Targeted Evaluation Report

Northland Polytechnic Limited

Tai Tokerau Wānanga

Date of report: 27 April 2022

Targeted evaluation of Northland Polytechnic

Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) became subsidiaries of Te Pūkenga as part of the Reform of Vocational Education.

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

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

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

About Northland Polytechnic Limited

Northland Polytechnic (NorthTec) offers applied vocational and professional education and training ranging from levels 1-7 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. NorthTec has around 115 training schemes and programmes across the region, and campuses and learning centres in Whangārei, Dargaville, Kaikohe, Kerikeri and Kaitaia, as well as off-campuses at community-based sites and at the international campus in Auckland.

Region:	Northland/Tai Tokerau
Code of Practice signatory[1]:	Yes
Number of students[2]:	Domestic: 5,845 learners (2,406 equivalent full-time students – EFTS); 38 per cent Māori (990 EFTS), and 6 per cent Pasifika (161 EFTS). Learners under 25 years comprise 62 per cent of enrolments; 46 per cent of learners are female, and 54 per cent male.
	International: 196 students in 2020
Number of staff:	247 full-time equivalents – 176 teaching and 147 non-teaching
TEO profile:	See Northland Polytechnic
Last EER outcome:	Confident in educational performance and Confident in capability in self-assessment (2017)
Scope of evaluation:	This targeted evaluation considered three

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[1] Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 (the international Code) and the Education (Pastoral Care of Domestic Tertiary Students) Interim Code of Practice 2019 (the interim domestic Code). Now combined as the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.

[2] Student numbers at the time of evaluation, provided by NorthTec.

focus areas[3]:

1. Learner support – how effectively NorthTec supports and guides learners

2. Learning assessment design and practice – how effectively NorthTec assesses learning

3. Area of strength nominated by NorthTec – Regional Partnerships, Delivery and Support

MoE number: 6012

NZQA reference: C46642

Dates of targeted evaluation: 16-23 November 2021

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[3] Samples were investigated from Construction, Painting and SafeTrades, and Social Services Pathways for focus areas 1 and 2. Pathways is the term used by NorthTec for a collection of programmes, managed by a pathway manager. There are 10 pathways, organised into product and delivery groups, led by a director and supported by two deputy directors.

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Summary of results

NorthTec is facing significant challenges with its large region, dispersed population and communities that have not been well served by tertiary education opportunities, according to management. Furthermore, they reported that several factors have had detrimental impacts on performance and sustainability: balancing the above challenges with the cost of programme delivery while also collaborating with local iwi, communities and employers; and ensuring consistent levels of support within the current resourcing model.

NorthTec works hard to respond appropriately to the pastoral and academic support needs of its learners. However, without a purposeful learner support policy framework, a prioritisation strategy, a co-ordinated team approach and comprehensive self-assessment, it is difficult to quantify the effectiveness of the support and the impact of the polytechnic's activities on learner achievement and wellbeing.

Enhancing, supporting and monitoring assessment practice has been a focus for NorthTec. Improvements in assessment design, academic policies and moderation results are clear indicators of the positive progress being made in this focus area.

*As demonstrated through its area of strength, NorthTec is building a long-term commitment to connecting with the region through partnering with regional communities and organisations, in particular iwi and hapū. Many initiatives are emerging or in the early stages of delivery, a*nd *there is a recognition of the mutual benefits for communities in strengthening capacity and capability, while supporting access to and participation in relevant tertiary education*.

- NorthTec's learners at the main campus are provided with a range of responsive support services and guidance. These are provided by staff who are passionate and care about their learners[4], as evidenced in feedback from learners (refer Tables 1 and 2, Appendix 1). However, this

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[4] NorthTec self-assessment report – section 7

evaluation found that provision of consistent support across the various regional areas is patchy due to geographical spread and the availability of staffing resources.

