

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Media Design School

Highly Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 12 March 2015

Contents

Purpose of this Report.....	3
Introduction	3
1. TEO in context.....	3
2. Scope of external evaluation and review	6
3. Conduct of external evaluation and review.....	7
Summary of Results	8
Findings	11
Recommendations	24
Appendix	25

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Final Report

Purpose of this Report

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

Introduction

1. TEO in context

Name of TEO:	Media Design School
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	92 Albert Street, Auckland
Delivery sites:	Programme delivery occurs solely at the address above (multiple floors).
First registered:	9 October 1998
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diploma of Creative Advertising (Level 6)• Diploma in Digital Creativity (Foundation) (Level 5)• Bachelor of Art and Design (3D Animation and Visual Effects) (Level 7)• Bachelor of Creative Technologies (Game Art) (Level 7)• Bachelor of Media Design (Level 7)• Bachelor of Software Engineering (Game Programming) (Level 7)• Graduate Diploma of Creative Technologies (Level 7)
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes

Number of students:	At the time of the external evaluation and review (EER): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic: 509 equivalent full-time students, of whom 80 per cent are under 25 years of age; 8 per cent identify as Pasifika and 7 per cent identify as Māori • International: 137 equivalent full-time students, from over 30 countries
Number of staff:	68 full-time equivalents, with 51 of these in teaching roles
Scope of active accreditation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma in Creative Technologies (Game Art) • Diploma of Creative Advertising (Level 6) • Diploma in Digital Creativity (Foundation) (Level 5) • Diploma of Interactive Gaming (Level 6) • Diploma of Internet Architecture and Development (Level 6) • Diploma of Visual Effects and Motion Graphics (Level 6) • Bachelor of Art and Design (3D Animation and Visual Effects) (Level 7) • Bachelor of Creative Technologies (Game Art) (Level 7) • Bachelor of Media Design (Level 7) • Bachelor of Software Engineering (Game Programming) (Level 7) • Graduate Diploma of Creative Technologies (Level 7) • Graduate Diploma of Game Development (Level 7) • Graduate Diploma in Advanced 3D Productions (Level 7)
Distinctive characteristics:	Media Design School's vision is 'to be globally

recognised as a premium provider of specialist education in the creative sector’ – particularly in the fields of digital technologies and design. The PTE is owned by Laureate Universities International, being one of the six Laureate ‘design universities’; the others are located in the USA, India and Italy.

Recent significant changes: Four degree programmes have been launched and the related diploma programmes have been ‘taught out’ since the last EER. No new students have been enrolled into the superseded diploma qualifications.

Previous quality assurance history: Two NZQA degree monitor visits (Bachelor of Creative Technologies and Bachelor of Software Engineering) occurred in 2014. The monitors’ reports described the respective degree programmes as continuing to meet approval and accreditation criteria. Some recommendations were made, however, including: encouraging further development of the research culture; implementation of an external moderation plan and programme advisory groups; and building institutional capacity to provide specialised pastoral care for international students.

The last EER occurred in 2010. NZQA was Highly Confident in both the educational performance and capability in self-assessment of Media Design School.

Media Design School was subject to a routine audit by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) in August 2013. No non-compliances were identified and no recommendations made.

Other: Since the last EER, Media Design School has been purchased by Laureate Universities International.¹ This linkage has led to a significant number of new opportunities for staff at Media Design School, including cross-campus exchanges

¹ Laureate International Universities (headquartered in Baltimore, USA) is a network of more than 75 institutions in 29 countries. Specifically, Media Design School belongs to the Laureate Design Universities Centers of Excellence, with five affiliated tertiary education organisations in the USA, Italy and India. Media Design School enrolments constitute approximately 0.1 per cent of Laureate’s total student body.

and visits, new industry and academic networks and sharing of teaching expertise and curriculum knowledge.

