

Report of External Evaluation and Review

Tai Poutini Polytechnic

Confident in educational performance

Confident in capability in self-assessment

Date of report: 5 July 2013

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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:	Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP)
Type:	Polytechnic
Location:	73-87 Tainui Street, Greymouth
Delivery sites:	TPP's main campus is in Greymouth, but it also delivers programmes in Auckland CBD, Manukau, Christchurch, Reefton, Westport and Wanaka.
Programmes currently delivered:	A wide range of programmes is offered at New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF) levels 2-6, for a full description see: http://tpp.ac.nz/campus.php http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/nzqf/search/results.do?orq=602432001
Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students signatory:	Yes
Number of students:	Domestic: 2,456 equivalent full-time students Māori 16.9 per cent Pasifika 7.3 per cent International: 100 students, of whom seven are in full-time study with student visas and the others are enrolled in short courses not requiring student visas.

Number of staff:	187 full-time equivalents
Distinctive characteristics:	The primary focus of TPP is meeting the tertiary technical and vocational education needs of the West Coast region. TPP offers a wide range of specialist or niche programmes across the country, as well as work-based courses to commercial interests, on a demand basis. Many programmes include work experience in commercial settings, and elements of distance learning supported through an electronic platform, as well as traditional paper-based distance learning.
Previous quality assurance history:	<p>TPP underwent an external evaluation and review (EER) in 2011 resulting in NZQA being Confident in the organisation's educational performance and Not Yet Confident in its capability in self-assessment. In 2011 the organisation had established organisational self-assessment, but this was not well embedded into practice across all faculties and all staff and it was too early for TPP to demonstrate the effectiveness of its self-assessment.</p> <p>TPP has been engaging with standard-setting bodies and industry training organisations for the external moderation of assessment materials and assessor decisions. Reports indicate that, in the main, TPP is meeting the national standard, and where issues have been identified, the organisation is taking appropriate steps to make the required changes.</p> <p>TPP engages with NZOIA (the New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association) and the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council, to ensure outdoor programmes meet current best practice.</p>
Other:	<p>TPP has a high number of students in employment who enrol on one or more of a wide range of national certificates which are delivered in periodic block courses, for example scaffolding, ropes or civil infrastructure courses.</p> <p>TPP is currently developing and delivering a joint venture programme between the polytechnic and the Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCIRT), to address the training needs of</p>

miners made redundant on the West Coast as well as to address the significant need for trained civil infrastructure staff in the rebuild of Christchurch following the earthquakes of 2010 and 2011.

2. Scope of external evaluation and review

The mandatory focus areas were:

- Governance, management and strategy
- International student support.

While TPP has few full-time international students (currently seven), over a full year more than 100 individuals enrol in a range of 'full cost' short on-site blocks of training as part of national certificates. These students are in New Zealand on work visas or other specific-purpose visas and are required to undertake short courses related to their employment, for example to meet health and safety requirements.

Four clusters of programmes were chosen as focus areas.

Music - part of MAINZ (Music and Audio Institute of New Zealand)

- Certificate in Foundation Sound and Music (Level 2)
- Certificate in Contemporary Music Performance (Level 4)
- Diploma in Contemporary Music Performance (Level 5)

Outdoor Education

- Certificate in Ski Patrol (Level 3)
- Diploma in Outdoor Instruction and Guiding (Level 5)

Allied Trades

- Short Award in Pendant Crane Use (Level 2)
- Industrial Ropes Access (Elementary) (Level 3)
- National Certificate in Intermediate Scaffolding (Elementary) (Level 3)
- National Certificate in Intermediate Scaffolding (Level 4)

SCIRT (Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team)

- National Certificate in Infrastructure Works (Level 2) (optional strands in earthworks, pavement re-surfacing, rural contracting and utilities)

These programmes were chosen as clusters in order to provide a breadth of coverage across the organisation's programmes and delivery sites as well as to include the majority of enrolled students. The programme clusters represent full-time and part-time students as well as those studying while in employment. The SCIRT focus area was included in this programme group because it provided a vehicle to review how well TPP engages with its local West Coast community, responds to emerging issues and works across sector groups to develop innovative responses to, for example, mine closures and the current issues faced in the rebuild of Christchurch.

