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Targeted Evaluation Report

Western Institute of Technology
(WITT) Te Kura Matatini o Taranaki

Date of report: 31 August 2022

Targeted evaluation of WITT

Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics (ITPs) became subsidiaries of Te Pūkenga New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology 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 WITT

WITT is a regional polytechnic based in New Plymouth, with a second campus at Hawera. WITT is currently celebrating 50 years since its foundation. WITT's overarching strategy is named Te Korowai Mātauranga o Taranaki. The strategy is explicitly designed around four pou (key principles): Te Pou Tokomanawa – Lifelong learning; Te Pou Tūarongo – Global Citizenship; Te Pou Aronui – Sustainability; Te Pou Ao – Employment Outcomes. This strategy is also aligned to Taranaki's regional economic strategy Tapaue Roa, which has been combined with the 2050 [Taranaki] Roadmap document.

Location:	Taranaki
Code of Practice signatory:	Yes
Number of students (2021):	Domestic: 1,709 equivalent full-time students (EFTS), including 423 Māori EFTS and 45 Pasifika EFTS; International: 168 equivalent full-time ākonga
Number of staff:	Full-time 195; part-time 95 (as at Feb 2022)
TEO profile:	Western Institute of Technology
Last EER outcome:	In 2018, NZQA was Confident in WITT's educational performance and Confident in its capability in self-assessment.
Scope of evaluation:	This targeted evaluation considered three focus areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Learner support – how effectively the subsidiary ITP supports and guides learners.2. Learning assessment design and practice to assure education quality – how effectively the subsidiary ITP manages its programmes and quality assurance for the benefit of learners and other stakeholders.3. An area of particular strength.
MoE number:	6017
NZQA reference:	C50780
Dates of targeted evaluation:	17-23 May 2022 (virtual visit)

Summary of results

- *WITT has a range of well-established processes and the staffing to adequately support ākonga. It is seeking to improve their impact (and ultimately student achievement and outcomes) by means of data-driven and more deeply embedded and structured connections to the monitoring and pastoral care practices for the 'student at risk' within its four schools.*
 - *Academic quality processes, including audits and cyclical self-assessment (including those touching on the design and quality of assessment), are generally robust, well planned and clearly documented. ITO¹ external moderation results are largely positive. Meeting NZQA moderation and programme monitoring requirements is, however, still variable (see Appendix).*
 - *Despite the contextual challenges presented by the reform of vocational education and the pandemic, WITT governance, management and staff have continued to move forward strategically and decisively. For example, this has recently culminated in Te Korowai Mātauranga o Taranaki strategic plan (which is also visible in clearly stated, monitorable connections within each school's business plan), and the commencement of a sizeable 'infrastructure skills park' in collaboration with the local council and local industry. WITT is pressing ahead with the necessary revitalisation and change required to better serve their region's needs.*
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WITT is the second-smallest ITP, a significant contributor to its local economy, and a busy regional tertiary education organisation. This was evident to the evaluation team across multiple parameters:

- Notable institutional engagement in Te Pūkenga working groups
- Programme portfolio refreshment and facilities upgrading since the last EER
- Commendable staff engagement in Kia Uruuru Mai: Mātauranga Māori in staff professional development
- A wide range of active external moderation engagement with other ITPs

¹ Industry training organisation

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- The setting of a strategy (see About WITT above) to respond to the social and economic changes and infrastructure developments currently occurring in Taranaki.

Since 2018, a new chief executive has been appointed, there are new board members, and significant restructuring and leadership changes have occurred. There is positive momentum and necessary change occurring at WITT.

The evaluators encountered a healthy and cohesive team culture across the groups of WITT staff interviewed. Documentation also reflected thorough and healthy collegial debate. The positive culture of the organisation could be seen and heard through the engagement that evaluators had with ākonga, staff and external stakeholders over the duration of this evaluation. There is clarity around purpose and direction, and a focus on improvement.

WITT has embedded annual and planned activities for structuring and monitoring academic quality audits and self-assessment (including those touching on the design and quality of programmes, student assessment and learner support activities and processes). WITT has also comprehensively engaged with their stakeholder's self-assessment imperatives. Most relevant to the focus areas of this targeted evaluation, these have included a Code of Practice self-review and Te Pae Tawhiti and Kia Ōrite Toolkit self-reviews. WITT also conducted its own 'student voice enquiry'. Many or most staff have engaged in these and other self-assessment activities aimed at understanding current educational performance, and devising actions towards improvement. There is evidence of many discrete improvements and refinements. This demonstrates a fulsome response to the recommendation made in the last EER to 'encourage greater staff involvement in programme and organisational self-assessment'.