Since 2011, staff and students of Media Design School have received more than 140 awards (national and international) for their creative output. In April 2014 Media Design School entered into a partnership with Sony, becoming the only tertiary education organisation in New Zealand where students can develop software for the PlayStation game platform as an integral part of their programme of study.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

Scope – Focus Areas and rationale		
1	Governance, management and strategy	This is a mandatory focus area in all EERs.
2	Pastoral care of international students	Media Design School is a Code of Practice signatory and enrolls a significant numbers of international students.
3	Bachelor of Art and Design (3D Animation and Visual Effects) (Level 7)	This is Media Design School's largest programme, and one that clearly reflects the vision and ethos of the PTE. The ratio of domestic students to internationals is about 3:1, affording a relevant insight into educational achievement for both groups, and associated teaching and pastoral care strategies.
4	Diploma in Digital Creativity (Foundation) (Level 5)	This programme is used as a 'foundation' programme for the above degree. Students who do not meet degree entry requirements, as well as those who wish to test out a number of creative strands before deciding on future study, are encouraged to enrol. At the time of the EER, 80

		per cent of the students were domestic and 20 per cent international. This diploma is likely to be affected by the Targeted Review of Qualifications process relating to Creative Arts qualifications.
5	Bachelor of Software Engineering (Game Programming) (Level 7)	This is a technically specialised programme, and currently Media Design School's third-largest degree programme. It is unique in New Zealand. At the time of the EER, 98 per cent of the students on this programme were domestic enrolments.

3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

Following a scoping meeting between the chief executive and chief academic officer and the lead evaluator, a meeting was held with the chief executive of Laureate Art, Architecture and Design Universities (who was visiting at the time of the EER) to explore governance and management processes. Media Design School provided an overview document (including analysis of programme performance) and examples of business processes prior to the on-site visit. The evaluators also familiarised themselves with the recent NZQA degree monitors reports, TEC performance information and recent programme applications made to NZQA.

Three evaluators conducted the on-site enquiry over three days (7-9 October 2014). They were joined by another NZQA staff member who observed the EER process for the purposes of professional development.

Interviews were held with the chief executive, senior managers, most of the full-time lecturers of the focus area programmes, student services staff (including marketing, admissions, registry, library and pastoral care staff), three industry representatives with a knowledge of Media Design School programmes and graduates, and a group of recent graduates invited by the PTE. The evaluators met with small groups of students from each of the focus area programmes, as well as a group of student representatives.

Media Design School provided a wide range of supporting documentation to the evaluators, many of which are referenced in this evaluation report, providing context and evidence regarding strategy, educational performance and self-review processes.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Media Design School**.

- Media Design School delivers programmes (at diploma and degree level) that clearly reflect and respond to the respective industry sectors and align with stakeholder needs. Graduates exhibit the sorts of transferable skills and knowledge valued by industry.
- The knowledge and experience of teaching staff maintain this alignment. Currently the curriculum for the new degree programmes is being ‘fine-tuned’ as they are progressively implemented, and high levels of student achievement and the academic integrity of the qualifications are being sustained.
- Across all Media Design School programmes, course completion rates averaged 86 per cent over 2010-2013, according to TEC data (see Findings 1.1 for more detail). This compares favourably with other degree providers. Although there has been some variation between focus area programmes and individual cohorts, these are very commendable results considering that the transition from diploma to degree delivery has occurred over this same period. This change process was well managed and required a significant amount of additional teaching time, guidance and support to maintain high levels of course completions.
- Media Design School graduates gain employment in the sectors targeted by the qualifications on offer, through having internationally portable skills in industries that are dynamic and ever-evolving. Knowledge of graduate outcomes and ongoing tracking of their progress by Media Design School is very good, but could be improved to understand the performance of specific qualifications.
- Programme and course design, and associated learning and teaching methods are particularly strong features at Media Design School, as are investment in and deployment of the information technology resources required to support effective delivery. This evaluation found that the teaching is highly interactive, challenges students, and is designed to reflect both sound pedagogy and industry work methods.
- Executive management and academic leadership at Media Design School is purposeful and empowering; the working environment very clearly supports creativity and innovation while ensuring accountability. Internal processes for planning and implementing key strategies around developing a suite of degree programmes, attracting and retaining more under-25-year-old

learners, and increasing international student numbers have been successful. New staff have been recruited with the skills and knowledge to specifically deliver on these and other organisational goals and funder targets.