- Learner survey results generally indicate high levels of satisfaction with services (refer to Table 2, Appendix 1). The over-reliance on these results as measures of effectiveness – with low response rates[5], limited analysis by priority learners[6] and limited use of results to inform planning – is affecting NorthTec's understanding of the effectiveness of support services and their contribution toward learner achievement, particularly with priority groups. To boost achievement for priority learners[7] and provide more consistent support across the dispersed region, a more strategic approach to resource allocation, a structured team approach and a more in-depth understanding and use of data is required.

- NorthTec has strengthened its approaches to assessment design and quality assurance processes. External moderation results are starting to reflect some of these improvements. Teaching staff are already, or are becoming, more reflective practitioners and improving their assessment practice. This evaluation found that there are further opportunities to strengthen policies (and some practices), and deploy better oversight of internal moderation, in order to have a complete picture of the quality of assessment.

- In the area of strength, the evaluation team found that NorthTec is building a long-term commitment to connecting with the region, throughout all levels of the organisation, recognising the benefit for their communities in strengthening and supporting access to and participation in relevant tertiary education. Many of these initiatives are emerging or in the early stages of delivery – it is too early, and there are insufficient measures in place, to determine whether they have been successful. NorthTec's understanding of the value and impact of its connections within the region could be strengthened through developing its analysis and understanding of the valued outcomes of its partnership approach.

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[5] Annual participation numbers for Learner Experience surveys: 2017 S1 n=457, S2 n=261; 2018 S1 n=569, S2 n=272; 2019 S1 n=525, S2 n=230; 2020 S1 n=397, S2 n=300; 2021 S1 457 (9.8 per cent). Data from SIL Research Student Experience Survey Report (section 7 Methodology) June 2021. For 2020 and 2021 response rates were impacted by Covid lockdowns.

[6] Māori, Pasifika, those under 25 years of age, students with a disability. The results from 138 Māori learners were analysed in June 2021.

[7] 2019 Statement of Service Performance Priority 3 – the achievement gap between all funded Māori and non-Māori successful course completions is 10 percentage points. NorthTec reported that this gap was 8 percentage points in 2020.

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Focus areas

Focus area 1: How effectively are learners supported?

Findings and supporting evidence

NorthTec learners are provided with relevant and timely study information on the polytechnic's website and in printed format, as well as from staff. Most programmes conduct learner interviews prior to enrolment, to maximise learners' opportunities of success by understanding their aspirations and ensuring a good fit with the chosen pathway. Initiatives to minimise the attrition between application and headcount[8], including the enrolment tracker system and the 'Keeping Learners Warm' project, were reportedly providing positive results, although the supporting data was not supplied. Orientation activities designed to introduce learners to the various academic and pastoral support services available as they begin their study programmes are rated well by learners (refer Table 1, Appendix 1).

NorthTec's staff are learner-centred in their practice, with an evident focus on their learners' wellbeing and achievement. Staff responsiveness to learners' individual and unique needs has been evident during the Covid-19 pandemic, with the rapid mobilisation of grants from the Tertiary Education Commission's Hardship Fund for Learners, to support learners who were facing hardship that had interfered with their ability to progress with their studies. Technology support – including the provision of Chromebooks and connectively, remote delivery and regular contact – also supported learners during these challenging times. Reports of learners staying on programmes and succeeding, and learners indicating they were well supported, were provided during the evaluation. NorthTec's analysis of these outcomes indicated that there was a 7 percentage point increase in retention in 2020 and an 8 percentage point increase in 2021 associated with these hardship grants.

Learners who are deemed to be most at risk of non-completion (indicated by two consecutive non-attendances and academic results under 50 per cent for any summative assessment) are flagged in the student management system for proactive support by pathway co-ordinators or a student navigator (student support champions). This system was introduced in 2019 and is now a well-embedded practice. Regular reports from this are being provided to senior managers to identify trends and issues. Challenges and potential inconsistencies, in record-keeping in the student management system and with

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[8] These initiatives were part of a series of change projects implemented in 2019-20 using triaging and case management processes to identify and support high needs/at-risk learners within the first two weeks. Headcount occurs two weeks after course commencement.

co-ordination across teaching teams and central support, were reported in interviews. Across the team, support staff often respond individually rather than as a cohesive team. This indicates that further work is required if this system is going to provide an improved understanding of the impact of interventions on learner retention and achievement, and inform the prioritisation of limited resources.