That said, numerous important activities or approaches considered in this evaluation are as yet relatively new, and so it is difficult to establish the evidence for, or the likelihood of their effectiveness. This evaluation report is necessarily cautious on numerous of these aspects.

WITT is working constructively through significant challenges: the uncertain pace and continued lack of clarity around externally driven tertiary education system change; continued acute financial challenges; and the ongoing pressures and disruptions presented by the pandemic. Notably, at no time were these factors used by WITT to deflect from any potential or identified performance limitations. Nevertheless, there are some areas of weakness, one of particular concern to NZQA (assuring NZQA of assessment reliability), and areas requiring further work or consideration by WITT.

There has been significant staff change, and numerous new teaching staff employed. Student numbers have grown. Regardless, tutor training needs to remain a continued priority. There is also potential to build a stronger teacher development focus around assessment and moderation (beyond the 4098 unit

standard) particularly given the extent of achievement-based, higher-level assessment occurring. This would also sharpen the focus on meeting the requirements of external moderation: conformity with NZQA national external moderation requirements (for a relatively small sample of standards) has been poor for consecutive years; and establishing better conformity with NZQA monitoring and assessment quality assurance requirements, which has been variable.

WITT's ākonga are actively supported to succeed in their programmes of study. The approach to support is strategic, increasingly ensuring common understandings and consistent approaches across the four WITT schools. The coherence and impact of the learner support function in delivering on the higher-level funder and ministerial imperatives required of WITT – and ensuring support is targeted, timely and effective, as experienced by all ākonga – is not yet strongly apparent.

Crucially, there is no evidence that student attrition has lessened since the last EER, including for Māori or Pasifika learners whose course and qualification completion rates are considerably lower than for other learner groups as measured by the Tertiary Education Commission educational performance indicators. WITT is fully aware of this and is actively working to improve retention and success.

Focus areas

Focus area 1: How effectively are learners supported?

Findings and supporting evidence

WITT has regularly reviewed, overarching policy and procedures to 'ensure the provision of support services to enhance the success and educational experience of ākonga'. The policy clearly outlines the various support services made available, how ākonga are informed of these, and the institutional intention to identify 'ākonga with specific support needs'. This evaluation found that the services are being provided and disseminated to ākonga as suggested by the policy, uptake of services is consistently high, and data on this is gathered and reported to the senior leadership informally and formally.

The provision of learner support is driven by learners and programme staff conversations and observations, and supported by a cohesive team approach and involvement in leadership forums. The consistency of the implementation of services sits within the shared intention, passion and aspirations of the student support team to improve the learning journey for ākonga and enable successful pathways. Oversight and direction of ākonga support is being increasingly prioritised by the senior leadership, and due attention is paid to trends and new initiatives. This is also a consistent theme at school and programme levels considered within this evaluation. Meeting minutes, activity reports, annual programme reviews and anecdotal evidence all support this view, as does the elevation of the student success lead role to the directorate level. There is enhanced accountability and visibility of key objectives. WITT's student information systems have been updated to allow for an 'early intervention approach' to be data-driven, with ākonga tracked through the aPlus+ programme.

The approach to support is now structured around two key institution-wide elements carefully designed to ensure common understandings and consistent approaches across the recently established four-school structure: the early intervention for student success framework mapped against the typical, annual student journey, and the student academic support and progression framework. These provide staff with a clear and consistent framework for identifying ākonga at risk, as well as the appropriate support and specific actions that must be taken and by whom. These are well designed, clear and necessary conceptual tools. While processes are in place to accurately measure² the uptake of services and report the results to the academic committee annually, the analysis and evidence of effectiveness is currently less convincing.

² That is, capture and count data, and report useful qualitative and illustrative information pertaining to support engagement.

In 2022, WITT started using Te Puāwaitanga – an online health and counselling support. This is in addition to services and referrals provided face to face by WITT staff. WITT also established a learner leadership team for 2022, who can bring themes and issues directly to senior management. According to WITT, ‘the team includes Māori, Pasifika, Disabled³ and LGBTQI representation ... they are the voice and advocate for [all] ākonga’. These representatives are remunerated for their time, and a part-time position for a coordinator has also been resourced. These are new and promising initiatives (further discussed in Focus Area 3). The Kaitakawaenga role has been strengthened and increased to better support Māori and Pasifika ākonga in particular. This role is valued within the organisation.