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 four evaluators over a six-day period spread over two weeks, and included visits to the Auckland, Manukau, Christchurch and Greymouth sites. Telephone interviews with stakeholders were conducted on the seventh day.

The team met with members of the Council, senior management team, heads of department, tutoring and support staff, programme advisory group members, and groups of students from each programme area.

A range of stakeholders, for example, employers, standard-setting bodies, industry training organisations, and ex-students were contacted during and after the site visits for their input to this evaluation.

TPP provided a selection of documents, records, and access to the student databases as requested, to complement and triangulate with the evaluative conversations held with personnel.

Summary of Results

Statement of confidence on educational performance

NZQA is **Confident** in the educational performance of **Tai Poutini Polytechnic**.

TPP is meeting the most important needs of the majority of its students and other key stakeholders. Across the programmes reviewed within the focus areas at this evaluation, course and qualification completion rates for 2011 averaged 80 per cent and 81.44 per cent (median national figures are 79 and 57 per cent respectively), and for 2012 the figures for course and qualification completion rates are 84 and 81 per cent (median 78 and 61 per cent respectively). The 2012 Annual Report notes overall course and qualification completion figures are 81 per cent and 70 per cent respectively. TPP's results are above the sector medians and relate to approximately 50 per cent of the total student population.

The organisation collects data on immediate outcomes for graduates, and in some cases 100 per cent of graduates gain employment in a field related to their study, for example Outdoor Education and Ski Patrol. In other faculties such as Allied Trades, the organisation has a growing body of evidence that students are making significant gains in transferable skills and knowledge in areas such as 'gaining pride and confidence in their work', and increasing companies' profitability. TPP acknowledged that although this evidence is gathered largely through informal student and employer anecdotes and through other indicators such as companies requesting repeat courses for their employees, there is a clear pattern to this feedback. TPP is developing processes to collect these anecdotes and feedback in a more planned and consistent manner, over a longer time period for stronger verification of this added value to students and stakeholders, and to build a more complete picture of achievement.

Over the past four to five years, TPP's overall educational performance is rising in terms of the students successfully completing courses and qualifications. In some faculties, for example in Allied Trades (approximately 50 per cent of all TPP students) and Ski Patrol, students are achieving course and qualification completion rates of close to 100 per cent. The organisation's self-assessment system provides evidence of high student and employer rates of satisfaction with the quality of teaching, course structure and outcomes achieved. For example, the application of skills and knowledge in the workplace, and employers of graduates from Outdoor Education noted the benefits to their business, for example significantly adding to their services and related income. TPP has lifted its student achievement rates overall, especially in qualification completions. TPP's overall educational performance indicators (2011 latest published figures) are currently at

the national sector median¹ for course completions, and one point above the qualification completion median. TPP's 2012 Annual Report notes the course and qualification completion rates are 81 per cent, and 70 per cent. Annual Report figures. Māori and Pasifika achievement figures are commonly the same or higher than for all TPP students, indicating that they are receiving appropriate support and their needs are being met, at least to the same extent as other students. For example, in the Music focus area in 2012, Māori and Pasifika students' qualification completion rate (92 per cent) for the Certificate in Contemporary Music and Performance was 5 per cent above the rate for the total group, and in the related diploma 1 per cent higher at 100 per cent. TPP is currently engaged in two pieces of research exploring the factors influencing Māori and Pasifika achievement rates.

TPP has a high proportion of students enrolled in block courses relating to their employment (approximately 50 per cent), and students achieve higher than average course completion rates. The organisation has robust self-assessment processes that show that these students and their employers find the courses to be highly relevant and add significant value in the workplace, for example in improved confidence on specific equipment or machinery.