- The suite of degree programmes is still being fully embedded, as are some important underpinning academic processes. Nevertheless, Media Design School is performing very well and NZQA can express continued high confidence in the PTE's educational performance.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Media Design School**.

- Under the leadership of senior staff, Media Design School has undergone a process of academic redevelopment in which programmes are now being taught by educators with professional and academic expertise appropriate to degree-level delivery. Integral to this process has been staff recruitment, targeted professional development, enhanced performance appraisal (and performance management), and the establishment of a faculty structure. Stakeholder, student and staff feedback has been used to inform these changes, which have been purposeful and effective in maintaining educational performance.
- Media Design School implements a range of targeted and well-managed surveys to gain information and critical feedback from industry, graduates, staff and students. These include thrice-yearly student surveys, alumni surveys and graduation surveys. The quality and validity of this self-assessment information is consistently high. However, this evaluation found that there is opportunity for more robust analysis of the information gathered to, for example, establish and compare how well particular programmes perform.
- At the governance and management level, a range of appropriate processes and tools facilitate planning, monitoring and review of all business activities on a tightly scheduled basis. These include a robust strategic and financial planning process, staff performance appraisal, the staff engagement survey and a range of other review and planning cycles and initiatives. The opportunity to benchmark organisational performance internationally via Laureate International Universities adds value to these processes, from which a number of useful business improvements have resulted.
- Where business processes, course structures and associated teaching methods have been reviewed, useful improvements with a focus on improving the student experience or supporting achievement have resulted.
- Media Design School does, however, have a clear opportunity to develop a more cohesive approach to monitoring and reporting achievement, one that

prioritises key indicators and uses shared language and understandings across the PTE, which can then be used to understand and evaluate programme performance. This is a significant area of self-assessment, relating directly to student achievement and outcomes, which requires strengthening.

Findings²

1.1 How well do learners achieve?

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

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

Across all Media Design School programmes, course completion rates averaged 86 per cent over 2010-2013. The median course completion rate was 89 per cent (2011-2014), according to the TEC data that Media Design School uses as key performance information. These rates compare favourably with course completions at university-degree level of 86 per cent, and with the institutes of technology and polytechnic sector, which ranged from 76 to 87 per cent at diploma and degree levels over a similar period.³ Although there has been some variation between Media Design School focus area programmes and individual cohorts, these are very commendable results considering that the transition from diploma to degree delivery has occurred over this same period.⁴

Qualification completion averaged 79 per cent over 2010-2012, again according to confirmed TEC data. As a result of the transition from diploma to degree delivery, qualification completion has declined, with numerous students being retained in study as they have continued towards a degree. However, retention was 82 per cent across all enrolments in 2013, and the PTE is closely monitoring qualification completion rates, which are increasing.

Achievement benchmarking by Media Design School is internal – against year-on-year performance, an 80 per cent course completion target, and against TEC contracted outcomes. There is also some comparison made with Laureate's other design schools. (Additional specific information on focus area programmes is detailed in Focus Areas 2.3-2.5.)

Māori students (who comprised 6 per cent of those same enrolments) and Pasifika students (5 per cent of enrolments) each achieved an 82 per cent course completion rate. Currently, Māori and Pasifika course completion rates are 100 per cent and 82 per cent respectively. Media Design School is implementing specific

² The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

³ Source: The Performance of Tertiary Education Organisations - Reports 2012-2013

⁴ Because of the significant changes to the portfolio of qualifications offered, it was mutually agreed between the PTE and the evaluation team that the course completion measure is the most useful and reliable indicator (of those included in the TEC educational performance indicator dashboards) for measuring student achievement. Few degree cohorts have as yet completed their qualification and graduated.

strategies to increase enrolment and achievement by priority groups, as required by the government's Tertiary Education Strategy. Across all programmes, retention and course completion rates for international students are on par with, or exceed, Media Design School averages in each of the last four years.

Also notable to understanding this performance, the proportion of students aged under 25 increased significantly between 2010 and 2013, from 60 to 77 per cent. This has required responsiveness and change by Media Design School, and particularly by lecturers, to meet the particular learning needs and expectations of a younger cohort. This evaluation found numerous examples of well-considered adaptations and changes to delivery to sustain educational performance for all students.