Student satisfaction surveys also provide ākonga with a formal opportunity to give ratings and written feedback on their experience. These are well constructed and analysed, and are actively scrutinised by staff and leadership. The 2021 first impressions survey had a return rate of 18 per cent (374 responses), and the end-of-year survey had a return rate of 32 per cent (592 responses).⁴ From the later survey, 88 per cent of respondents indicated that they had received ‘the right level of support from tutors, staff and the student success team throughout their study’. Ākonga receive feedback on actions taken as a result of their survey comments, and responses have ranged from targeted staff professional development through to extending the opening hours of some key facilities. Those ākonga interviewed provided numerous examples of how they experienced support and academic guidance, or saw pastoral care provided to others. The staff-student relationships described were of a commendable quality, and staff were described as accessible and professional.

Analysis of student withdrawals across programmes, to improve understanding of the underlying reasons, is variable. Central data is maintained, attrition data is included in programme annual self-assessment summaries, and it appears that certainly more attention has been paid to the reliability of this data. Knowledge of the reasons for attrition is likely to be quite strong at programme level. However, analysis and making sense of the data – with a view to understanding and changing what can be changed – is not yet compelling. For example, the recently introduced student voice project does not include engagement with ākonga who have withdrawn. This falls somewhat short of a convincing response to a related recommendation made in the 2018 EER report.⁵

³ In 2021, 357 students identified at enrolment that they had a disability.

⁴ Response rate limitations have been a point of discussion at senior leadership meetings.

⁵ ‘Include analysis of student withdrawals across all programmes, to improve understanding of underlying reasons. This analysis was seen in some areas but not the majority.’

WITT is taking and has documented the expected Code implementational steps for a Te Pūkenga subsidiary. Processes for measuring the impact of learner safety and wellbeing practices have room for further refinement to enable a more proactive and targeted approach to learner support as new systems, processes and reporting structures bed in.

This year is a capability-building and Code implementation year for providers. NZQA currently has no concerns about WITT's implementation of the Code and compliance to date. There are some inconsistencies in the ITP's understanding of the finer details, for example with student accommodation definitions and publication requirements.⁶ However, the practices described in the documentation⁷ and by staff are focused on achieving the purpose of the Code, that providers: take all reasonable steps to maintain the wellbeing of domestic tertiary ākonga and to protect international ākonga, and ensure as far as possible that domestic tertiary ākonga and all international ākonga have a positive experience that supports their educational achievement.

Conclusion

The evaluators found sufficient resourcing and increasingly refined and re-focused approaches to, for example, WITT's learner support, more enabled by aPlus+ and Pulse Survey adoption and use, and the development and adoption of frameworks for support interventions where most needed. Staff are capable, act professionally and are well informed on internal policy and processes and also sector trends and needs.

Support services are resourced to allow for the targeted support of identified learners. Leadership and staff in the student success team have a sufficient focus and understanding of Code requirements and have adjusted practices and developed action plans to provide an, at the least, adequate implementation of the Code, including for international ākonga.

WITT's learner safety and wellbeing practices give confidence that they have adequately implemented the purpose and outcomes of the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.

WITT needs to ensure ākonga support is targeted, timely and effective, and also supports WITT's higher-level imperatives. The evaluators suggest, however, that the evolution, embedding and coherence of current learner support is not yet strongly apparent.

⁶ For example, on page 5 of the Review of Learner Wellbeing and Safety: Whole of provider approach, supports and practices document on Outcomes 1-4.

⁷ For example, Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 – Gap Analysis Report and Action Plan.

Focus area 2: How effectively is learning assessed?

Findings and supporting evidence

Since the 2018 EER, WITT has been busy in new programme accreditation and approval activities and has comprehensively updated and refocused its programme portfolio. The ITP has also prepared for and participated in over 30 consistency reviews (achieving a 'sufficient' rating in each). It has had a degree approved for a new Bachelor of Engineering Technology as well as taken part in degree monitoring events for existing degrees. All of this has consumed considerable focus on assessment development (generally in conjunction with other ITPs), as well as staff familiarity with existing or new assessment tools and approaches, and associated moderation activity. Assessment quality is front and centre in this ongoing work at WITT, both to purposefully align learning activities and assessment tasks with learning outcomes, and to guide ākonga in their learning.