A high number of Māori learners enrol at NorthTec. There is pōwhiri for new learners and their whānau. Daily karakia and waiata led by NorthTec's Haurua mai Te Waru Roopu also provide opportunities for ākonga to connect, meet key Māori staff, share kai and discuss issues. The student support services, especially navigators, deliver the front-facing services based on a tikanga-based model (Te Whare Tapa Wha) and support learners well in their studies.

The Māori capability development framework, Koni Ahi, is currently being progressed by the Te Hāpai Ara team, with a focus on 'collective action' to meet the challenges of lifting Māori student achievement at NorthTec. The team has also recently launched an organisation-wide project: Murua i te Kaikiritanga – Eliminating Racism (Societal, Institutional, Interpersonal and internalised), and professional development has been provided through Ako Aotearoa. The actions planned for 2021 and 2022 are well articulated in NorthTec's response to Te Pae Tawhiti, Te Pūkenga's Te Tiriti o Waitangi Excellence Framework, and describe the activities and plans. Connecting and furthering these cultural, supportive and developmental activities, and understanding their impact on Māori learner achievement, is of upmost importance for the institution.

NorthTec's network of learner representatives was re-invigorated in 2020 and a student council re-established in the same year, after a period of low engagement with the student body. The co-ordinator and kaiawhina/administrator, specifically supporting student voice activities, has had an increase in hours. This re-establishment is in its early stages, with some structural mechanisms still to be developed.

NorthTec is attempting to provide services that are responsive to the needs of its diverse and regionally spread learners. Although NorthTec uses the services of some external agencies, for example for literacy and numeracy, staff and learners expressed concern at the absence of specialised staff to respond to specific learning needs, such as dyslexia, and with associated community supports which are limited in the region.

Overall, this evaluation found that while NorthTec's learners at the main campus are provided with a range of responsive support services, this is not yet consistent across the regional campuses and learning sites. Where contractual arrangements for the delivery of programmes with partners are in place in regional and remote locations, learners reported being provided with intensive pastoral and cultural support, which they appreciated. However, the evaluators heard consistently across interviews that limited staff resourcing in some

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locations negatively impacts on both the availability of and leaners' access to support services. Staff isolation at the regional sites is also a concern. NorthTec lacks an overarching student support policy or prioritisation strategy to guide the support and resourcing across the region, and is having difficulty with equity of support, as well as many staff juggling multiple roles. NorthTec management confirmed that they were working on a business case for funding that, if successful, would go some way towards overcoming some of these inconsistencies and resourcing issues.

Support for learners to prepare for and transition successfully to employment upon completion of their study is a priority for NorthTec[9] and is well supported at programme level, including through learner employment placements, managed apprenticeships and facilitating connections with local employers. Practicum placements in the social services pathway also appear well supported and monitored.

Learners on programmes offered by contracted partners frequently have employment opportunities in their local communities as these are integral to the design of the programme, such as building houses for whānau. NorthTec is working alongside other Te Pūkenga subsidiaries to develop a website where employers will be able to upload vacancies and information about jobs and future opportunities for their learners.

Implementation of student policies and procedures

NorthTec's self-assessment states that: 'there are effective support policies and procedures in place to ensure that concerns are raised and addressed in a timely manner to support learners'. To support this claim, NorthTec presented its student concerns and complaints policy, as one of the key policies relating to learner support. The overview for 2021[10] and reports provided to the academic committee by the academic quality assurance committee include relevant data and analysis showing the main areas where concerns and complaints have been raised: the quality of teaching, communication and staff conduct. NorthTec has taken action in response to these themes, for example in staff performance processes, and instigated 'learning walks' in the trades pathways. However, to date there has been no reflection on the impact of these two interventions on learner success, such as retention and course completions.