The courses and qualifications that Media Design School students complete have evolved over time, very evidently reflecting development of the creative sector locally and new technologies internationally. Employment in relevant positions within the creative digital technology and design sectors following graduation is high, and knowledge of graduate outcomes and ongoing tracking of their progress by Media Design School is good. However, wide variances in quantitative estimates around 'just how good' were noted by the evaluators, and closer analysis of these outcomes is warranted.

Protocols and sanctions around plagiarism are clear and rigorously applied where identified. Assessment modes and protocols take account of ensuring that student work is in fact their own. Internal moderation practices are also rigorous and control over assessment is well managed by the academic development staff and academic board, in conjunction with faculty staff (see also Findings 1.4). Sample records of recent student grades for conferment of two degree programmes showed a normal distribution of grades and final grade point averages. Media Design School course results and broader qualification achievement rates are certainly highly credible.

The principal and significant gap in self-assessment identified during this evaluation relates to gathering, sharing and understanding educational performance data. Across faculty leaders, lecturers and registry staff, a range of different, sometimes quite variable activities are currently being used to gather and track student achievement. Media Design School has a clear opportunity to develop a more cohesive approach to monitoring and reporting achievement, one that prioritises key indicators and uses shared language and understandings. This can then be used to arrive at evidence-based conclusions to understand and improve on programme performance. Benchmark comparisons of achievement by other, similar providers may also be of value.

Although there were some specific challenges managing the degree transition, good evidence was available that students' needs were being met and very good levels of performance were being maintained. Regardless, the significant changes to the academic portfolio are still being worked through, qualifications are still in transition, and the student demographic is simultaneously shifting.

Final Report

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

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

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

Self-assessment information (including wide-ranging and in-depth industry and alumni surveys⁵, extensive qualitative social media tracking, and solicited feedback from both graduates and industry) provided the evaluators with a picture of strong performance under this key evaluation question. The skills, knowledge and work-readiness of graduates clearly lead to employment, although there was some evidence that employment and remuneration patterns vary between qualifications. This is reflective of the dynamic nature of sectors within the wider creative sector, which the PTE monitors closely in terms of employment opportunities.

Media Design School could enhance its self-assessment information by identifying more clearly the valued outcomes for each of the specific qualifications offered. The evaluators noted that although wide-ranging and useful information was being gathered, it lacked such analysis.

Comment sought from recent graduates by Media Design School confirmed that the simulation of working practices in their programme was both realistic and had prepared them appropriately for employment. This was confirmed by both the recent alumni survey and the evaluator interviews with graduates, who observed that the workplace-like team projects, and the broad range of software they had developed proficiency in at Media Design School, gave them a skill-set that readily transferred into the workplace. In addition, a recently commissioned industry survey⁶ scored Media Design School highest for consistently producing graduates with employers' two most sought-after attributes: 'technical skills' and 'the ability to collaborate in a team environment'. Therefore, graduates have the knowledge and skills sought by industry.

⁵ 'Media Design School has prioritized developing stronger relationships with alumni, and cultivating an understanding of their career and academic success after graduation. As a first step in this process, research was conducted in Spring 2014 among all Media Design School alumni and addressed several topics including their current professional life, their views on an Media Design School education, and how an alumni association can best serve them.'
Source: alumni survey report (267 respondents representing a 9 per cent response rate).

⁶ Conducted by Colmar Brunton in 2014, and drawing from three sources a sample of 102 'creative industry' employers across New Zealand who employ and/or manage graduates. The survey sought to make direct comparisons with the skills and attributes of graduates from six of the other largest providers of design programmes at tertiary level (both university and PTE) in New Zealand.

Industry stakeholders and graduates confirmed the value of Media Design School creative outputs which have been sustained at a high volume internationally since at least the last EER. For example, films produced by Media Design School have attracted over 140 awards since 2011 from more than 80 international (short) film festivals. Faculty records and analysis of these outputs is quite detailed. Often these are co-created works involving a team approach – students across programmes of study and teaching staff. Media Design School students and graduates are also prize-winners in other media areas – for example, advertising. These awards represent high-quality products, reflect in-depth learning by students, and provide significant ‘external evidence’ of the relevance and quality of Media Design School programmes.