Related to this, academic quality functions, and essential academic quality infrastructure and processes, have been consistently in place since the last EER, with some adaptation and change to reflect internal and external requirements. Policy documents, meeting records, improvement plans, course outlines and related assessment guides for ākonga sighted in sample area programmes were at the least of very good quality.

Organisational policy and oversight of learner assessment

Overarching policy and procedures for assessment have been consistently in place, in active use, and have been subject to cyclical formal review since the last EER. These policies are further expressed in well-formulated programme approval documentation, course outlines and assessment guides. There is a suitably functioning academic committee and authority delegations from the academic committee, through to schools' teaching and learning committees (each of which has a formal resulting sub-committee).

These school-based committees are playing an important role in assuring quality of assessment and rigour of policy application. The resourcing of an independent academic advisor embedded within each school appears a good strategic approach, and these individuals are working in a facilitative and capability-building manner. That said, there is also considerable academic expertise within the schools' teaching staff, and this helps to guide and support more recently recruited staff new to teaching.

Although assessment and moderation policy appears sound, there are evidently some challenges to its effective implementation. While ITO moderation and inter-ITP moderation results are largely positive, conformity with NZQA requirements have been less positive for some time (see Appendix).

Sport fitness and exercise sample programmes

Sport, fitness and exercise programmes have sound evidence of good processes and practices and evidence of robust moderation practice taking place; this was confirmed or validated by staff and ākonga. Moderation activities and improvement action plans are endorsed and monitored by the school teaching and learning committee; reporting on this is included in the comprehensive annual self-assessment reports sighted.

Ākonga appreciated the good feedback they received, indicating also that the assessments prepared them for real work. Improvement plans developed as part of annual review are clear and are being actioned. There seems to be a consistent approach across programme locations.

Trades-related sample programmes

The balance of theory and practice varies across trades programmes; however, on most occasions it is appropriate to the programme type. This is supported by the engagements with industry to enable the application and joining of theoretical and practical skills and knowledge. Further support is needed to ensure industry employers are appropriately equipped to supervise, observe and, where relevant, give feedback on learner capability in line with programme expectations.

Theory and practical structures vary across the courses, with more focus on the theory, but more desire for the practical. Evidence-based and theory-based assessment predominantly occurs through assessment of portfolios and the testing of theoretical knowledge. However, testing of practical skills and knowledge is variable across the programmes, where different approaches and expectations of assessment and learning are applied. Opportunities for real-world experience are offered, but vary across the programmes. Collaborative opportunities and information sharing between tutors, to assist consistent assessment practice, exist and are in use.

Quality and suitability of learner assessment

The systems for maintaining quality and suitability of assessment generally work well. The decentralisation of academic services and embedding of academic advisors in schools provides tutors with direct access to a shared pool of expert staff with the knowledge and skills to provide advice and support for assessment. Capability development is an ongoing focus. As discussed in previous sections, there has been some variability in the results of NZQA monitoring and moderation; action plans developed in response to adverse findings have not always been followed through.

Learner feedback about assessment is positive. The learners interviewed in this targeted evaluation, albeit a small sample, expressed satisfaction with the assessment tasks they had been asked to undertake, and appreciated that assessment is part of the learning process. The same learners confirmed that

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they knew clearly what was expected of them in the assessment process and when assessments were scheduled to take place.

The course development process ensures that the starting point for assessment design is the graduate profile outcomes and learning outcomes. Although not unique, this does represent good assessment design practice and helps ensure that graduate profile and learning outcomes are efficiently and effectively met. WITT has been able to demonstrate for each of over 30 NZQA consistency reviews that it has participated in over the past few years that its graduates match the graduate profile at the appropriate threshold. This provides assurance that assessment is aligned with qualification graduate profile outcome statements and is at the appropriate level.

Conclusion

WITT has appropriate assessment and moderation policies, which are both sufficient and fit for purpose. Assessment and moderation is managed independently by each school insofar as it is appropriate. The application of central policy has been patchy in a few places, as evident in some tutor interviews, and as revealed in NZQA external monitoring report findings.