With regard to the international and interim domestic Codes of Practice, there were no significant compliance concerns identified from NorthTec's policy and process documentation submitted, and the interviews conducted. The interim domestic Code self-review process could be strengthened by seeking collective

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[9] Statement of Service Performance 2019 Priority 1 Delivery skills for industry

[10] Concerns, Complaints and Appeals overview 2021 – concerns/complaints 2019 (28), 2020 (17) and 2021 (35); appeals 2019 (1), 2020 (1), 2021 (1).

insights from operational student services staff. A project team is mapping the current practice against the existing and new Codes (refer footnote 1) to identify any gaps and to prepare a business case for resourcing to close any gaps. The project team has self-identified that the lack of robust evaluation, including measures of effectiveness of the implementation of policies and procedures, is a key area for improvement.

Self-assessment

NorthTec uses a range of mechanisms to collect data and feedback from the learners. There is a reliance on the results of learner surveys, and these were presented as one aspect of the evidence of the effectiveness of student services in the self-assessment report. As noted in the earlier section, the response rates to these surveys are generally not high enough to be deemed representative of all learners, and this limits the weight that can be given to this information. It was not possible, for example, to understand from NorthTec's overall self-assessment evidence how well the support needs of different priority learner groups are actually being met.

Data around students using support services is collected and reported.[11] However, this data is not compared with any expected benchmarks or targets, or examined to establish usage patterns and trends. There was no evidence to show this data is analysed and used to inform resourcing requests, or planning for service availability and prioritisation. There is more that could be done here to better use available data, and gain evidence of impact or to identify gaps.

NorthTec's pathways teams regularly review key metrics to monitor learner engagement and success, using Revive and Power BI dashboards. The availability and timeliness of this data is improving, as is managers' capability with these systems. These monitoring activities inform the annual evaluation process. Student support staff undertake some self-reflection within teams, such as the library team and navigators reporting to the academic committee. However, there does not yet appear to be any co-ordinated evaluation process across the student management directorate, or input into the pathways' annual evaluations.

Overall, these self-assessment processes provide some insights into identifying themes and for focusing support. However, they do not provide a comprehensive view of how effective the guidance and support is currently, or to fully inform the allocation of resourcing and focus for future improvements.

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[11] In 2020, NorthTec's support people supported 2041 learners and provided 9849 interactions (liaison manaakitanga, hardship and learning)

Conclusion

NorthTec's student support and teaching teams are working hard and responding to the support and learning needs of their learners within the current resourcing. Comprehensive study information and advice is provided as learners choose their study pathway and begin their learning journey. Learners are well supported to prepare for the transition to employment.

In the absence of an overarching student support policy framework and resource allocation and delivery strategy, NorthTec staff are responding individually to student needs and demands. It is acknowledged that the Te Tai Tokerau region provides considerable challenges with the remoteness of some learning sites and campuses. However, without the aforementioned policy framework, delivery strategy and monitoring, the concern is that resource allocation is reactive. Moreover, provision is inconsistent across sites.

There needs to be a clear articulation of policy and strategy:

- to inform the services that will be offered and prioritised to minimise barriers to learning for all learners, and in particular Māori, Pasifika and disabled learners

- to inform planning and resources for the provision of effective guidance and support.

Self-assessment processes need to be informed by data and feedback from learners, beyond that currently being collected, and to ensure full representation. There needs to be appropriate tools and processes for planning, monitoring and reviewing to enable a better understanding of the impact and effectiveness of these support initiatives, activities and processes. A more co-ordinated team approach to understanding this data, to inform and implement service strategy, is also required.

Focus area 2: How effectively is learning assessed?

