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# Targeted Evaluation Report

Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology  
Limited

Date of report: 8 December 2022

# Targeted evaluation of Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology Ltd

*Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) became subsidiaries of the New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (NZIST) as part of the Reform of Vocational Education.*

*NZQA carries out targeted evaluations of NZIST subsidiaries whose external evaluation and reviews (EER) became due during the transition to the new organisation.*

*The targeted evaluations focus on areas of educational performance that will be important for both the subsidiary and NZIST in the new operating environment.*

*The limited scope of the targeted evaluation means that it will not result in organisational statements of confidence. Therefore, no EER category status will be assigned.*

# About Toi Ohomai

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*Toi Ohomai operates from campuses in Tauranga (Windermere), Rotorua (Mokoia), Whakatāne, Taupō and Tokoroa, and from a further 20-plus delivery sites. It offers around 150 applied vocational and professional education programmes ranging from levels 1-9 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework, to over 10,000 ākonga (learners) across the Bay of Plenty and South Waikato rohe.<sup>1</sup>*

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|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Region:                         | Bay of Plenty and South Waikato  |
| Location:                       | Aotearoa/New Zealand   |
| Code of Practice signatory:     | Yes  |
| Number of students: (2021 data) | Domestic: 8,635 learners (4,600 EFTS – equivalent full-time learners); 40 per cent Māori (1,866.6 EFTS), 6 per cent Pasifika (291.8 EFTS), and 5.2 per cent disabled learners (452 EFTS). Learners under 25 comprise 49 per cent of all enrolments; 58 per cent of learners are female and 42 per cent are male.<br><br>International: 557.7 equivalent full-time students |
| Number of staff:                | 593 full-time (575 permanent) and 298 part-time (137 permanent)  |
| TEO profile:                    | <a href="#">Toi Ohomai Institute of Technology Ltd</a>   |
| Last EER outcome:               | Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment (2018)   |
| Scope of evaluation:            | This targeted evaluation considered three focus areas:<br><br>1. Learner support – how effectively the subsidiary ITP supports and guides learners   |

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<sup>1</sup> The geographic boundaries of the rohe are described by Toi Ohomai in the pepeha ‘Mai i ngā Kurī-a-Whārei ki Tihirau, Mai i Maketū ki Tongariro, ki te pae o Raukawa, Tae noa ki te Kaokaoroa o Pātetere’. Self-assessment report (p2)

2. Learning assessment design and practice to assure education quality – how effectively the subsidiary ITP manages its programmes and quality assurance for the benefit of learners and other stakeholders
3. Area of strength – Māori enjoying success as Māori.

The evaluators sampled programmes in Sport and Recreation, and Automotive. These programmes and training schemes ranged from levels 4-7, which in total enrolled 461 equivalent full-time students in 2021.

MoE number: 6025

NZQA reference: C50779

Dates of targeted evaluation: 3-6 May 2022

# Summary of results

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*Toi Ohomai's commitment is to ensuring its people and communities have the best access to quality education across the Bay of Plenty and South Waikato. The ITP is committed to growing a mana ūrite (empowerment) relationship approach towards realising Māori enjoying educational success as Māori, and achieving the educational priorities of Te Pūkenga as part of the broader expectations of the Government's reforms of vocational education. Toi Ohomai provided convincing evidence of the achievement of these goals.*

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Toi Ohomai values its kaimahi and pays careful attention to their wellbeing. The ITP's modelling of desired behaviours, purposeful recruitment processes and strategic appointments ensures a natural alignment with its mission. The values of the organisation – manaakitanga, kotahitanga, whanaungatanga and toitūtanga – are consistently embodied in the actions of the institution, from the leadership to throughout the teaching and support teams.

This evaluation recognised that significant improvements have been made by Toi Ohomai in the academic and pastoral support for ākonga since the last EER. They have responded effectively to the recommendations made at that time and have provided evidence of the impact of these improvements.

The integrated team approach, consistent practices across campuses – supported by appropriate policies and procedures – and strong leadership provided convincing evidence that ākonga are being effectively supported in their learning and wellbeing. This was reinforced by feedback from ākonga themselves, and in the high levels of satisfaction in ākonga surveys.