The tutors interviewed demonstrated a sound awareness of what kinds of assessment tasks work well for their students and/or course cohorts, which is positive and further affirms the staff development that has occurred in this area of teaching practice since the last EER; it also shows responsiveness to the 2021 student survey feedback. Ākonga experience useful formative and appropriately challenging summative assessment, and they receive mostly timely and useful feedback to inform their learning.

Moderation occurs on a planned cycle, with the occasional lapse in making improvements to assessment material in a timely way. Assessment practice in sample programmes appears to align well with the educational aspirations and quality assurance expectations set by WITT. There are strong, well-directed efforts to improve systems and processes where required, as well as to ensure that academic integrity and standards are maintained.

The traceability of improvement actions varies. Record-keeping could be strengthened to more explicitly capture action plan follow-up and to summarise self-assessment activities specifically associated with strengthening assessment and moderation activities.

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

WITT's nominated area of strength – Whakamana i ngā ākonga (Connecting our learners to their futures)

'As described in Te Korowai Mātauranga o Taranaki, WITT's purpose is to connect people to their future providing education to the region of Taranaki that prepares people for employment.' (WITT)

Linkages to regional strategies and key entities and secondary schools are apparent in this strategy, which extends from practical next step implementation through to ambitious or visionary possibilities, if momentum is gained and funding is achieved. The strategy appropriately places WITT as a key enabler, rather than at the centre of the regional development narrative, and includes local knowledge including the taio (the natural environment), Mātauranga Māori, taonga te iwi and taonga.

'Authentic Learning Environments connecting learners to their futures' (WITT)

WITT staff used an online, visual 'flyover' approach to provide an overview of the main Bell Street campus for the evaluators, and then images of key developments and facilities across schools, locations, programme areas and ākonga services. These provided a compelling link to WITT's ongoing consideration of the student experience ('look and feel'); investment in new resources; upkeep or reconfiguration of others; and maintaining alignment with industry needs, student needs and wants, while also integrating local hapū knowledge. The services are all increasingly linked to programme delivery with modern technology, and accessibility on the main campus and satellite campus. The acknowledgement and involvement of local iwi through the engagement and advice sought in the naming of facilities, where appropriate, supports and evidences a commitment to recognising the historical narrative and improving future relationships.

Significant investment in the facilities and services to support student success and their learning journey has occurred.⁸ The evaluators saw appropriate developments toward ensuring learning approximates or mirrors the expectations and experiences of the world of work. The range of examples included new equipment, flexible and moveable teaching and learning venues (for carpentry and barista training for example), automotive service facilities and high-spec nursing technology equipment. Developments and advancements are driven by programme needs and involve stakeholder input including from ākonga, to inform their design and suitability – such as in the case of the Te Puna Manaaki Student Hub.

⁸ Over \$1.3 million in 'campus improvements' in 2021, and additional spending in 2022. Substantial funding came through a local trust and industry partners.

'Engaging and supporting our Māori learners to connect with their futures'
(WITT)

The evaluators were able to hear of and question staff involved with the work around programming to build capacity and strengthen kaimahi knowledge of and ability to work with ākonga Māori. Key current initiatives discussed included Te Pou Tū and Kia Uruurumai. This session focused in a reasonably in-depth way on the 'culture change aspect' occurring within WITT:

- Ongoing reflection and change as captured in WITT's Te Pae Tawhiti self-review report and the Te Pūkenga Te Rito Outcomes Framework
- Staff development
- Programmes in Te Reo Māori (at levels 1 to 3) and Māori governance (a Toi Ohomai developed programme adapted to local needs)
- The relationship between Taranaki iwi and WITT.

WITT has been intentionally reflective to ensure an improved culture shift in the organisation and alignment to the communities it serves, including ākonga and kaimahi.

Internal development – both formal and less formal – and growth in numbers of kaimahi Māori assists WITT's capability to improve success for Māori learners, and foster clearer understanding of the 'levers of success' by all kaimahi. New staff appointments are strategic towards developing WITT's capability in Te Ao o Taranaki, to enable a support network for Māori, and to better connect with the iwi. The political and social contexts for iwi and the rohe are the drivers of the need for programmes and engagement, such as the development of whānau to help in the post-Treaty settlement phase of the iwi. Taranaki iwi are strategically in positioned to drive aspirations of ngā hapū o Taranaki within, outside and across WITT. Iwi engagement is in a phase of strengthening and there is purposeful recruitment of staff by WITT which reflects this.