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

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

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

Media Design School has a stated vision and mission: ‘to deliver high quality education [and]...develop skilled graduates for the digital technology fields’. Constant interaction with the related sectors, active networks among graduates, staff expertise and creative work (which is subject to international peer critique) are fundamental aspects to successfully realising and evaluating these goals. Media Design School’s engagement with other Laureate tertiary education organisations is creating international linkages which are very likely to further strengthen the PTE and add value to the student experience, now and into the future. The match between programmes delivered, government strategies and the need for technically savvy, creative graduates was very apparent in this evaluation. TEC performance requirements are being met, as evidenced by increased and then sustained funding since the last EER.

Students are provided with a good selection of specialist programmes, each clearly relating to a particular niche within the digital creative sector. Evaluators noted that across the programme portfolio, school leavers, university graduates and those seeking entry to a new career were equally well catered for. International students are being recruited from over 30 different countries, and the students interviewed by the evaluators said they carefully selected Media Design School from a wide range of possible tertiary destinations. Multinational teams undertaking cross-disciplinary assessment projects are common, which adds value to the learning for both domestic and international students. The relatively recent move to degree offerings has attracted a wider range of students, and in particular is increasing the number of under-25-year-olds, which is a direct response to funder priorities.

Students at Media Design School are provided with excellent classroom, laboratory and relaxation facilities. Class sizes are small, allowing for successful delivery of

Final Report

the programme design. This emphasises an increasing degree of self-directed, project and team-based learning as students' progress through each level of the degree. This process intentionally reflects industry work practices. Coaching and support for students by teaching and other staff is integral to meeting the needs of a diverse student population. Student diversity is also reflected in staff diversity; staff recruitment clearly matches Media Design School goals and proprieties. Student needs are currently very well met.

Key features of self-assessment occurring to ensure continued matched needs include: robust strategic planning and financial management processes, and a refreshed programme portfolio informed by research and consultation with industry. All programmes are being delivered subject to sound academic processes and professional oversight. Refinements and modifications to programmes are occurring based on reflective processes, and as permitted within the NZQA approval framework. Media Design School has sound relationships with its respective industries, and international competition, conference and curriculum networks also ensure stakeholder needs are being met. Media Design School alumni and industry surveys are used to monitor matched need. Good mechanisms exist for obtaining critical student feedback, including regular surveys and class representatives. Appropriate engagement with industry, graduates and students is encouraged and occurs across the PTE using a coherent and comprehensive approach.

In relation to self-assessment capability and matching the needs of NZQA as a key stakeholder, Media Design School continues to demonstrate some limitations. This has been evidenced in findings from the degree monitors reports and in programme approval applications. Although Media Design School provided the evaluators with evidence that the PTE is implementing strategies and processes to address the monitors' recommendations, these gaps should be routinely identified by the PTE's own self-assessment processes. This finding contributed to the rating for self-assessment under this key evaluation question.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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

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

Students at Media Design School receive very effective teaching and are engaging in carefully structured courses designed to develop the knowledge, technical skills and professional attributes required to succeed in industry. Students interviewed described a learning environment in which 'getting feedback and getting it right' are prioritised, and asking questions is 'expected'. From their point of view, lecturers described students as 'keen...motivated' and routinely 'asking tough questions'. Scheduled online surveys have good response rates, ask pertinent questions about teaching and capture a range of relevant feedback from students. This then links

Final Report

into faculty academic meetings, as well as providing useful information for support services.

Across focus area programmes, sound programme design and carefully considered learning and teaching methods are particularly strong features at Media Design School. In particular, the teaching challenges students and requires high attendance and participation in order to succeed. A very high standard of work is expected of the students; peer and industry critique of outputs is the norm. Teamwork on project-based learning tasks and increasing self-directedness, particularly in year three, are fundamental to all the degree programmes.

Programmes are designed to reflect both sound pedagogy and also industry 'work methods' and tools; this develops the sorts of transferable skills and knowledge valued by industry, as evidenced in a recent comprehensive industry survey commissioned by Media Design School. Investment in and deployment of the industry-specific technologies required to support effective teaching (for example high-spec project management and digital design software) is also very effective. Notably, these inputs directly relate to the impressive volume and quality of the PTE's creative outputs and awards, which have brought student and staff work to the attention of an international audience.

