



NEW ZEALAND QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY  
MANA TOHU MĀTAURANGA O AOTEAROA

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**KIA NOHO TAKATŪ KI TŌ ĀMUA AO!**

# Report of External Evaluation and Review

Animation College New Zealand  
Limited

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 22 June 2017

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# 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:	Animation College New Zealand Limited
Type:	Private training establishment (PTE)
First registered:	2 June 1992
Location:	Levels 10 and 11, 385 Queen Street, Auckland
Delivery sites:	Level 10 and 11, 385 Queen Street, Auckland Levels 2 and 3, TV Rotorua Centre, 1224 Eruera Street, Rotorua
Courses currently delivered:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diploma in Applied Animation (Level 6)</li><li>• Diploma in Digital Media (Level 7)</li><li>• Certificate in Computer Graphics (Level 5)</li><li>• Bachelor of Animation (Honours) (Level 8)</li><li>• Bachelor of Animation (Level 7)</li><li>• Bachelor of Creative Software (Level 7)</li><li>• Diploma in Computing and Network Support (Level 5)</li><li>• Certificate in Computing Technical and Client Support (Level 5)</li><li>• Certificate in Windows Server Administration (Level 5)</li><li>• Certificate in Networking Device Administration and</li></ul>

	Support (Level 6)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diploma in Distributed Software Development (Level 6)</li> <li>• Certificate in SQL Server Implementation and Support (Level 6)</li> <li>• Certificate in Windows Software Development (Level 6)</li> <li>• Certificate in Web Software Development (Level 6)</li> <li>• Diploma in Cloud Technology (Level 7)</li> </ul>
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	<p>Domestic: 509 students</p> <p>New Zealand European/Pakeha, 203; New Zealand Māori, 110; Pasifika, 72; Asian, 124; Other, 87</p> <p>International: 22 students</p> <p>Most students are aged between 21 and 27 years, with an average age of 22 years (65.5 per cent are male, 34.5 per cent are female).</p>
Number of staff:	38 full-time; two part-time
Scope of active accreditation:	Refer: <a href="http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/course-accreditations.do?providerId=932410001&amp;delSiteInd=0">http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers/course-accreditations.do?providerId=932410001&amp;delSiteInd=0</a>
Distinctive characteristics:	<p>Animation College offers level 4-8 courses that bridge the content and technology<sup>1</sup> industries and provide students with programmes in animation, character, storytelling, interactivity, creative software, and information communications technology (ICT).</p> <p>Animation College is the first PTE in New Zealand to offer an honours-level degree programme to service the creative sector in animation. It is also taking a leading role in New Zealand offering an applied technology programme that serves as a bridge</p>

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<sup>1</sup> 'The mission of Animation College New Zealand Ltd is to create a cluster of technology, content and business pathways which, through interdisciplinary interactions and a unique educational model, will reflect industry like no other educational cluster in New Zealand and produce graduates sought after by industry around the world.' (Animation College Self-Assessment Summary Report, February 2017)

between the creative and software development sectors through the Bachelor of Creative Software.

Animation College opened the Rotorua campus in 2015 and the Manukau campus in 2017 to provide programmes to meet the needs of the priority learner groups of Māori and Pasifika.

Recent significant changes:

At the previous external evaluation and review (EER) in 2013, NZQA was Highly Confident in Animation College's educational performance and Confident in its capability in self-assessment. Since then, there have been a number of significant changes to the PTE's ownership and structure. The organisation has had a major increase in student numbers as a result of a number of acquisitions of, and mergers with other tertiary providers, and subsequent programme development, including:

- The purchase and use of the AMES brand and AMES programmes (2015)
- Approval and accreditation of the Bachelor of Animation (2015) and the Bachelor of Creative Software (2016)
- Entered into sales and purchase agreement with South Seas Film and Television School prior to ACG acquisition (2016)
- Academic Colleges Group (ACG) purchase of Animation College and its brands (2016)
- Purpose-built campus developed at 385 Queen Street (2015).