There is a realism in effecting necessary culture change and staff professional development (e.g. Kia Uruuru Mai) to better meet the needs of ākonga Māori in particular (as would be reflected in much-increased retention and success across WITT). Additional staffing expertise has been recruited; there is stronger Māori (and Pasifika) representation in governance and management, and a commitment to a strong and supported Māori workforce.

'Connecting with our learners – Learner Voice and Learner Representation'
(WITT)

The evaluators heard directly from five student voice representatives drawn from different programmes and schools, and the part-time paid co-ordinator for this group. This is something of a peak body for representation – there are also student reps approached and recruited across programmes, as available. This comes out of the recently implemented Student Voice Stocktake (relating to the *Final report*

Code self-review), and so is relatively new. Some of these ākongā had completed a few years of study at WITT already, and so could make well-informed observations and speak to various concrete improvements and positive changes they had seen or personally experienced. These changes reflected student suggestions, concerns and in one case a class group complaint (the process and formally documented outcome for which was discussed with and confirmed as accurate by the ākongā).

These ākongā confidently expressed clear priorities and interest areas, with plans to implement change or generally create a supportive, student-focused culture on campus. Concrete suggestions included WITT ensuring early attention to checking the IT capability and capacity of both ākongā and staff to ensure everyone has the right tools available to them before they start teaching and learning. Diverse thinking and perspectives in leaders to ensure diverse needs and approaches are considered. An inter-faith prayer room and a rainbow room have been created on campus recently, to list a couple of examples.

‘Preparing our learners – attesting to work readiness’ (WITT)

The evaluators gained more insights into the particularities of engagement between WITT and external stakeholders, the programmes on offer and their uptake. Examples are the longstanding programming of critical importance to the health sector, as well as new partnerships and developments such as an infrastructure park. Stakeholders interviewed were able to knit together and validate the commitment by WITT leadership to the organisational improvements, and ongoing touchpoints around programme delivery in the sample areas in particular. Connections and relationships with the local talent pipeline partnership were also apparent.

Conclusion

WITT is actively seeking to maintain institutional and programme relevance and currency and is working with stakeholders to evolve and best serve their region: Whakamana i ngā ākongā (‘Connecting our learners to their futures’) highlighted that very clearly.

The scale of change demanded of and needed by both WITT and the Taranaki region could be loosely described as generational, and so the kind of response required would reasonably be more visionary than the sort of goal-setting of less turbulent times. Te Korowai Mātauranga o Taranaki, and the work already being delivered towards fulfilling it, appears to be well aligned to the times.

Within a quite hard-pressed, small regional ITP (taking into account all of the contextual challenges outlined in the summary above) WITT leadership and staff are most certainly working together with both focus and effort. There is clearly evident forward momentum and leadership; there is buy-in by staff; and there is a team effort to deliver improvements and relevance for all stakeholders and the region. This evaluation found a healthy team culture and a clarity and

shared sense of purpose among those interviewed. It was also clear that a 'learner-centred' focus was being maintained within a context of change.

Kia Kaha, Kia Maia, Kia Manawanui.

Appendix 1

The recent (5 and 6 May 2022) NZQA Degree Monitoring Report He Pūrongo Aroturuki Tohu Paetahi (joint monitoring and Nursing Council of New Zealand accreditation) made relevant comments on some areas that overlap with this targeted evaluation. It was indicated clearly to WITT that the outcomes of this routine, cyclical monitoring of WITT's largest programme would be considered along with the sample programmes from two different schools. This report (below) is at draft stage at the time of writing this targeted evaluation report.

'Assessment – Aromatawai

Students reported that the feedback they received on submitted assignments was not consistent – with some lecturers providing extensive and valuable feedback, and others none. Given the importance of feedback on student learning, it is important that expectations for feedback are clarified.

Students talked of the challenges with juggling multiple different courses each semester, and the concomitant problem of a seemingly very high assessment load. It is acknowledged that the assessment load appears to be fair, however, the sheer number of courses means students are concurrently working on different assignments for the courses they are enrolled in, and this presents challenges. Students reported that assignment submissions came up fast and there was often not enough time to receive feedback on an assignment before the next assignment was due. This situation does make learning and improving by applying feedback from lecturers a rather moot point. It is important that teaching teams across each semester liaise and collaborate to ensure the timetable of submissions is fair.

Recommendations:

Clarify expectations about feedback to students within assignments – consider developing professional development sessions/resources on providing good feedback.