Interviews with students and employers during this evaluation revealed that in some programme areas, for example Outdoor Education, 100 per cent of students gain employment in a field related to their study. Across most programmes reviewed in this evaluation, a high proportion of the full-time students gain employment in a related field subsequent to graduation.

A high proportion, typically 85 to 95 per cent, of students, for example within the Music faculty programmes, progress to higher study. Across the total student body, the percentage of students progressing to further or higher study is low; in 2012 this was 45 per cent. However, TPP statistics show that this is mainly attributable, for example to the trades area qualifications often finishing at a level 3 national certificate, or where there is only a single level 4 national certificate. Other factors include the high percentage of students who are in employment and studying part-time, and this was especially in evidence across the Allied Trades faculty which accounts for around 50 per cent of all student enrolments.

There was considerable evidence across all focus areas at this evaluation of close and active engagement with industry, including the developing project with SCIRT. The various faculties' programme advisory committees have in many areas been reviewed and reformed recently, providing critical input and analysis of programme content and adding to students' preparation for employment. This was well evidenced in the organisation's self-assessment records and confirmed through interviews with committee members and employers of graduates during this evaluation.

¹ Tertiary Education Commission published Educational Performance Data (EPDs) reference: <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Learners-Organisations/Learners/performance-in-tertiary-education/Educational-performance-at-individual-tertiary-providers/>

Across all faculties, teachers are well qualified in their technical subject areas and there is an active professional development process in place to develop existing and new tutorial staff in adult learning theory and practice. The organisation has a range of effective processes for performance appraisal. The evaluation team noted that one of the strengths of the organisation's performance appraisal processes was that they were adapted to meet the specific nature and requirements of each faculty. However, these processes were being reviewed and it was too early for evidence to be available to show improved performance. Student evaluations indicated a high level of respect for, rapport with and support from the tutors, and this was confirmed through the evaluators' observations and interviews with students. TPP has instigated teaching excellence awards for high-performing staff, and in one instance this has led to a proposal (currently in development) to Ako Aotearoa (National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence) for a National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award.

TPP Council and the senior management team have a clear and effective focus on student achievement as well as developing innovative solutions to emerging education and training needs. One example is TPP's involvement with the Christchurch rebuild. The organisation is engaged with SCIRT. This body is responsible for the rebuilding of the horizontal infrastructure in Christchurch (roads and underground piping), and TPP is developing training solutions to help meet the civil infrastructure skill requirements for the rebuild. This has involved a coordinated approach with all parties involved in the Canterbury rebuild, including the Tertiary Education Commission. This project is in its early stages but initial indicators point to its potential success.

The evaluation team noted a significant culture shift at TPP since the previous NZQA EER in 2011, towards improving the focus on student achievement, the quality and value of these achievements and implementing processes to track and monitor the effectiveness of changes. This is in evidence across the organisation, within the TPP Council, the senior management team, and tutorial and support staff. Evidence of this shift was noted at the sites visited by the evaluation team, with staff commenting that in some cases they had been visited by members of the Council and the chief executive. This was valued by staff, enabling closer and more direct lines of communication. Further to this, the evaluation team noted a cultural shift at TPP described by staff members as a shift from providing programmes and waiting for students to come, to going out to stakeholders with the message, 'Tell us what you want and we'll do it'.

The evaluation team considers that TPP has clear evidence that it is meeting the most important needs of students and key stakeholders, that the organisation has effective processes contributing to the educational success of the programmes evaluated, and that there is a history of educational performance improvements. However, overall performance data is primarily at the polytechnic sector national median, and immediate outcomes data, while very positive in many instances, is still being determined across the board, and determining longer-term outcomes is a work in progress.

Statement of confidence on capability in self-assessment

NZQA is **Confident** in the capability in self-assessment of **Tai Poutini Polytechnic**.