A full organisational restructure in March 2016 has changed the staffing profile and created numerous academic and administrative roles including:

- Revised management structure including a new college dean and the development of two clear discipline lines (animation and ICT)
- Expansion of the administrative/professional team to support the growing number of staff and students on campus
- Establishment of satellite campuses in Rotorua and Manukau.

Previous quality

In December 2016, a Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) review of Animation College was undertaken to

assurance history:	<p>assess the compliance of educational delivery with TEC funding conditions as part of the TEC's standard monitoring process. The final report indicates that, 'apart from minor record keeping matters, the review found no material issues that would instigate any funding recoveries for under-delivery'.</p> <p>The first NZQA degree monitoring visit for the Bachelor of Animation occurred in February 2017. Internal and external moderation processes are embedded across all programmes.</p>
Other:	<p>Animation College has been the Winner of Westpac Auckland Business Awards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2016 – Winner of the Best Emerging Business</li> <li>• 2017 – Winner of the Best of the Best, Best Emerging Business.</li> </ul> <p>The impact of the outcomes of the mandatory review of qualifications for the ICT discipline has led to a complete review of all ICT programmes.</p> <p>Animation College programmes are endorsed by the Chinese Ministry of Education.</p> <p>As part of the parent company ACG, Animation College and AMES, South Sea Film, and Television School and Yoobee: School of Design share strategies, knowledge and practice on a regular basis.</p>

## 2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The focus areas were chosen in consultation with the college dean and represent animation programmes at both Rotorua and Auckland. The EER team also reviewed the integration of the ICT programmes from Ames Training to Animation College through the interviews with management. These programmes have undergone major changes to delivery and are to be aligned to the new qualification outcomes from the mandatory review of qualifications and to the programme structures that best meet the future needs of the organisation. The student profile at the Rotorua campus, as well as the industry engagement, is unique to that region.

The following focus areas were included in the EER:

- **International student support and wellbeing**

This is a mandatory area as there are a small number of international students (4 per cent) at the Auckland campus.

- **Diploma in Applied Animation (Level 6)** – delivered at Rotorua and Auckland

This two-year, level 6 diploma (240 credits) is delivered in both Rotorua (15-18 students) and Auckland (44-50 students) and has been the key programme for Animation College since it was approved in 2009. Delivery in Rotorua began in 2015 using a delivery model designed to meet the needs of Māori learners (14 Māori and one non-Māori in 2016).

- **Bachelor of Animation** – delivered at Auckland

This new degree programme was delivered in Auckland beginning 2014. The first graduates in 2016 were Diploma in Applied Animation graduates who transitioned to the third year. The first graduates completing the three-year programme will graduate at the end of 2017. This programme demonstrates changes in delivery methodology that align with the new organisational strategic priorities on student-centred and integrated learning.

### 3. Conduct of external evaluation and review

*All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published policies and procedures. The methodology used is described fully in the web document Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction>. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.*

The EER was conducted by a team of two evaluators over three days. The evaluators visited the Rotorua campus for one day and spent two days at the Queen Street, Auckland campus.

Prior to the EER visit, the lead evaluator met with the college dean to discuss the purpose of the EER and the scope and arrangements for the on-site enquiry. A self-assessment summary was supplied in advance of that visit. After the finalisation of focus areas, relevant key documents were supplied to the evaluation team to support the on-site enquiry. These documents included the investment plan, the TEC audit report, programme evaluation reports and achievement data.

During the EER, interviews were conducted with senior management: the chief executive, college dean, creative director; programme management; teaching staff; students; support staff; external stakeholders and advisory group members and graduates. The EER team reviewed a wide range of documentation, both paper-based and online, and was shown a demonstration of the new graduate online employment platform.

# Summary of Results

## Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the educational performance of **Animation College New Zealand Limited**.