Ensure assessment timetables align to allow for feedback on submissions to be received prior to next assignment due dates.

Moderation – Assessment

Rigorous and extensive post-moderation processes were reported in the 2020 Monitor's report, and these processes have continued throughout the 2021 academic year.

Internal moderation primarily involves cross-marking of assignments to ensure consistency of marking across different markers. The delivery of the Ara programme by three institutes means this process is rigorous (and time-consuming). WITT staff reported that post-moderation occurred between Ara and WITT staff but they found implementing any suggested changes quite challenging, with Ara staff initially unwilling to make changes to assessments. However, as relationships have evolved and matured, WITT staff report that there is a greater element of trust between them, and Ara staff are much more accepting of WITT's feedback and recommendations. The introduction of a cross-campus moderation day at the end of the academic year was felt to be valuable in the moderation process and in on-going development of relationships between staff at the two institutes.

WITT staff also talked of a much greater confidence in and understanding of process of moderation. They felt that they were very well positioned for when the Te Pūkenga curriculum was to be introduced, and national moderation would have to be undertaken. [redacted detail here, paper by paper comments]

External moderation is managed by Ara, as the owners of the programme. WITT staff are invited to participate and contribute.

Recommendation: review the moderation report for BNU7.006 and clarify the passing requirements for the portfolio assessment. Suggest that pre-moderation (cross marking) is still required to determine what constitutes a pass for the assessment.

Learner support and guidance

WITT has taken positive and proactive steps to ensure teaching staff are readily available to students. It is of note that students commented on how available lecturers were – with some responding to emails and texts during weekends and out of hours. It is however important that there is no pressure on staff to be available 24/7 – indeed, it should be discouraged as it is not reflective of a healthy work-life balance. In addition, this availability contributes to the unhealthy rhetoric that WITT lecturers are over-worked and under-paid (this same narrative was reported [in the 2020 monitoring] report, and appears to be just as prevalent in 2021).

The Student Success team continue to have a key contribution to student success and the success of the programme. Innovations from 2020 include the creation of a pastoral support role that sits within the School, but is directly linked with the Student Success team. This inter-woven role effectively bridges any gaps between the BN programme staff and the Student Success team, with students being physically walked over to meet learning advisors and be hooked in to learning and study support.

aPlus+ remains an important tool in tracking and monitoring students – especially priority learners who are routinely monitored.

Students were highly complimentary of the support they receive from the ‘awesome’ staff in the Student Success team. They described excellent academic support and whilst appointments with learning advisors remained at a premium, they felt the levels of support were adequate. The Kaitakawaenga are highly valued by students, and their model of working in partnership with students and lecturers is very effective in supporting students and lecturers alike.

Recommendation: establish expectations and boundaries around student-lecturer contact (including regular working hours) during orientation, and reinforce this at the start of each semester (consider including a statement on each course Moodle page advising students of work hours and contact times).’

Appendix 2

NZQA programme monitoring results

NZQA QAD Monitoring and Assessment have conducted three monitoring activities since the last EER. The results of this monitoring are summarised below.

1. Moderation of learner samples, New Zealand Diploma in Business Level 5 (January 2020) – summary of findings:

WITT's delivery of the New Zealand Diploma in Business (with strands in Accounting and Leadership and Management) (Level 5) meets the approval and accreditation criteria 6.1 Criterion 1 in respect of assessment and moderation.

NZQA moderated learner work from 11 of the 12 courses comprising this programme. Of the 28 pieces of learner work moderated, 19 (68%) met the course learning outcomes and 22 (79%) were at the appropriate level.

Issues identified included: some over-generous marking; some work not at the correct level; poor academic writing and English Skills; insufficient instructions to guide the ākonga; inconsistencies in the allocation of marks and weightings

2. Moderation of learner samples, NZ Certificate in English Language (Academic) Level 4 (June 2022) – summary of findings:

Monitoring outcome	
Partially meets criterion	<p>Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki Ltd (WITT) have some capability to ensure assessment materials and decisions are fair, valid, and appropriate for the level.</p> <p>Moderation verified results for the Listening and Speaking courses and just over half of the decisions for Writing. [The] majority of the assessor decisions are not verified for the Reading course.</p> <p>Despite some unresolved issues, there have been significant improvements to WITT's assessment and moderation systems for the New Zealand Certificate in English Language (Academic) since it was monitored in 2021. The quality of assessment has improved, instilling confidence that WITT has the capability to address remaining issues before the next delivery of the programme.</p> <p>In total NZQA moderators agreed with 27 assessor decisions in relation to 42 learning outcomes (LOs), an agreement rate of 65%</p>

3.