Media Design School has recruited a significant number of additional staff – including sourcing particular expertise internationally – to deliver the new degree programmes. In addition, all staff have been encouraged and assisted to undertake directly relevant professional development: the National Certificate in Adult Education and Training (Level 5), Laureate's online learning courses, and other online software training courses. Fifteen staff are either enrolled or in proposal stage in Master's or Doctorate programmes. Impacts on and improvements to teaching have quite clearly occurred as a result, and the evaluators noted a consistent, shared understanding of the design of courses. One example of changes leading to improved achievement has been the introduction of an oral assessment mode in some components of the software engineering programme. These have allowed lecturers to check underpinning knowledge and authenticity of work as well as accuracy in calculation. Following critical reflection and review, the curriculum is being fine-tuned as the first cohorts of students complete each course and level of the new degree programmes. The oversight and documented processes for maintaining appropriate academic control and integrity of assessment are being robustly applied.

Performance appraisal and oversight of teaching by programme leaders is very sound, and regular online student surveys provide feedback on teaching, which the PTE responds to. An example of performance management arising from these processes was used to illustrate how effective current processes are. However, structured observation of teaching (including mentoring and/or coaching) would likely add value to the goals around teacher development, particularly given the numbers of new staff and the diversity of their teaching backgrounds. This

potentially links to the research strategy and increasing attention to effective 'design pedagogy' across Laureate more broadly.

Internal moderation of assessment is occurring regularly, and – based on sample moderation reports sighted during this evaluation – is thorough and covers all assessments on a scheduled basis. Although some external moderation was occurring (and the endorsement of industry peers on creative outputs is of real value), Media Design School needs to adopt a more rigorous and targeted approach to externally validating assessment.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Staff are well inducted and very clear about their roles in providing guidance and support to students. Media Design School has recruited new staff who are being appropriately inducted into their roles, many having specific responsibilities for ensuring that students are successfully supported, particularly internationals. More broadly, the admissions team has clearly defined responsibilities to ensure a high-quality student experience before enrolment and during their study. Improvements were made following the review of process for enrolment from one year of the programme to the next, and all print and web-based materials are currently being closely reviewed. The goal is that students clearly understand the programmes and only enrol in an appropriate qualification. Compliance with the Code of Practice has also been subject to a recent review. These self-assessment activities are well led, purposeful and are clearly intended to support and improve achievement.

The small class sizes at Media Design School ensure that each student's attributes and interests are known to lecturers, and personal attention and guidance is given as required. Numerous aspects of teaching involve group projects and/or teamwork. This can provide challenges as 'team dynamics' arise. A number of useful examples were provided to the evaluation team about approaches to 'coach' students within these contexts to maximise learning and ensure fairness. Students interviewed by the evaluators described a supportive, work-focused learning environment, and that processes for airing any concerns or complaints were understood and available to them. Processes for sharing student survey findings – and management responses – are informal. More intentional feedback to all students would add value to the survey process.

There was strong evidence that structured formal and informal processes respond to individual needs. In some cases, student needs have been particularly challenging or acute, requiring quite high levels of pastoral care and at times outside interventions. The evaluators noted that some of this support comes from

one or two key staff members, and there may be some risk in that. Regardless, no significant gaps were noted. The significant changes occurring to the student demographic (younger students and more international students, for example) are being responded to, but effectiveness over time has yet to be demonstrated.

Media Design School has a clear Māori and Pasifika recruitment and success strategy. As stated, achievement by these students is carefully monitored and is generally very good. Additional staffing to deliver on this strategy is in place, and other key staff within the organisation are also clear about their particular roles. Elements of Pasifika and Māori cultural expression appear throughout the campus, and pōwhiri has been introduced to exemplify to students the value placed on language and culture. Media Design School has a multicultural and multi-ethnic staff and student profile, and this is reflected in the campus culture and quality and variety of creative work produced.