Animation College has a clearly articulated vision to provide a unique educational model to connect its programme disciplines with its fast-growing and dynamic industry. Staff and students are actively engaged with industry and the community to work collaboratively on applied projects. External stakeholders interviewed highly value the responsiveness, agility and flexibility of this organisation for working on industry-standard projects where skills and knowledge are shared in a real-world partnership model. Engagement with industry is comprehensive. Animation College has built strong networks with external stakeholders and actively consults with them to understand and meet their needs. Innovative strategies are being used with secondary schools to attract the right students to programmes to ensure relevance to the students' career goals and aspirations. For example, the Light and Dark Secondary School Character Competition attracts more entries each year from secondary schools across New Zealand, and an increasing number of these students enrol in programmes at Animation College.

Student achievement is excellent across all groups of learners. Using the educational performance indicator data, course and qualification completions are consistently above the PTE sector median. Benchmarking with similar providers also indicates higher levels of achievement. The structure of the programmes provides pathways for students to progress to higher-level qualifications, either following an apprenticeship model or enrolling in a relevant degree. Māori participation is growing and achievement is strong, especially in the diploma programmes in Rotorua. The average course completion for Māori since 2013 has been 85 per cent which is on a par with non-Māori. Students complete their qualifications at Animation College and are well-supported to gain employment in relevant work areas. There is good evidence of the priority placed on enhancing and increasing the links with graduates to capture graduate destinations and share industry trends for currency and relevance.

The learning environment has been transformed from a teacher-led to student-centred model across all programmes over the past two years to replicate the collaboration and teamwork in the industry. The emphasis on blending the creative and technical skills and capabilities of the discipline areas, as well as the development of personal skills such as problem-solving and effective teamwork 'soft skills', provides a strong point of reference for all activities across the organisation. There is good evidence of improved student engagement which has had a positive impact on the quality of the outputs of both individuals and groups.



Animation College has undergone an organisational transformation over the past two years as a result of mergers with and acquisitions of other tertiary education providers. The vision and strategic direction of the organisation are clearly future-focused and strongly aligned to produce graduates who can transition seamlessly into the workplace and meet the standards required by industry.

## Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Highly Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Animation College New Zealand Limited**.

There is a strong commitment to embed a culture of self-assessment and reflection across all activities and campuses of Animation College. Formal and informal processes to constantly review and self-assess the value and relevance of the programmes to students, community and employers provide good evidence of high levels of satisfaction with the outcomes achieved. These processes include the use of key performance indicators, benchmarking with similar providers and within ACG, feedback from students, annual programme reviews, monitoring and moderation, reflective journals and diaries and other evidence to track progress and performance.

Individual student achievement is well understood and monitored to ensure that the needs of the students and industry are met. All students, including priority groups, have the same performance targets to ensure parity of outcomes. The organisation takes responsibility for developing clear student pathways with relevant guidance and support to ensure good outcomes for all students. For example, staff meet regularly to reflect on individual progress, share delivery strategies, and discuss how well their programmes are performing. Regular formal and informal feedback is sought from current students, graduates, key employers and industry partners to provide an overview of how well the organisation is meeting the current needs of these groups. A transparent and authentic recording system tracks the progress of quality improvements and evaluates the effectiveness of the changes.

Management has created an environment where innovation and ideas are encouraged from staff and stakeholders to support high-quality performance. External reviews are completed to provide expert advice and feedback in relevant areas to ensure compliance with best industry practice. For example, an external report on information technology infrastructure requirements was used to inform information technology requirements for the new campus. Following an internal review, all committees and programmes use documented action plans to track progress and monitor the effectiveness of improvements. The continuous focus on excellent outcomes is informed by robust data and results in an organisation with effective teaching and learning, strong industry links, consistently strong educational performance indicators, and good evidence of valued outcomes for graduates.

# Findings<sup>2</sup>

## 1.1 How well do students achieve?

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

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

Overall achievement is strong and reflects Animation College's commitment to parity of achievement and successful outcomes for students. Course completion targets apply to all students, including priority groups, and are set at a minimum level: 83 per cent in 2016 and 2017, rising to 85 per cent in 2019. Cohort-based qualification completion rates show Animation College has achieved 85 per cent for 2015/2016 compared with similar design schools (82 per cent and 81 per cent), and a large ITP<sup>3</sup> at 82 per cent.