Assessment of learning is underpinned by sound policies and supporting guidelines that are well socialised with staff. Enhancements to the academic governance structures provide confidence in the oversight of academic quality and monitoring at all levels throughout the institution. Although there is still further work needed to fully embed the improvements made in moderation, the increased understanding of the value of moderation, and staff and teams' engagement in this quality assurance activity, was well evidenced.

The equity discourse was clearly evident in conversations throughout the evaluation, in the focus areas as well as the nominated area of strength: Māori enjoying success as Māori. Toi Ohomai's shift in wording from partnership to mana ūrite speaks highly of their awareness of balancing levels of influence. Toi Ohomai clearly demonstrated its focus on equity through the support offered to Māori learners and their whānau through the early stages of enquiry

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and enrolment, and the targeted support for ākonga. The evaluators heard reinforcing examples of the institution striving to embed mātaraunga Māori principles in the learning context and content, with work progressing in the assessment area.

The institution is in a strong position to:

- effectively engage with iwi
- determine success indicators
- plan actions to deliver strategic outcomes and evaluate their effectiveness.

Toi Ohomai's enabling systems and structures and the maturity of its strategic focus position the institution well for the early transition to Te Pūkenga, to influence the future of provision across the network, and to leverage the benefits for their iwi, communities and ākonga.

# Focus areas

## Focus area 1: How effectively are ākonga supported?

### Findings and supporting evidence

Toi Ohomai's student support team provides a full range of services to ākonga, across campuses, delivery sites and for those learning online.<sup>2</sup> The student support annual plan provides guidance and direction to teams to offer seamless and integrated support. The team honours the Toi Ohomai values through the philosophy of supporting ākonga in the development of skills and knowledge for learning, life and work, while maintaining their mana and developing independence.

Services are executed through a 'one-push' model/business rule, underpinned by a matrix of services and a clarity of purpose around roles to support efficiencies. Internal referrals connect ākonga directly (with 'one push') to the appropriate staff, or external agency, for support, advice and information aligned with their needs and individual circumstances. The network of community and government support agencies is an essential component of this integrated approach. Support is offered through a variety of modes, including face-to-face, online, phone and email. The practices also allow for flexibility when appropriate and necessary to achieve the support outcomes for ākonga.

This 'one-push' model could be considered an ambitious approach. It is resource intensive, relies on integrated referral systems, knowledgeable staff, good intelligence on the external services in their communities, the ability to gain a clear understanding of the needs of learners, and to anticipate potential barriers or hardships during the student journey. Despite these challenges, Toi Ohomai is successfully executing this service delivery strategy. The evaluators consistently heard about how well socialised this model is among staff and ākonga and how effectively it is executed. There is a question of the sustainability of this model due to the potential for staff burn-out. However, Toi Ohomai appears to be mitigating this through an ongoing focus on staff wellbeing.

The support team is very connected, understand theirs and others' roles well, and are able to quickly connect the ākonga to the right person to get the support they require. There is a strong connection between the teaching teams and the student support team, which is not always observed in large institutions.

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<sup>2</sup> During 2021, Toi Ohomai delivered 20 programmes fully online (excluding eCampus) from levels 4-9.

In interviews with the evaluators, the student support team displayed a genuine passion for their work and the ākonga they support. They described the range of support mechanisms, ensuring the best fit for the support needed, and understanding that one size does not fit all ākonga.

Over the past three years, ‘engaging Māori learners better’ has been a key focus for the team’s mahi. The close alignment between the team’s approach and the outcomes of the Māori Success Strategy is evidenced through:

- Kaitātaiako facilitators providing targeted support for ākonga Māori
- their use of culturally appropriate contact and support methods, such as connection and engagement activities held on the marae
- the use of te reo by the team and in marketing and promotional materials.

Community support aims to ensure the community is better informed to help ākonga succeed; the outcomes add value to the community. Currently, the resourcing for this support is in high demand, as the access is available to and being used by ākonga non-Māori as well. The evaluation team noted that this could be reaching capacity point. This concern has been identified by Toi Ohomai which is working to increase the Māori targeted support and resourcing.