Findings and supporting evidence

Assessment policies and procedures

NorthTec has a robust quality management system, inclusive of appropriate academic policies and guidelines. New and revised policies are consulted on where required, and once approved are socialised with staff via the intranet. Guidance for assessment within programmes of study is set out in programme regulations.

The assessment and moderation policy was reviewed last year, with the associated procedures and guidelines refined and updated by the learning and teaching committee this year. NorthTec's assessment principles, the processes for internal and external pre- and post-assessment moderation, reporting and

monitoring and personnel responsibilities, are generally well articulated in this policy. This evaluation identified some opportunities to strengthen the policy, such as ensuring loops are closed, and identifying actions to be taken where issues are identified relating to poor assessor decisions. The policy could also include a fuller description of subcontracting arrangements and responsibilities in relation to quality assurance of assessment and expectations regarding moderation for the external partners.

Quality and suitability of assessment

There has been a purposeful drive to improve assessment design and ensure assessment activity is relative to the context, learning outcomes and level, though the use of rubrics, integrated assessment and specificity of evidence. This work has been led and well supported by the team of academic advisors. There is also early work in progress to incorporate Māori pedagogies in assessment design principles and practice.

In the pathways, the evaluators heard of many examples of good assessment practice. Examples include carpentry with the integration of assessments and the collection of naturally occurring evidence. Social services takes many learner-centred approaches to the use of assessments rather than exams, and more formative assessment before summative is provided. This includes the variety and relevance of assessment used, including mini-quizzes and student reflections based on lived experiences. Learners in the social services pathway identified the useful verbal and written feedback received on their assessments and had a clear understanding of the use of marking rubrics. They described being regularly asked for input on the assessments and learner-centred practices to ensure their learning and success.

Teaching staff have been using their learnings through virtual and online delivery during the Covid lockdowns, with support from the digital learner team, to help ensure different modes of delivery and assessment reflect learners' needs. For example, in social services the evaluators heard of the innovation and learnings through delivery of virtual noho marae and placements. This pathway has also developed a resilience strategy and resilience kit to support blended delivery.

NorthTec has a range of well-used tools for checking academic integrity, including a new reference search tool, and learners are well informed of expectations in relation to academic integrity.

Effectiveness of internal oversight of assessment (and moderation) plans and processes.

The academic committee structure is providing suitable quality assurance and oversight with appropriate delegation to leadership at a programme (pathway) level. The establishment of three academic sub-committees in 2018 with a focus

on teaching and learning, quality assurance and research has strengthened accountabilities and enhanced reporting.

After some performance lapses in moderation, and issues with assessment practices were revealed by NZQA monitoring processes in 2019 (refer Table 2, Appendix 1), there is evidence that the work to improve and strengthen assessment design and internal and external moderation processes is bearing results.

Internal moderation processes have been strengthened in the pathways, staff attitudes and approaches to moderation are shifting from compliance towards continuous improvement, and the required plans are being completed and lodged centrally. There remains some work to do to ensure quality assurance loops are closed, and to ensure overall organisational oversight and contribution to academic quality across the institution is available. This will enable NorthTec to say with confidence that assessment is fair, valid, consistent and appropriate, and moderation is being used effectively to improve assessment material and practices. The evaluators were told that the intention is to have all moderation activities showing on the intranet portal, and to be overseen by the academic committee. It is important that this work be completed as soon as possible.

External moderation results are improving (refer to Tables 3 and 4, Appendix 1). The 2020 results from the various TITOs[12] and NZQA show that requirements were met for all except Careerforce, with the majority of NZQA requirements being met. This indicates that the requirements of external standard-setting bodies are mostly well understood and the moderation evidence submission process well managed, with results overseen by the academic committee.

The results of NZQA consistency reviews for 2018-21 show that 29 of the 31 reviews of NorthTec's submissions have been rated 'sufficient'. This indicates that the evidence relating to programme design, assessment practice and moderation results has supported the conclusions that graduates have achieved the outcomes specified in the graduate profile of the qualifications under review.