Across the organisation, student achievement consistently exceeds organisational targets, sector medians and benchmarks. The recently acquired ICT programmes are included in the 2016 data and, while not yet final, the provisional figures indicate that, overall, the level of student success continues the highly successful overall trends. Participation rates remain relatively consistent, with the growth across the college including the combined numbers from Animation College and AMES. The growth of the priority group student numbers is significant. Māori students have increased from 31 in 2014 to 110 in 2016, and Pasifika students have increased from 15 in 2014 to 72 in 2016. Animation College has identified that course completion rates require greater commitment to ensure parity of achievement for Māori and Pasifika students. The successful outcomes at the Rotorua campus in 2016 (14 Māori students, one non-Māori, with 14 students graduating) are attributed to effective learning and teaching strategies, and high levels of pastoral care and student satisfaction. This model is being used to inform delivery strategies at the new Manukau campus which will enrol predominantly Pasifika students.

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

<sup>3</sup> Institute of technology/polytechnic

**Table 1. Animation College achievement data 2013-2016**

	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Course completions#</b>				
All	89%	87%	85%	85%
Māori	91%	83%	88%	79%
Pasifika	91%	88%	86%	76%
International students	100%	100%	100%	100%
<b>Qualification completions</b>				
All	85%	72%	86%	85%
Māori	92%	79%	67%	86%
Pasifika	67%	67%	80%	67%
Under 25	93%	90%	81%	86%
International students	100%	100%	100%	100%
Progression to higher-level study	na	na	69%	87%
Retained in study	88%	87%	69%	85%

# Animation College target is 83%

Source: TEC Performance Report (2013-2015), Animation College Self-Assessment Summary Report 2017

Across the focus areas, the evaluators saw evidence that students are gaining a range of technical and work-ready skills which are at the standard required for the industry across the regions. Some of the core industry skills being achieved by the students include self-confidence, time management, ability to work in a team with a range of complementary skills and abilities, problem-solving, and constantly challenging oneself to do more. Progress and achievement is monitored regularly at the programme committee meetings to identify where follow-up is required. The staff-student relationship is built on respect and a learning partnership approach.

The organisation has a good understanding of its performance. Animation College actively promotes and celebrates student achievement. Lecturers, managers and professional staff work collaboratively as a team to build a positive, exciting and successful learning environment to enhance student achievement and the study experience.

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

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

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

Students highly value the positive, responsive, and industry-aligned learning environment that provides opportunities for all students to achieve new skills and knowledge. Animation College has a clear focus on producing graduates with the creative abilities to work with the technical experts in employment and careers within the creative and technology sectors. The organisation uses a range of strategies to maintain and enhance relationships with industry, community and educational stakeholders to be recognised as a leader within the relevant sectors locally, nationally and internationally.

Animation College has a range of approaches to obtain formal and informal student, graduate and stakeholder feedback which is used to inform programme development and resourcing decisions, and to include industry trends within learning and teaching. These approaches include:

- Annual graduate destination reports, which have been used since 2012 to gather data on employment outcomes, the types of work graduates are involved in, and the industries employing graduates. Former students return to Animation College for workshops and forums to share their experiences with current students.
- Every few months, a number of local and international animation professionals are invited to participate in the industry's trend mapping survey. The report outlines trends that are reshaping animation, including emerging technology and preferred skills for future graduates.
- As part of outreach to external stakeholders, Animation College staff have visited 32 companies in Auckland including 11 ICT, nine animation, nine digital full-service companies, Māori TV, and community not-for-profit organisations. The resulting industry trend mapping report outlines the trends in animation production, emerging technical trends to aid the creation of animated content, and the preferred skills for future production artists.
- Animation College undertakes ongoing stakeholder engagement. These include workshops led by the external relations coordinator and creative director, and development of an industry database representing both animation and ICT discipline areas. A graduate employment platform has been developed to enable graduates and students communicate with industry professionals.
- Animation College undertakes one-off initiatives such as hosting a Māori digital hui in December 2015 to create new communities of practice.