Engagement with students increased during the Covid-19 lockdowns, with use of the hardship fund forming a core component of the support strategy. Toi Ohomai received 1,200 grants applications during this period, and of those allocated, 60 per cent were to ākonga Māori to support their needs and continued engagement in learning. Outcomes data indicated that 88 per cent of these ākonga Māori successfully completed their study, which is very positive. Technology resources were delivered to ākonga, and a variety of online support mechanism were enhanced and used during this time. Wellbeing checks were available, and a click and collect library service was offered. A student lockdown learning survey was conducted in 2022 to gain a more in-depth understanding of how ākonga had found this experience. Findings have been considered by the learning quality and standards committee to inform future services.

The evaluation team heard about the consistency of support offered and available across the different modes of delivery. Support for online learners is readily available, with examples such as extensions granted, immediate feedback provided, and support with the technical aspects of being online. Work-based learners are visited regularly by their tutors and are readily able to access support from campus-based staff.

Student voice mechanisms, both formal and informal, are effective at programme and faculty level, and also at organisation level through Toi Ohomai’s survey mechanisms. The recently created Student Voice Framework

provides guidance on the administration and integrity of surveys and makes recommendations for improvements. The allocation of a business owner for each survey ensures purposeful design and use of data to inform improvements in services, programme and teaching. Response rates for 2021<sup>3</sup> were representative of all ākonga, including Māori ākonga, providing a high level of confidence in the 96 percentage satisfaction rates for support and studies at Toi Ohomai. Evidence<sup>4</sup> was provided that demonstrated examples of the institution's responses to survey feedback, such as: holding Mihi Whakatau for ākonga across all campuses to improve orientation, and 'Get Ready' workshops developed and used before the start of semester.

An improvement project involving the redesign of the application-to-enrolment journey was carried out in 2019 with input from learner voice. Significant impacts on enrolment timeframes, reducing from around 30 days to up to a day turnaround were achieved through these improvements. Learners are now able to track their applications online, with real-time updates and messages. A network of advisors is also available to assist applicants with study choices, forms and accessing documentation. These improvements appear to have contributed to the high rates of satisfaction in the institute's First Impression survey<sup>5</sup>, which confirms that learners have a positive experience as they enquire about and make study choices.

Toi Ohomai has a range of effective mechanisms for identifying and supporting ākonga learning needs. Examples include:

- self-identification of support needs on the enrolment form and follow-up by the support team
- interviewing ākonga enrolled in foundation programmes
- contacting priority ākonga, including Māori and Pasifika, disabled learners and those self-identifying with mental health issues before commencement to discuss their needs
- involving whānau in these early stages of study.

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<sup>3</sup> 2021 survey response rates. First impressions – 39.1 per cent response rate, 1,837 responses of which 26.7 per cent (292) were from Māori ākonga. Programme survey – 30.5 per cent response rate, 3,428 responses of which 25.5 per cent (995) were from ākonga Māori. Teaching survey – 41.1 per cent response rate, 4,611 responses of which 28.4 per cent, (1,309) were from ākonga Māori.

<sup>4</sup> Toi Ohomai self-assessment report p16

<sup>5</sup> First Impressions survey S1 2021, 'The first contact I had with Toi Ohomai staff made me feel positive about studying there' – 99 per cent satisfaction; 'Finding out about the course I wanted to study was easy' – 98 per cent satisfaction.

Toi Ohomai's support staff build personal relationships with these ākonga to understand both academic and wellbeing needs. Survey results<sup>6</sup> indicate that ākonga appreciate the interview processes and the opportunity to meet with staff as they begin their study journey.

Toi Ohomai provides inclusive learning support and inviting facilities across the campuses for ākonga to study, socialise and relax in. This is evidenced through the provision of library services beyond the main campuses, with regular pop-up services, access to online support through the Studiosity services, providing timely (within 24 hours) feedback on draft assignments, and face-to face support from learning facilitators and the careers and employability team for CVs and interviewing skills.