The evaluation identified an issue relating to unit standard results reporting performance.[13] Over the period 2018-21, NorthTec reported a significant percentage of results late[14] for a number of learners, largely from the

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[12] Transitional industry training organisations

[13] Assessment Standards Rules 2021, Part 2, 13,1b, made under section 452 of the Education and Training Act 2020. To maintain consent to assess in respect of the entire consent or particular classifications or standards, holders of the consent (except relevant schools and transitional ITOs) must accurately report credits for students within three months of assessment, unless NZQA has approved a different reporting timeframe for the holder of the consent.

[14] Percentage of results reported late: 2018 - 6.60 per cent, 2019 - 7.26 per cent, 2020 - 20.01 per cent, and 2021 (YTD) 11.48 per cent. Number of students with late results

programmes delivered by subcontractors. While NorthTec has enhanced its monitoring of these arrangements, there is a need to ensure that learners are provided with their results in a timely manner, and that NZQA rules are met.

Self-assessment

Through regular formal and informal discussion and annual evaluation, pathways are reviewing the suitability of assessment and the outcomes of moderation practice. Support from the central academic and digital learning teams and ongoing professional development are building staff capability with assessment design, delivery and moderation. This support is valued by the pathways.

In addition to the oversight and improvement of assessment and moderation practice summarised above, further evidence of ongoing improvement is the 2021 self-assessment quality improvement plan being implemented at the time of the evaluation. There are strong indicators of NorthTec's commitment and focus to continuously improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessments. The evaluators heard examples of improvements, such as the learning walks in carpentry, with the intended impact to engage reflective tutors and improve retention, completion and achievement rates; and the embedding of English and maths within curriculum content, to develop tutors' and learners' confidence and competence in these skills.

Conclusion

NorthTec has made genuine and measurable gains towards strengthening its approaches to assessment design and quality assurance. External moderation and consistency review results are starting to reflect some of these improvements, and teaching staff are already, or are becoming, reflective practitioners and are working to improve their assessment practice. There are further opportunities to strengthen policies and some practices, and to have better oversight of internal moderation, in order to have a complete picture of the effectiveness of assessment.

(percentage in brackets): 2018 - 462 (13.21 per cent), 2019 - 486 (13.75 per cent), 2020 - 665 (27.92 per cent), and 2021 - 219 (14.30 per cent). Data provided by NZQA.

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

Regional partnerships, delivery and support

Findings and supporting evidence

Background and rationale for selection

NorthTec nominated its regional partnerships, delivery and support as the area of strength for this evaluation to consider. In the self-assessment report provided in preparation for this targeted evaluation it was noted that, 'a commitment to success for Māori through meaningful partnerships is at the centre of NorthTec's Business Development operating and relationships models'. NorthTec seeks to respond to the priorities of Māori learners and their whānau, and to the wider aspirations of iwi, hapū and Māori communities dispersed throughout Northland.

Relevant to NorthTec's approach is that Te Tai Tokerau is one of New Zealand's least urbanised regions, with nearly 189,000 residents spread across approximately 13,800 square kilometres, and only half of the population living in urban environments. The region is characterised by a young population – a higher proportion (than the national average) of whom are not in employment, education or training – and 29,000 Māori are currently unemployed. Strong employment growth is projected in construction, health/social services and primary industries.[15]

NorthTec's aim is to align its delivery to local needs, drawing on both longstanding and emerging partnerships to leverage the benefits of education for the social, cultural and economic prosperity of its region.

Performance

There are 11 iwi and a large number of hapū within NorthTec's rohe, and NorthTec has established new or has longstanding partnerships with many of them. There were 25 partnership arrangements in place at the time of this targeted evaluation, mostly built around funding the community-led delivery of level 2 and 3 programmes. Many of these programmes focus on foundation skills and te reo Maori, while other programmes are built around potential employment in areas such as primary industries and construction.