- Animation College holds industry nights where students present their work to industry professionals. Recent comments from stakeholders indicated that they were impressed with the level and quality of achievement from year one Bachelor of Animation students under the new delivery model.

There is an emerging trend for graduates to become freelance contractors which has an impact on the skills required to manage work differently. This has informed a greater emphasis on ensuring graduates develop these skills through their learning. Graduates from the Diploma in Applied Animation either continue to further study or go on to employment. Eighty per cent of the 2016 graduates continued to the newly introduced Diploma in Digital Media (Level 7) to focus on entrepreneurship and real-world projects through the digital apprenticeship model of this one-year diploma.

The staff and students at the Rotorua campus are developing a strong reputation through engagement with iwi and the wider community to build an animation community in Rotorua. Telling stories through animation is a key theme across the various stakeholder initiatives in this region, including projects with Te Taumata o Ngāti Whakaue Iho-Ake Trust and the Rotorua Library. The growth and value of the campus is contributing to the Rotorua Lakes Council strategic intentions to develop a creative hub in the centre of the city.

Similarly, the Auckland campus is contributing to a range of community assignments such as Foster Hope and Medicine Mondiale. External stakeholders described the quality of the graduates and how well their skill-sets enabled them to undertake industry standard projects and assignments. Feedback included comments such as: 'What Animation College do is magic! – the students understand the customer brief then have the intelligence to create an animation – these students are our talent'; 'this is the only place to get the strong foundation and understand the craft'; 'the staff are really integrated industry/academics and they are instilling confidence in the students'; and 'they engage creatively with projects, are self-motivated and organised'. These statements are strong indicators of value and relevance.

Informal results<sup>4</sup> from the 2016 PTE international student experience survey indicate a high level of satisfaction across the dimensions measured. All students who responded were satisfied or very satisfied with their institution/college experience overall and with their arrival experience, learning experience and support services. This was confirmed by the current international students.

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<sup>4</sup> Email feedback from the New Zealand director of the International Graduate Insight Group reports that 'the threshold for an institution to receive official institution-level results from the 2016 PTE International Student Experience Survey was 15 responses'. Animation College did not reach that threshold so the results are considered 'informal' despite an excellent 100 per cent response rate from its 12 international students.

A review of the advisory committee terms of reference and composition was completed to include key stakeholders across both disciplines – animation and ICT – and to align with the strategic direction of the organisation. Members of this group are actively involved in workshops, guest lecturing, and sharing their expertise and knowledge with staff. This was confirmed by the members interviewed by the evaluators.

There is good evidence of valued outcomes through ongoing engagement and partnerships with industry professionals, community organisations and employers. For example, the nine Bachelor of Animation 2016 graduates were in employment related to their qualification by March 2017. In addition, 80 per cent of the 2016 Diploma in Applied Animation graduates in Rotorua progressed to the level 7 Diploma in Digital Media and are working with clients and industry in the Business Hub in Rotorua. The strong emphasis on industry relevance is highly visible through the intentional increase in activities and initiatives to build strong relationships to enhance outcomes for students and ensure they are empowered to reach their potential. The nine graduates from the Bachelor of Animation were in employment related to their qualification within three months of graduating.

### 1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

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

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

There is clear and consistent evidence that Animation College is meeting many of the most important needs of the students and stakeholders. Animation College is actively engaged with industry professionals and community groups including Māori and Pasifika, to ensure programmes are relevant and consistent with the expectations of employers and enable students to achieve their career goals and aspirations. The delivery of diploma programmes at the Rotorua campus is a strong example of how well Animation College understands the needs of that region. Almost all students are Māori (14 out of 15) with diverse backgrounds and variable patterns of success in previous education. The delivery model for this Diploma in Applied Animation group has been tailored to meet their needs while achieving the same programme outcomes as the Auckland cohort. The high level of success achieved by the first Rotorua graduates in 2016 shows the effectiveness of the learning and teaching strategies, the strong emphasis on appropriate pastoral care and support, and the high levels of student satisfaction. The majority of graduates are now studying towards the Diploma in Digital Media (Level 7) being delivered for the first time in Rotorua in 2017. Animation College is to open a new campus in Manukau to increase the levels of participation among Pasifika. In 2016,

Animation College signed a memorandum of understanding with a local secondary school to increase its understanding of student needs in that region. The learnings from the Rotorua experience will inform decisions for the Manukau initiative.