TPP has a consistent approach across all faculties to determining how well it is meeting the needs of its students and other stakeholders. The quantitative and qualitative data used in this analysis is robust, well-considered and validated. The organisation has effective processes to monitor how well changes are resulting in improvements to student learning. The quality and validity of the self-assessment processes was evidenced through TPP's comprehensive 'five pillars'. These include the Programme Annual Self-Assessment (PASA) documents, student satisfaction surveys, internal evaluations (including cross-team information sharing and benchmarking), the 'Bank' a central repository of information accessible by all staff and TPP's educational performance data held on the main student management system.

This 'five pillars' approach is one of the main changes to self-assessment at TPP over the last 18 months. It is a comprehensive process which has facilitated improved access to performance data for all staff. This in itself has resulted in improved cross-team benchmarking and raised awareness of key qualitative and quantitative performance information.

Key improvements resulting from improved self-assessment include:

- Improved communications across TPP (acknowledged by all staff)
- Revised quality management system policies and procedures
- Improved induction resources for new tutorial staff, including an online 'tutor toolkit'
- A programme for senior staff to visit and learn from high-performing polytechnics
- Further embedding three-part student satisfaction surveys
- Hardship fund set up to support struggling local students
- Revised complaints process resulting in faster resolutions
- Changes to the academic board to include a more diverse range of TPP staff
- Improved reporting and understanding of educational performance data
- PASA process now includes a 'PASA challenge' where staff present findings to the management team and prepare to defend challenges to their findings. One result has been improved understanding by finance and IT staff of resourcing needs
- Instigating graduate destination data collection

- Improved sharing of professional development via the 'Bank'
- Improved sharing of all performance information, including trends and remedies, resulting in better cross-faculty benchmarking
- Improvements to the e-learning platform as well as video-conferencing, developing DVDs and supplying computer tablets. These changes have supported a wider range of learning styles and have facilitated running distance courses, such as for Ski patrol, to provide continuity between face-to-face sessions.

TPP has further embedded its self-assessment plan and processes across all faculties and at all levels of the organisation. Factors that have contributed to improvements in TPP's capability in self-assessment are, for example, an improved Report Portal for sharing performance information across the organisation, and the further development of reflective practice across all staff, including improved communication between faculties and improved internal evaluations. An example of the improved communications is the chief executive's weekly newsletter, 'From the Cave', used to share information and to acknowledge examples of good practice. A leadership group meets three times per year at different sites to discuss student issues, improvements, trends and challenges. This group is having a significant impact in sharing understanding and contributing to on-going improvements.

The evaluation team noted that while self-assessment data and analysis was strong across the organisation, there were some specific areas that were particularly outstanding. For example, in the Music faculty a research paper has been written looking at why Māori and Pasifika students are achieving successfully, and this has already been shared across the organisation to help further lift Māori and Pasifika student achievements. A second independent piece of research is currently underway looking into how core Māori concepts and ways of learning are contributing to Māori achievement. This is likely to be a significant value to TPP and possibly the wider tertiary education sector. However, it is in its early stages and this cannot yet be determined.

Knowledge of graduate destinations is stronger in some faculties than others, and the need for a graduate tracking project has been identified to build a better understanding of how well programmes prepare students for employment. In one faculty, Outdoor Education, where immediate graduate outcomes, such as gaining employment, are known, a project recently got underway to track graduate outcomes, to determine the longer-term value of their study and qualifications and to further develop the programme. The value of this and resulting improvements are yet to be determined.

Some programmes experience reduced course completion figures, a key performance target in their performance plan with the Tertiary Education Commission. In a number of cases where students had left a programme early (resulting in lower course and qualification achievement rates), students were

known to have gained highly valued 'dream jobs' directly related to their study. TPP is exploring ways to continue to work with these ex-students to help them complete their courses and qualification in order to best meet the students' needs, as well as stakeholders' long-term needs for trained and qualified staff.

TPP benchmarks its performance on a range of measures against the polytechnic and university sectors, and is actively engaging with high-performing polytechnics to develop its self-assessment processes and analysis. Staff members involved in this are providing collegial activity and report that it has been valuable in building self-assessment understanding and developing tools to improve TPP's own analysis and decision-making processes. This is set to continue during 2013.