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

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

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

The linkage between Laureate governance and Media Design School executive management is both very strong and specifically structured. Supporting educational achievement and pursuit of the 'global recognition' vision are integral and interrelated strategies. Media Design School has benefited from the application of more structured business tools derived from Laureate's international network of tertiary institutions. This provides a shared understanding of goals and strategies as well as clear lines of reporting. At the same time, this evaluation found sound evidence that the unique characteristics of Media Design School and the requirements of operating within the New Zealand PTE environment are understood and appreciated by Laureate. The Media Design School curriculum is being adopted at other campuses, staff exchanges have occurred, and Media Design School lecturers have made presentations to other, international faculty members.

Management and academic leadership at Media Design School is purposeful and empowering: the working environment very clearly supports creativity and innovation while ensuring accountability. Staff interviewed by the evaluators also suggested that financial information was 'more open and available', and that this linked to capital funding and resource processes. Laureate is conducting a 'global staff satisfaction survey'. Although the survey was not complete at the time of the EER, it will allow benchmarking; a senior staff member at Media Design School will be involved in the data analysis of the survey.

Internal processes for planning and implementing key strategies around developing a suite of degree programmes, attracting and retaining more under-25-year-old learners and increasing international student numbers, have been successful. Staff have been recruited with the skills and knowledge to specifically deliver on these and other organisational goals and funder targets. Investment in facilities, information technology, staff recruitment and professional development are all significant, and are linked to maintained educational performance. All of these factors are subject to critique, review and adoption of 'good practice' by the wider Laureate design schools network.

The evaluators agree with the summary provided by the chief executive that Media Design School is 'nearing the end of a transition [from its former ownership] to being a globally connected tertiary education provider'. Crucially, however, the suite of degree programmes is still being fully embedded, as are some important underpinning academic processes (for example, external moderation, formalised and ongoing industry input into the degree programmes). The necessary associated 'research culture', and the consolidation of the staffing to support key educational strategies, are also still in progress. Nevertheless, Media Design School is performing very well at this point in the change cycle, and sustaining the high current educational achievement is clearly a focus.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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

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

2.2 Focus area: Pastoral care of 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 **Good**.

As noted under Findings 1.1, international students achieve good results at Media Design School. Additional staff have recently been recruited to ensure effective and responsive guidance and support is provided to the increasing numbers of international students being enrolled. Programme information and course guidance, assistance with orientation to Auckland, and processes for locating suitable accommodation are currently meeting student needs. In considering this rating, the evaluators took due consideration of the fact that many team members are relatively new and students numbers are set to increase significantly.

Media Design School completed its most recent self-review of compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students in August 2014. This was externally facilitated and included file audits, a range of appropriate key evaluation questions, and benchmarking against another PTE's processes. Three 'areas for change' were identified, clearly delegated to staff responsible for actioning the response, and are in the process of being completed. This was an effective approach to self-review. Policy and process for entry and admission include a formal memorandum of understanding with a nearby Category 1 English language provider. Recent enhancements and improvements to self-assessment were noted (for example the demographics dashboards), and the registry was readily able to produce Media Design School-wide data on course completion and retention rates upon request; programme-specific data would enhance knowledge of performance.

2.3 Focus area: Bachelor of Art and Design (3D Animation and Visual Effects) (Level 7)

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

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

As noted within the main body of this report, the transition from diploma to degree programmes has been well managed, good evidence was available that students' needs are being met, and very good levels of performance have been maintained. Identified gaps in self-assessment relate to limitations in data analysis around shared, commonly understood educational performance data to arrive at evidence-based conclusions around programme performance. The value of graduate outcomes is a corollary indicator to this, and self-assessment information indicates high value in this focus area. Significant changes to the relatively new academic portfolio are still being worked through. Nevertheless, high course completion rates, and the high quality of third-year students' capstone assessment outputs, as externally validated by significant success in international awards, demonstrate highly effective educational performance.

Specific performance information relating to the Bachelor of Art and Design clearly show a pattern of strong performance (Table 1).