Programme growth and development is a key strategic priority for Animation College. A Programme Harmonisation Project was introduced at the end of 2015 to align and integrate the programmes previously delivered by Animation College and AMES Training. The priority outcomes for the Programme Harmonisation Project are to:

- develop a unique delivery model for interconnected programmes at diploma, degree and postgraduate levels with flexibility for industry-relevant exit points and pathways into either a level 7 practice model, or further study at levels 7 and 8.
- align programme structures to ensure graduates are work-ready for the industry where plans and projects involve interdisciplinary teams connecting content and technology through the integration of complementary skill-sets.

A full review of programme structures and delivery models was undertaken in 2015 and 2016 to change the learning and teaching environment from teacher-directed to student-centred strategies. Animation College identified that the learning environment was not producing graduates who were able to work independently, using problem resolution and project management. Students had provided feedback on the high number of assessments. Following consultation with staff and students, as well as feedback from employers, the delivery of the animation programmes were refocused for 2016. The programme reviews for 2016 support the changes for both the student-centred learning and teaching model and the coherent pathways resulting from the realignment. The reviews of the ICT programmes will be completed in 2017 for delivery in 2018 and will follow the same project model. Animation students can now pathway from the two-year, level 6 diploma to a level 7 diploma delivered as a digital apprenticeship model, or to the Bachelor of Animation. The first graduates of the Bachelor of Animation in 2016 had transitioned from successfully completing the level 6 diploma. The Bachelor of Creative Software began mid-2016 and has been designed as the first qualification bringing animation and ICT together.

During the EER interviews, staff and students were enthusiastic about the success of the realignment. Consistent themes were the high level of student engagement in their learning, the value of applying knowledge and skills to a well-defined brief, and having the lecturer monitor their progress and support problem-solving on a daily basis. Other strengths included effective collaboration within class groups, the high level of pastoral care and support received when needed, the value of

'rushes'<sup>5</sup> to provide critical feedback on their work, and the involvement with graduates and industry professionals throughout the programme. Many students commented on their achievements as being well beyond what they thought was possible. These are strong indicators of how well Animation College programmes are meeting the needs of the students.

Programme design and outcomes enable regular access to industry partners and external stakeholders with strong relationships being developed as a result of the increasing market for animation skills and techniques. Staff and students are involved in community and commercial productions and advertising activities and Animation College is building a reputation for being responsive, flexible and agile to approaches from industry and the community. The outcomes being achieved at Animation College are receiving positive national media attention.<sup>6</sup> External groups are approaching Animation College for students to take on projects such as specific animation clips for the New Zealand Police, Victoria University and Māori Television.

A range of approaches are used to strengthen learning and teaching skills and capabilities, and there are many opportunities for staff to share their practice. These include teaching across disciplines to model the connectedness of animation and ICT, co-teaching, running workshops on the use of the learning management system (Moodle), focused retreats, collaborative research projects, shared office space, and completing teaching qualifications. Moodle is the key communication tool, giving students access to programme resources, materials, videos, student discussions and staff discussions to enable flexible, anytime/anywhere access to communicate with others on relevant issues. Strategies to reflect on performance include professional journals, peer observations and student exhibitions, which all provide evidence for the annual performance appraisal. External stakeholders recognise the strength of the staff-student relationships and how well they reflect the real work environment.

Comprehensive plans for moderation of assessment are being followed, with good evidence of pre- and post-moderation outcomes to ensure assessments are fair and appropriate. The first NZQA degree monitoring visit has provided feedback on the initial delivery of the degree following its approval in late 2015. While there are still areas to be strengthened, Animation College has a clear plan of action to implement the required improvements.