Much of the education is delivered in 'non-institutional' style designed to better meet the needs of learners and communities and to make best use of the resources available. To enable this, NorthTec has introduced a programme supporting iwi partners to attain tertiary teaching qualifications through a partnership with a private training establishment. It is also engaging iwi representatives to contribute to the development of learning resources within

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[15] Source: NorthTec's Targeted Evaluation Self-Assessment Report 2020-2021

programmes of learning, ensuring resources and practice reflect Te Tai Tokerau Reo Māori me ōna Tikanga.

Other initiatives include the establishment of 'digital learning hubs' in communities, for example in Kerikeri and Rawene, whereby learners can study independently while having access to technology, study space and academic support. While these are not 'partnerships' per se, they have been largely successful, for example by achieving 100 per cent completion in the health care programme in Kerikeri, and a genuine benefit to learners in those regional communities.

Another partnership initiative south of Whangārei has led to nine learners successfully completing the Certificate in Construction (Level 2), with a focus around iwi and marae housing.

NorthTec also presented the worthwhile start that they have made on Koni Ahi, the cultural capability building project, being rolled out to all NorthTec staff. This project is in its early stages and, while commendable, has only a tangential link to regional partnership delivery and support.

Understanding value

There is a definite short-term value exchange as a result of NorthTec's regional partnerships. Learners, many of whom have not benefited well from the education system, are gaining valuable qualifications, which are often their first educational achievement and may set them on a path to higher qualifications. Programmes in the regional partnerships are contributing to the development of important skills and knowledge of use to communities and iwi.

To date, in part due to the disruption caused by the pandemic, there is limited data to make a compelling assessment of the long-term value of these partnerships and initiatives. At the time of the evaluation, NorthTec's performance targets and measures were largely related to short-term fiscal gains and using available funding, to ensure funding thresholds were met and maintain funding levels for 2022 to continue developing partnerships. NorthTec is strongly encouraged to develop other indicators to demonstrate outcomes and value, and to provide more compelling evidence to support this as an area of strength.

Purposeful alignment of NorthTec's operating and relationship model with partners' long-term goals is not yet evident. NorthTec has engaged with Te Roroa in conversations around their housing and education strategy, and as a result of this NorthTec has successfully delivered a level 2 construction skills programme. NorthTec reported that work is underway to support the iwi with medium and long-term goals as articulated in their strategic plan.

Conclusion

NorthTec serves a distinctive and geographically diverse constituency of learners. NorthTec's partnership arrangements are supporting regional equity of access for vocational education and training by providing a range of options to learners who would not normally have the opportunity to access them. Learners are having the opportunity to participate in education in their own community in a manner which fits their lifestyle and commitments, where their needs are well understood and supported, and services are flexible to meet their needs.

NorthTec is building a long-term commitment to connecting with the region, throughout all levels of the organisation, recognising the mutual benefits for their communities in strengthening and supporting access to and participation in relevant tertiary education. That said, many initiatives are only just emerging or in the early stages of delivery. NorthTec's understanding of the value and impact of its connection to its regions could be strengthened through developing a greater understanding of the valued outcomes of its partnership approach, and given more time without the restrictions experienced over the past few years.

Appendix 1

Table 1. Learner First Impressions survey, semester 1 2021 (scale 1-5); sample size 674 (11.5% of all learners)

Before enrolment	Rating
It was easy to find information about the programme	4.02/5.0
I found the information I needed on the website	4.09/5.0
The timeframe between my request and when I received information was acceptable	4.06/5.0
I was given helpful advice when choosing my programmes/courses	4.29/5.0
Staff at information desk were friendly and helpful	4.49/5.0
After enrolment	
My enrolment went smoothly	4.2/5.0
I found the programme information helpful	4.25/5.0
The course outlines/guides gave me a good idea of what to expect in my programme/course of study	4.23/5.0
I found staff approachable and available to discuss my studies	4.45/5.0
Orientation	
Orientation provided me with all the information I needed to start my studies	3.9/5.0
I received sufficient guidance in the first few weeks to make a good start	4.24/5.0