	Retention 2013	Retention 2014	Course completion 2013	Course completion 2014
All students	95%	96%	91%	89%
Domestic	93%	96%	89%	88%
International	96%	98%	92%	93%
Māori	100%	100%	93%	95%
Pasifika	96%	92%	90%	84%
*August single data return period				

2.4 Focus area: Diploma in Digital Creativity (Foundation) (Level 5)

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

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

Not specifically an exit to work programme, the Diploma in Digital Creativity has been strategically retained by Media Design School as a 'preparatory' and 'testing out [student] directions' programme. The Targeted Review of Qualifications will see the programme discontinued, but Media Design School has well-advanced plans for a replacement programme leading to a new, New Zealand qualification. Most of the students interviewed were particularly clear that the programme was meeting their needs and expectations, with reasons that matched the rationale and

programme intent as described above. Those who pathway to a degree at Media Design School, are well prepared to succeed. Those who do not re-enrol, do so with some useful skills and knowledge and potentially more clarity around future work and study options in relation to design. As shown in Table 2, retention and course completion are high, and are positive indicators of ‘met need’.

The key stakeholders identified for the diploma are internal (Media Design School degree programmes and learners) rather than industry. However, data held by the faculty and discussed with the evaluators during the EER was not found to be sufficiently robust to support the claim that ‘80-90 per cent of graduates progressed onto degree programmes’, mostly at Media Design School. Assessment of the available data indicated much lower rates of progression. This finding undermined the quality of both educational performance and self-assessment for this programme, particularly in relation to key evaluation questions 1 and 2.

	Retention 2013	Retention 2014	Course completion 2013	Course completion 2014
All students	97%	96%	87%	83%
Domestic	97%	96%	84%	78%
International	97%	97%	84%	97%
Māori	100%	100%	92%	87%
Pasifika	100%	100%	100%	88%
*August single data return period				

2.5 Focus area: Bachelor of Software Engineering (Game Programming) (Level 7)

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

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

This degree is technically specialised, and currently Media Design School’s third-largest programme. Retention of students, course completion and transition into employment are excellent. Performance has been weaker for international students, who currently make up a very small percentage of students enrolled.

The first cohort of Bachelor of Software Engineering students graduated in September 2014 (see Table 3).

Table 3. Bachelor of Software Engineering (Game Programming) – retention and completion*, 2013-2014				
	Retention 2013	Retention 2014	Course completion 2013	Course completion 2014
All students	90%	94%	80%	96%
Domestic	94%	100%	86%	98%
International**	70%	40%	48%	40%
Māori	100%	100%	77%	100%
Pasifika	100%	100%	100%	100%
*August single data return period				
**2013 – four internationals (two have transferred to other programmes; one is continuing); 2014 –three internationals (one continuing).				

According to information gathered by a Media Design School survey at that time, 12 (of 14) had already entered employment in directly related fields, with companies known to Media Design School staff. Teaching methods and the associated course structures are being fine-tuned, based on sound reflective practice, to ensure mastery of the most significant mathematical concepts by all students. Relatively recent staff appointments are adding value to the teaching and the process of fully establishing all components of the programme. Notable for this degree are the transferability of skills into other areas of high employment demand and skills shortages in information technology, such as software writers and programmers, significantly strengthening the value of the outcomes (see Findings 1.2).

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Media Design School:

1. Develop a more cohesive approach to monitoring and reporting educational achievement, one that prioritises key indicators and uses shared language and understandings. Crucially, the results can then be used to arrive at evidence-based conclusions to inform business planning, understand programme performance, and improve on it.
2. Consider introducing benchmark comparisons of educational achievement by other, similar providers.
3. Refocus graduate engagement to capture more specific knowledge of value-added outcomes, with links to specific programmes and evaluation of their relative performance.
4. Consider the introduction of structured observation of teaching (mentoring and/or coaching) linked to the stated goals around teacher development.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

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

Self-assessment and participation in external evaluation and review are requirements for maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities. The requirements are set through the NZQF Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2013, which are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review, in accordance with the External Evaluation and Review Rules (EER) 2013, as a condition of maintaining registration. The Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2013 are also made by NZQA under section 253 of the Education Act 1989 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes and/or registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013.

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

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz).

The External Evaluation and Review (EER) Rules 2013 are available at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/About-us/Our-role/Rules/EER-Rules.pdf>, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>.

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Final Report