At the beginning of a programme of study, students complete an individual letter of intent to identify their background, goals, particular interests and aspirations to provide a context for learning for their lecturers. Responsiveness to student feedback is strong, and the evaluators saw good examples of changes made

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<sup>5</sup> A 'rush' is a learning activity where students critique each other's creative work and provide feedback on strengths and improvements.

<sup>6</sup> Refer Animation College website [www.animationcollege.co.nz](http://www.animationcollege.co.nz)



following feedback. For example, the sequence of delivery of interactive narrative and production was changed from being sequential to being delivered concurrently, and timetable changes have been made to align specific resources with the integrated delivery mode.

#### 1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

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

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

The Animation College learning environment is strongly focused on a student-centred campus based on the core values of the organisation to lead to successful outcomes for every student. There is good evidence that students receive individual support from lecturers and other staff on a daily basis to discuss techniques and progress, to respond to queries, and to encourage skill and capability development.

Comprehensive course information and expectations are provided to all students through interviews prior to starting the course of study, on the website and the learning management platform (Moodle). Orientation provides good opportunities for students to meet other students, and to value the diversity of the student cohort. As well as the initial orientation, international students are provided with an additional dedicated workshop four weeks into their study to follow through on how well they have settled into their programme and into the new country. Animation College is well aware of its responsibilities to support the international students' safety and wellbeing in areas such as accommodation, attendance, family and study issues. Key staff have clear responsibilities to provide this personal support to the students when this is required. Culturally responsive support is available to Māori students.

Strong personal support is provided to ensure students attend, and are engaged and achieving. Attendance is monitored closely and support staff are in regular contact with any student who is absent. Students understand attendance requirements and the availability of support. Flexible solutions are provided to unexpected personal issues to ensure continuity of learning. Students feel they have a direct line to campus management, support staff and lecturers through a number of feedback opportunities available to them. Student surveys, a student representative network, student journals and shared campus facilities are some of the feedback strategies used. The journals are also used to develop concepts and identify time taken to complete certain tasks in preparation for future work opportunities. For example, students were concerned about the outdated

computers and discussed this with management. Immediate action resulted in new computers being installed within a week.

Regular feedback on submitted work is a key element in creative skill development. Individual feedback from the lecturer is a regular occurrence, as is students critiquing other students' work through the 'rushes'. Learning how to give and receive critical feedback is an essential skill for all students to enable the presentation of their ideas and creative work to external clients.

### 1.5 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 **Excellent**.

Animation College has a clearly articulated vision, strategy and purpose developed as a result of consultation and collaboration with industry and other stakeholders. The vision and values are actively embedded in all aspects of the organisation to support and strengthen the graduate outcomes. Over the past three years, the organisation has transformed its educational delivery model and management structure through careful planning and targeted decision-making. Staff roles and responsibilities and organisational systems and processes have been reviewed and realigned to cater for the growth resulting from mergers and acquisitions and to focus on the future needs of a rapidly growing global industry.

Leadership from senior management has been key to managing the challenges of integrating different institutional cultures, managing growth, and improving communication strategies and systems to provide transparency and involvement for all staff in the implementation of the changes. Animation College has effectively managed the transformation process, with students, staff, management and stakeholders all feeling engaged, informed and part of an emerging and resilient organisation. The review of the academic decision-making structure has resulted in changes to the academic and programme committees. Action plans are used for committees to track and monitor responsibility and progress on the implementation of decisions.

The new organisational structure was introduced in May 2016 to align with the strategic direction of the organisation and enable the two programme strands (animation and ICT) to focus on student-centred learning and greater opportunities for collaboration within Animation College and across ACG. This included a renewed focus on quality, with systematic, evidence-based decision-making to inform programme development, facilities, partnerships and staff appointments.

