, and described a simple pre-test given to students before entering the programme, and there is an effective embedding of literacy and numeracy concepts in the programme. This has been complemented by the use of the Tertiary Education Commission online assessment tool. Tutors are completing formal educational qualifications and undertaking professional development through trades conferences and industry updates, with the intention of becoming licensed builders consequent on impending changes to the Building Act. The tutors are also members of an ITP carpentry forum which is developing new teaching resources.

Tutors meet continually to monitor teaching, and the wider trades team has informal "stairwell" meetings, all complemented by regular meetings with the head of department

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[15] DARE Foundation programmes develop skills in decision-making, responsibility, and esteem to enable children, parents, and their communities to make informed and supported choices for a powerful life (www.dare.org.nz)

and programme leader. While it is clear that the PASA process and the development of action plans have been adopted by this programme, there is little evidence of systematic self-assessment of the effectiveness of changes to teaching practices and other interventions.

2.9 Focus area: Student support services, including library services and support for international students

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

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

Information about the comprehensive range of student services, including campus libraries, available on the Greymouth campus and at other sites is provided to students.[16] Enquiries to students in the programme focus areas indicated that students were aware of these services. Staff have a range of methods of uncovering student needs, including self-identification through first impression and subsequent surveys, use of the 0800 telephone number, and tutor identification of needs,

Support for Māori and Pasifika students
There are visits to all campuses on a one-week-per-month basis, not only to foster links with these students but also with other students who have needs. These can then be dealt with during the visit or referred to the relevant support areas, such as disability support. The Māori and Pasifika advisor provides student support through verbal and Facebook feedback. While this informal feedback gives an indication that these visits are worthwhile, there is no more formal process to evaluate the effectiveness of any interventions that were put in place.

Library
The library at Greymouth has been relocated more centrally, and statistical evidence and student feedback indicates that this has improved the use, visibility, and operation of the library, particularly in assisting students with IT skills, referencing, study skills etc. One detailed example was staff demonstrating certain IT functions to students and then providing summary notes with screen shots to assist students with those specific tasks.

Pastoral care of students
Support staff on the various campuses are brought together through newsletters and videoconference meetings. Staff are proactive with Youth Guarantee students, holding meetings with them, bringing in speakers from Careers NZ, Work and Income NZ, helping with CVs etc.

Students with disabilities
General patterns are derived from first impressions surveys, e.g. tutors speaking too quickly, which has resulted in the polytechnic running workshops on classroom management strategies, leading to notable improvements.

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[16] *Student Information 2011. Incorporating MECNZ, Digger School, EMANZ, MAINZ.* (January 2011). Greymouth: Tai Poutini Polytechnic.

International students

A committee responsible collectively for several aspects of international student enrolment, accommodation, pastoral care, and social activities meets monthly. This not only ensures that the polytechnic meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students; it also makes sure it is keeping in touch with the international students and monitoring their progress. Enrolment procedures and information about the polytechnic and its programmes are described in an international prospectus.[17] Students may have extensive correspondence with the polytechnic before arrival, and those spoken to by the evaluation team indicated that their expectations were realised and they were well informed about support services available. International students stay in campus accommodation in Greymouth, whereas in Auckland or Christchurch they arrange their own apartment accommodation, with assistance from polytechnic staff at those campuses. International students generally perform better than domestic students, although the small number of students means that the statistical evidence is of doubtful worth.

Self-assessment

Support services are annually reviewed, with action plans for further improvements monitored half-yearly. Support services benchmark themselves against other institutions, largely through the use of informal staff networks. The first impressions survey provides good information about the self-identified needs for student support, and these are followed up with individual students, and the needs identified aggregated. The recent introduction of this survey instrument means that it is too early to establish its effectiveness beyond needs identification and response, i.e. in establishing demand for services and whether their provision makes a real difference to educational outcomes.

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[17] *International Prospectus 2011* (2011). Greymouth: Tai Poutini Polytechnic.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations arising from the external evaluation and review, other than those implied or expressed within the report.

Appendix

Regulatory 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 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.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual courses they own or provide. These criteria and policies are set by NZQA under section 253(1)(ca) 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 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 policies and criteria approved by the NZQA 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 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).

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.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/

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