Table 2. Learner satisfaction rates with NorthTec support, semester 1 2021 (scale 1-5); sample size 457 (9.8% of all learners)

Support	Rating
Financial support	3.93/5.0
Loans and allowances	3.98/5.0
Counselling/disability	4.04/5.0
Pastoral support	4.12/5.0
International support	4.09/5.0
Careers advice	4.15/5.0
Mentoring	4.23/5.0
Kaitakawenga	4.25/5.0
Academic writing	4.30/5.0
Literacy and numeracy support	4.47/5.0
Tutor	4.46/5.0
Health services	4.48/5.0
Library services	4.56/5.0
ICT	4.38/5.0

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Table 3. Transitional industry training organisations (TITO) national external moderation (NEM) outcomes 2018-20

	2018	2019	2020
Met the requirement of the NEM			
BCITO	No	Yes	Yes
Careerforce	No	-	No
Competenz	Yes	-	Yes
Connexis	No	-	Yes
HITO	-	Yes	-
MITO	Yes	Yes	Yes
Primary ITO	No	Yes	Yes
ServiceIQ	No	Yes	Yes
SkillsOrg	-	Yes	-

Source: Quality Assurance Division, NZQA

Table 4. NZQA national external moderation (NEM) 2018-20

Year	Overall outcome	Comment
2020	Meets the majority of NEM requirements	NorthTec did not meet all the moderation requirements in the Core Skills and English for Academic Purposes systems. However, there is an overall improvement since 2019.
2019	Does not meet the NEM requirements	The fourth year of non-compliant results in the Core Skills system. NorthTec was required to develop and implement an action plan. English for Academic Purposes units were removed from NorthTec's moderation plan as they were being moderated as part of NZCEL programme monitoring.
2018	Does not meet the NEM requirements	The fifth year of non-compliant results in the Numeracy system so conditions were imposed on NorthTec's consent to assess Numeracy standards. The fourth year of non-compliant results in English for Academic Purposes systems and the third year of non-compliant results for Business and Management and Core Skills.

Source: Quality Assurance Division, NZQA

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Programme monitoring results

NZQA conducted two monitoring activities in 2019.[16] The New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 5) did not met all of the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules (specifically, 6.1 criterion 1 relating to assessment and moderation). Of the 32 samples of learner work moderated, 15 (47 per cent) met the learning outcomes and 24 (75 per cent) were at the appropriate level. The main issue related to learners passing without meeting the requirements of the learning outcomes. An action plan was submitted by NorthTec and accepted by NZQA, with no further follow-up required.

In the second monitoring activity in 2019, NorthTec's delivery of the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic) (Level 4) (NZCEL) partially met the programme approval and accreditation criteria in respect of regulations and resources, but did not met criteria in respect of programme structure and delivery, assessment and moderation, and review. The moderation agreement rate was 19 per cent (learners met 21 of the 112 learning outcomes). None of the 16 assessor decisions to pass students on the skill/module were able to be verified, which meant none of the four learners could be verified as having passed any of the four skills modules. The main issues identified related to over-generous and incorrect marking. Assessment design did not align with NZCEL Graduate Profile Outcomes and there were mismatches between approved course learning outcomes, assessment outlines and assessment task.

In 2020 and 2021 the intended follow-up programme monitoring of the NZCEL course was postponed due to a lack of enrolments and the ongoing effects of Covid-19 and border closures.

Source: Quality Assurance Division, NZQA

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[16] Moderation of learner samples from the New Zealand Diploma in Business (Level 5) (20 December 2019), and a monitoring visit and moderation of learner samples for the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic) (Level 4) (12 September 2019).

Final report

Disclaimer

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

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

- *Identify organisational fraud[17]*

- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*

- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

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

Final report