Staff are highly valued and management places a high priority on professional development for all staff. Highly qualified and industry-experienced staff are recruited to support the achievement of the organisational vision for interdisciplinary interactions between creativity, technology and business. A comprehensive programme of interactive workshops is designed to provide opportunities for staff to evaluate different learning and teaching approaches, embrace online teaching tools, and address the challenges of improving student success in diverse, collaborative and inclusive learning environments. The recent addition of the teaching and learning advisor role aims to provide leadership and support to staff in the continuing development of student-centred learning and teaching strategies. There is a clear focus on staff professional development and engagement, e-learning innovations, and building soft skills into programme delivery. Research activity is well supported and aligns with the need to keep abreast of industry trends. A highly effective performance and development model is being implemented, with regular performance conversations at review points to reflect on progress against the achievement of performance goals including research and professional development. This reflective and continuous improvement focus is contributing to a community of practice where staff are fully engaged in sharing knowledge and practice to enhance the learning environment.

The organisation clearly understands its responsibility for the progress and welfare of international students and is structuring its support strategies to meet the predicted and intentional growth in this area. There is close cooperation between the schools and colleges within ACG to share knowledge and expertise in dealing with the range of requirements. For example, an international student advisor works across two colleges to provide international student support and is currently training as an immigration advisor to add this knowledge and experience to the international team.

Animation College is on a trajectory of growth and is constantly looking at international trends to ensure the organisation is well-prepared for the future needs of both industry and the students. The highly effective leadership team is clearly focused on the vision and strategic priorities and having everyone moving in the same direction through collaboration, consultation, communication and transparent decision-making.

Overall, Animation College is a strongly reflective organisation, using and analysing a range of feedback and active research to fully understand the impact of changes and identify relevant trends. Staff, students and stakeholders are regularly consulted and involved in new developments. The design of the learning environment is strongly matched to the mission and vision of the organisation. There is good evidence of an inclusive, comprehensive and systematic approach to self-assessment through a range of reflective activities, informal and formal, which are embedded in all levels of the organisation.

## 1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

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

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

Management and staff are actively involved in ensuring that Animation College manages its compliance accountabilities and responsibilities effectively. There is good evidence that:

- Policies and procedures are in place to identify key areas of compliance, with ongoing systems to review operational processes to identify any gaps or weaknesses.
- Systems and processes to maintain compliance with the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice are effective. In 2016, Animation College completed a self-assessment against the new Code of Practice to confirm compliance and identify future improvements, including additional training for agents, collecting feedback from students and agents to review the application process, and providing information sessions on aspects of the Code of Practice. A number of improvements have been made, such as a termination of enrolment process and checklist and annual review of agent agreements. An external audit of the implementation of the Code of Practice was conducted in early 2017. The report on the overall findings was received by Animation College during the EER visit and provided a number of commendations and recommendations for Animation College to consider.
- There is a high awareness of the risks associated with not meeting contractual requirements regarding programme delivery hours, approvals and accreditation requirements. A recently approved Type 2 change regarding delivery hours provides evidence of this.
- Strong systems are used to understand what is needed to meet TEC and NZQA requirements. Comprehensive documentation and records provide evidence that these requirements are met in a timely manner with no risks or issues identified by NZQA.

Management has strong engagement with other PTEs in ACG and regularly meets to discuss management, academic and compliance matters. This collaboration enables the sharing of practice and experience to effectively monitor compliance requirements and develop good practice for each organisation.

In arriving at its findings on this question, the evaluation team reviewed minutes and actions plans for meetings of management, the academic board and the programme committee, as well as reports and other relevant documentation.

## Focus Areas

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

### 2.1 Focus area: Diploma in Applied Animation (Level 6)

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

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

### 2.2 Focus area: Bachelor of Animation (Level 7)

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

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

### 2.3 Focus area: International student support and wellbeing

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

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

# Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Animation College New Zealand Ltd:

- Continue to develop systems and processes to record the evidence and analysis of the range of informal and formal feedback to monitor the effectiveness of improvements.
- Continue to strengthen the delivery of the Bachelor's programmes to ensure that the recommendations of the approval panel are implemented.
- Continue to focus on improving Māori and Pasifika achievement rates.

# 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](http://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*