The international support team is an integral part of the student services team, providing consistent and responsive wraparound support for international learners. Toi Ohomai's learner safety and wellbeing practices gave the evaluators confidence that they are achieving the purpose and outcomes of the Code of Practice for student pastoral care. This confidence is provided through the consistent written and oral evidence submitted by Toi Ohomai and the ease with which staff at all levels were able to respond to enquiries by the evaluators. A full review of the new Code has been completed and work is underway on practices where gaps were identified.

Self-assessment practices are deeply embedded in the culture of Toi Ohomai student support services. All staff contribute to planning, and leaders are making evidence-based decisions about services and resource allocation.

## **Conclusion**

Toi Ohomai has an integrated team approach to ākonga support, with consistent practices across campuses and learning sites, supported by fit-for-purpose policies and procedures. Effective services are reducing barriers to education for ākonga and supporting them to succeed in their programmes of study. Strong leadership provides clear direction to the team, attention is paid to the impacts on ākonga achievement, and outcomes are measured and trending well. Learners reported that their pastoral and academic support needs were being well met. This is confirmed by high levels of satisfaction in student surveys. The purpose and outcomes of the Code of Practice are being achieved.

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<sup>6</sup> First Impressions survey S1 2021 – 95 per cent satisfaction with the question: 'the chance I had to come in and meet with teaching staff [interview and engagement session] prepared me well for study'.

## Focus area 2: How effectively is learning assessed?

### Findings and supporting evidence

Toi Ohomai's academic regulations, policy framework and supporting guidelines provide a sound foundation to support assessment of learning. Ākonga are provided with comprehensive information about assessment through programme handbooks and the course descriptors. Ākonga interviewed by the evaluators understood what was required for each assessment and how assessment would be marked using rubrics, where appropriate. They reported that the feedback received was useful and supported their learning. High satisfaction rates<sup>7</sup> to survey questions relating to assessment confirm this feedback.

The enhancements made to the academic governance structures since the last EER has increased the oversight of academic quality and monitoring of assessment across the institution. More staff are involved in academic committees, quality assurance mechanisms have been introduced at faculty and group level, and there is a better understanding of how these structures and processes contribute to maintaining academic standards and consistency. The academic committee's instigation of an academic risk register is a positive approach to keeping issues to the fore, ensuring actions are completed and impacts are evidenced.

The Covid-19 lockdown presented opportunities for Toi Ohomai to explore and implement innovative approaches for online delivery that safeguarded the integrity of the assessments. Tutors were well supported by the learning advisors during this transition. Evidence from discussions with staff and ākonga from the Automotive programme highlighted the ability of staff to maintain the integrity of assessment during the lockdowns. Ākonga attested that staff took the opportunity to deliver online training in automotive procedures that kept them engaged in study and helped them familiarise themselves with practices they would use in work placement after the Covid lockdown. Delivering mainly theory over the course of the lockdowns gave ākonga a sense of incremental achievement despite the restrictions of access to the learning environment and the stress Covid presented.

Since the last EER, Toi Ohomai has had a deliberate focus on improving moderation systems, practices and staff engagement in this quality assurance activity. Improvements include bringing together practices from the two

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<sup>7</sup> Programme survey results for 2018 and 2021 satisfaction rates (sample size 2,118 and 3,305 respectively). Question – 'I had assessments that helped me understand what I had to do', 2018 – 86.3 per cent, 2021 – 90.3 per cent. Question – 'I had assessments that were relevant', 2018 – 93.9 per cent, and 2021 94.8 per cent.

institutions<sup>8</sup>, socialising the policy, clarifying expectations, building staff capability, appointing moderation champions, and introducing a traffic light monitoring system to identify progress in moderation and highlight to academic leads and teams where attention was required. Internal programme health checks have been conducted in 2019, and one was planned for 2020. However, this was interrupted by Covid-19 lockdowns, and another was implemented in 2021.