The TPP Council has a strong educational membership and has carried out internal reviews of the performance of both the Council as a whole and that of the chair. The chair of the Council noted that they receive a regular 'portfolio of information' such as trends in the sector, financial performance, reports from the academic board and management, a 'scorecard' of programme performance against educational performance indicator statistics, and student support information, and regularly discuss the organisation's performance against its commitments, including information regarding Māori, Pasifika and under 25-year-old student achievements. Members of the Council discussed with the evaluators, as staff had also, the organisation's shift from a passive Greymouth-based organisation to going out to staff and other stakeholders, taking a proactive approach more focused on meeting local and national stakeholders' needs as well as meeting students' needs. This change was noted as helping the Council understand issues, providing it with an improved perspective on developing, reviewing or changing strategies to better meet the needs of its local and regional community as the basis for improving the polytechnic's performance both locally and nationally.

The evaluation team considers that TPP has made significant progress in implementing its self-assessment strategies over the last 18 months and has confidence these are well embedded across the organisation. The changes have resulted in all personnel in the organisation having an improved understanding of how well they are meeting the needs of their students, stakeholders and those of the wider community. This is resulting in improvements in student achievement such as through adapting programmes to better meet those needs, improved resourcing, tutor professional development and linking students with workplaces to help prepare them to enter employment. Examples of these improvements are noted in detail within the body of this report.

The areas for further development in self-assessment are, for example, around strengthening processes to collect and review feedback from industry, including employers of graduates.

Findings²

1.1 How well do learners 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**

Over the past five years, TPP's course completion rates have been consistently above the Tertiary Education Commission published national medians, and qualification completion rates have been slightly below the medians. The 2012 interim data shows overall student course completion rates at the median and qualification completion rates 1 per cent above the median. Overall, these results show a pattern of improving performance over this five-year period in keeping with the sector median increases.

Across the focus areas reviewed at this evaluation two-thirds of the programmes are achieving above the sector medians for both course and qualification completion rates. Course and qualification completion rates for 2011 averaged 80 per cent and 81.44 per cent (median 79 and 57 per cent respectively), and for 2012 the interim figures for course and qualification completion rates are 84 and 81 per cent (median 78 and 61 per cent respectively). These results are significantly above the overall results for TPP's programmes and the sector medians and relate to approximately 48 per cent of the total student population. Results for the first SCIRT programmes show very high achievement (92 - 97 per cent), student satisfaction and employment rates, and very positive feedback from the SCIRT project team and employers.

Across all TPP's programmes, in 2011 the proportion of Māori and Pasifika students who completed courses was 1 per cent below the rate for 'all students' who completed courses, and the proportion of Māori and Pasifika students who completed qualifications was 4 per cent above 'all students' who completed qualifications. These results are an indication of TPP's success in focusing on lifting student achievement overall, and specifically lifting Māori and Pasifika student achievements. While there have been few international students in recent years (currently seven), there is a gap in the analysis of how well they are achieving compared with domestic students. However, staff know these students individually and can discuss their achievements and offer individual support. This is not currently putting international students at risk, but with plans to increase international student numbers, the lack of structured international student support could become an issue in the future.

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

TPP is showing strong achievement with students progressing to higher levels of study. For example, 85 to 95 per cent of graduating foundation-level Music students progress on to the certificate and subsequently to the diploma programme. A very high percentage, (up to 100 per cent at times), of these students graduate at certificate or diploma level, with many winning awards. This pattern of progression to higher study was also reflected in the Outdoor Education faculty. Students are also making significant gains in other life skills, such as with literacy and numeracy, when measured against the Tertiary Education Commission online progressions tool as required.