4. Internal moderation monitoring, New Zealand Diploma in Professional Cookery Level 5 (May 2022) – summary of findings:

Monitoring outcomes	
Does not meet criteria	<p>Western Institute of Technology (WITT) has established assessment and moderation policies and processes for the Diploma in Professional Cookery (Level 5) (hereafter ‘the programme’). However, there are gaps in the implementation of the policies and processes.</p> <p>Pre- and post-assessment moderation reports submitted to NZQA indicate that WITT’s moderation practice is not fully effective on verifying whether assessment tasks provide learners with the opportunity to meet the learning outcomes at the correct level, and if the learner work is sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the learning outcomes.</p> <p>WITT's internal moderation processes need further review to achieve more effective and robust internal moderation and ensure that assessment materials and decisions are fair, valid, consistent, and appropriate for the level, given the stated learning outcomes.</p>

NZQA national external moderation (NEM) 2019-21

Year	Overall outcome	Comment
2021	Does not meet NEM requirements	Met moderation requirements in Literacy Did not meet for Numeracy (6 th consecutive year); Communication Skills (no assessor decisions were verified); Core Skills (3 rd consecutive year)
2020	Does not meet NEM requirements	Did not meet for Numeracy unit standards.
2019	Does not meet NEM requirements	Did not meet for: Adult Education; Numeracy; Core Skills; Te Mātauranga Māori me te Whakangungu unit standards

Source: Quality Assurance Division, NZQA

External moderation - other

Table 2. Transitional industry training organisations (ITO/TITO) and NZBED national external moderation (NEM) outcomes 2018-21

Organisation	2018 (number of samples)	2019 (number of samples)	2020 (number of samples)	2021 (number of samples)
Key: 'Yes' - indicates Met the requirements of external moderation (n/m) – indicates not selected for external moderation in that year				
BCITO	Yes 3/3	Yes 2/2	Yes 4/4	(n/m)
Careerforce	(n/m)	(n/m)	Yes 1/1	(n/m)
Competenz	Yes 5/5	Yes 2/2	(n/m)	Samples for 5 Unit Standards submitted Reports not yet received
Connexis	Yes 3/3	No 4/4 'Unsupported judgements' ⁹	Yes 3/3	Mostly met 7 Unit Standards submitted - 6 'Supported' Judgement - 1 2/3 Samples 'Not Supported' Judgement
HITO	Yes 2/2	Yes 3/3	Yes 1/1	(n/m)
MITO	Yes 2/2 Site visit	Yes 2/2	(n/m)	(n/m)
Primary ITO	Yes 1/1	No 7 Unit Standards submitted 3 Met the National Standard 1 required minor alterations 3 non-compliant (action plans completed)	No 5 Unit Standards submitted 1 Met the National Standard 4 non-compliant (action plans completed)	Mostly met 6 Unit Standards submitted 4 Met the National Standard 1 – 2 samples met and 1 sample not met 1 non-compliant (action plans completed)
Skills Active	(n/m)	Yes 2/2	No 1/2 requested all unit standards be	(n/m)

⁹ Relating to assessment evidence collected within the constraints of a prison context.

			submitted for pre-moderation	
ServiceIQ	No 2/2 non-compliant (action plans completed)	Yes 2/2 (required minor alterations)	No 2/2 non-compliant (action plans completed)	Mostly met 2/3 1 Met the National Standard 1 Met but requires minor alterations 1 not accepted (action plan completed)
SkillsOrg	Mostly met 2/3 1- 1 sample met & 2 not met	(n/m)	No 3/6 3 non-compliant (action plans completed)	Mostly met 6/8 2-partial 2/3 & 1/3
NZBED	Yes 7/9 courses 2 'Require Modification'	Yes 6/6 courses	Yes 16/17 courses	Yes 10 courses submitted -2 courses 'Meets Standard' - 8 courses moderation report not yet received

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 fraud¹⁰*
- *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.*

NZQA

Ph 0800 697 296

E qaadmin@nzqa.govt.nz

www.nzqa.govt.nz

¹⁰ 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.