Some improvements in external moderation results from NZQA and industry training organisation moderation systems demonstrate the positive impact of Toi Ohomai's focus and commitment to strengthening internal moderation and the quality of assessment (see Appendix 1). However, results from NZQA's 2021 monitoring activity (see Appendix 1) for one programme, identified some gaps and issues with assessment design and assessor decisions that need rectifying. An action plan has been approved by NZQA, and Toi Ohomai is currently implementing this plan.

The results of NZQA consistency reviews for 2021-22 show that all of Toi Ohomai's 22 submissions have been rated 'sufficient'. This indicates that the evidence relating to programme design, assessment practice and moderation results has supported the conclusions that graduates have achieved the outcomes specified in the graduate profile of the qualifications under review.

Toi Ohomai confirmed in the self-assessment report prepared for this evaluation that the internal moderation improvement process has not progressed at the pace planned. This evaluation concluded that there is still work to do, including continuing to build capability, enhancing monitoring systems, ensuring sample size provides assurance of the validity and consistency of assessment decisions, and understanding the effectiveness of actions and improvements. There are opportunities to collaborate within the Te Pūkenga network to strengthen assessment and moderation practices and outcomes.

Staff are engaging in processes to interpret and assess appropriate integration of mātauranga Māori into programme contexts and content. Some progress is being made to embed mātauranga Māori into assessments and assessment practices. Good networks and systems are available to support this work across the institution. The recently developed rubric is worth sharing.

## **Conclusion**

Assessment of learning is underpinned by sound policies and supporting guidelines that are well socialised with staff. Enhancements to the academic

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<sup>8</sup> Following the EER recommendation in 2015, Bay of Plenty Polytechnic was required to review its moderation process to address areas of identified weakness. A new system was piloted in 2017 and in 2018 was introduced to the new institution, Toi Ohomai (a merger of Waikato Institute of Technology and Bay of Plenty Polytechnic). These changes were in the early stages of implementation at the last EER in 2018.

governance structures provide confidence in the oversight of academic quality, assessment and monitoring at all levels throughout the institution. Although there is still some further work needed to fully embed the improvements made in moderation practice, the increased understanding of the value of moderation, and staff and teams' engagement in this quality assurance activity was well evidenced in this evaluation.

### **Focus area 3: What are the subsidiary's areas of strength?**

#### **Māori enjoying success as Māori**

##### **Findings and supporting evidence**

The equity discourse was clear in the evaluators' conversations with Toi Ohomai. Of particular note is the shift in wording from partnership to mana ōrite, which speaks to a high level of consciousness about balancing levels of influence. Examples in planning and delivery served as evidence of this, with iwi providing student support and iwi influencing what elements of mātauranga would be delivered by the institution and what would be delivered by iwi. Communities were able to easily articulate what they wanted to achieve in entering into relationships with Toi Ohomai, and the subsequent benefits for them which had been catered for in planning. Ākonga could see how education gave an opportunity to give back to their whānau/hapū/whenua. This was demonstrated to be a significant motivator for those spoken to. Additionally, Te Kāhui Mātauranga (strategic leadership group) provides a pathway for iwi to contribute to the establishing of the key performance indicators for the chief executive of Toi Ohomai.

Māori enjoying success as Māori was described in multiple ways relative to context, while maintaining a constant narrative of empowerment. This showed awareness of the complexity of the focus area and developed understandings of its interpretation. The transformational theme and empowerment achieved through education was strong and was tracked with relevant indicators.

Approaches were flexible and responsive to the preferences of the communities that were intended to benefit from the learning. Support provided to ākonga was provided within a journey context, recognising that success is not a product of sequential successes but of learning. The value is in the perseverance in the journey and, if need be, changes to enrolment along the way.

Marae-based delivery was highly valued, particularly in the more rural regions. There was also recognition that many Māori learners are in urban settings and from quite different backgrounds and motivations; therefore, needs were met in different ways. Staff and students both say they feel supported to be Māori to achieve success as Māori. Success as Māori within the institution includes the extension and protection of whānau bodies of knowledge. Research activity and use of funds is empowering of whānau in providing avenues to engage as a

researcher, develop whānau-desired knowledge bases, and decide on the dissemination of their knowledge.

There appears to be a very strong subscription to the mission of the organisation. Teams spoke of being well looked after and supported in their wellbeing and development. Support such as regular supervision for those in student support-type roles showed a good understanding of the nature of this work and potential impacts on kaimahi. Conversations across the various areas of the organisation were rich with examples of putting institutional values into practice. This gave confidence in a consistent understanding and support of the values and purpose of the organisation. Self-assessment practices track performance against strategic outcomes and support the abilities of kaimahi to articulate the effectiveness of their responses/work.

## **Conclusion**

The strategy was viewed by the evaluation team as brave, willing to be bold, and acknowledging the complexities and power dynamics required to achieve equity. Actions are clearly aligned to strategy and carried out in line with organisational values. Self-assessment is used effectively to evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives and work undertaken. Performance indicators align with intended outcomes and operating contexts, with examples of them being co-designed with iwi. Relationships with iwi are valued and incorporated into operating structures and planning processes.

There may be some careful navigation required in the dynamic of 'for Māori exclusively' versus 'for all via kaupapa Māori', and any experiences that dynamic may create for learners within the student body as initiatives continue to progress.

The institution strives to do as much as it can within the parameters of the system it operates within. The impact of Covid on enrolments (domestic and international) has in turn affected the institution's finances. However, this does not seem to have affected investment in initiatives for achieving equity.

The transition to Te Pūkenga has been incorporated into the institution's planning, with early adoption of templates to ease transition and alignment. Additionally, there is an awareness of the potential for talent drain to Te Pūkenga, and capability is recruited into the various workstreams. Where this has already happened, efforts have been made to maintain capability within the organisation. Toi Ohomai will likely need to continue to invest in the growth and development of people to keep up with learning demand.

Overall, the institution is in a strong position, able to effectively engage with iwi, determine success indicators, and plan actions to deliver strategic outcomes and evaluate their effectiveness.

# Appendix 1

## NZQA and industry training organisation combined moderation results for unit standards.

Data supplied by Toi Ohomai at the time of the evaluation.

2020 – samples for 54 unit standard assessment were provided for moderation  
Awaiting results for 12 unit standards

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| 23 (54%) | met standard                                 |
| 12 (28%) | met standard and required minor modification |
| 7        | did not met the standard                     |

2021 – samples for 32 unit standard assessments were provided for moderation  
Awaiting results for 1 unit standard.

|          |                           |
|----------|---------------------------|
| 24 (77%) | met standard              |
| 7        | did not met the standard* |

\* Most of these related to Primary ITO where the evidence provided was not sufficient to demonstrate the assessment was accurate. Toi Ohomai has addressed this with the teaching team.

### Programme monitoring results

NZQA conducted a monitoring activity on Toi Ohomai's Culinary Arts programme<sup>9</sup> in 2021. The monitoring outcome did not meet all the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules (specifically, 4.1 criterion 6 and 6.1 criterion 1, relating to assessment and moderation).

NZQA found that Toi Ohomai's internal moderation system has some weaknesses, and its processes do not always ensure all assessment decisions are fair, valid, consistent and appropriate for the level, given the stated learning outcomes.

The following specific issues were identified: assessment materials need improvement in the description of tasks and how these align with learning outcomes; over-generous marking was a noticeable feature with learners awarded passing marks despite insufficient evidence that all learning outcomes were fully met, especially for those assessments that require analysis and reflection; and post-assessment moderation did not identify poor assessment decisions when evidence suggests they have not met all learning outcomes.

An action plan was submitted by Toi Ohomai and accepted by NZQA, with a further follow-up required by November 2022.

Source: Quality Assurance Division, NZQA

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<sup>9</sup> Internal moderation of Culinary Arts (Level 5) (Prog. Ref: 1190560) leading to the New Zealand Diploma in Cookery (Advanced) (Level 5) with strands in Cookery and Patisserie (NZQA Ref: 2102-1). Report published March 2022.

## *Disclaimer*

*The findings in this report have been reached by means of a modified evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.*

*For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:*

- *Identify organisational fraud<sup>10</sup>*
- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*
- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

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<sup>10</sup> NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.