In some areas, for example Allied Trades, even where students may not complete a qualification, the skills and knowledge achieved have been acknowledged by students and their employers to be contributing to their well-being and abilities, for example they have 'improved productivity and confidence on the job'. In other faculties, such as Outdoor Education, there was also consistent qualitative data showing that students are making significant gains in knowledge and skills beyond the minimum required by the qualification. For example, employer feedback to TPP has that confirmed students' knowledge and understanding of business skills, such as marketing and product and service analysis, have in some cases led to measurable business growth. The evaluators noted that TPP is successfully verifying these anecdotes and examples of student achievements. In some cases, such as those noted above, students have gained achieved valuable transferable business skills beyond the minimum learning outcomes of the qualifications in which they are enrolled.

TPP has made strong progress in developing its ability to not only collect achievement data, which was reasonably strong previously, but also to make this data available across the organisation using the 'Report Portal', enabling all staff to have access so they can review their programme's or faculty's performance and to compare or benchmark this across the organisation. This improvement to data access, combined with an organisational culture shift to opening up communication and increasing the dialogue between faculties and between levels of management, has resulted in a more robust self-assessment of student achievement. There are still areas to explore, such as further analysis to determine the equity of achievement, for example across programmes, tutors, delivery sites, faculties, benchmarking by gender or ethnicity, analysis of trends over time or benchmarking against other tertiary providers.

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

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

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

Across most focus areas reviewed at this evaluation, TPP was able to show a range of evidence where students' outcomes were of significant value. Examples of this are the high number of students from the Outdoor Education programmes going into employment (100 per cent into employment from the 2012 diploma), graduates undertaking challenging eco-tourism roles such as in the Solomon Islands, and comments from staff at a university in regard to the high calibre of graduates from the Music programme. TPP's self-assessment results indicate that employers across most programmes reviewed at this evaluation have commented on the work-readiness of graduates, for example, 'They are ready to go' and, 'Nearly all [ski] patrollers here are from TPP'. The organisation collects accounts of added value such as these, and is developing processes to monitor this information across all programmes to build a more complete picture to inform its self-assessment.

Some programmes engage with and add significant value to the local community. One example of this is the Outdoor Education programme where TPP students under staff supervision facilitate a range of outdoor education activities for local secondary schools. This has added value to both the TPP students and the secondary schools, with TPP students developing skills facilitating and leading client groups, and the secondary schools gaining access to outdoor education programmes that would otherwise be difficult to access.

The Music faculty's Certificate in Foundation Sound and Music and Certificate in Contemporary Music Performance students are making significant gains in their literacy and numeracy through integrated literacy and numeracy as assessed against the Tertiary Education Commission online assessment tools and progression tests. Students interviewed at this evaluation confirmed they are also gaining increased confidence, and in some cases completing a course for the first time and setting 'a foundation for [their] future'. The organisation is collecting a wide range of data on the value of the outcomes of its programmes, through such mechanisms as student surveys related to programmes and tutors, and graduate interviews.

Across the organisation, there is some variability in the robustness of the self-assessment data, for example quantitative data is stronger than qualitative data overall, and in some cases the qualitative data or student and employer experience and stories are not well captured for future review and reflection. Some faculties have initiated a process for reviewing how the programmes have added value over a longer timeframe. However, this process is in the early stages and it is too early to determine its success.

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

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

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

TPP staff are highly focused on ensuring that programme content and delivery match the current technical needs of industry, that teaching and learning strategies and resources result in students being well prepared for the workplace, and that the training needs of students are well catered for. This was consistently in evidence at all focus areas through staff, student and employer interviews, as well as through the programme advisory committees meeting minutes and interviews with committee members at this evaluation.

A high percentage of students are gaining employment on graduation. For example, in 2012, 100 per cent of the Diploma in Outdoor Instruction and Guiding graduates gained employment. This was on average 93 per cent over the past three years. As noted elsewhere in this report, a high percentage of students are progressing to higher-level study and a high percentage of these students are graduating, indicating that the programmes are meeting the study and academic needs of the students. The organisation has a number of accounts and informal feedback from employers of graduates noting graduates' readiness for entering the workforce.

The majority of enrolments with the Allied Trades programmes come through repeat business with client companies. The repeat business is of itself an indicator that these companies' needs are well matched, but further to this, company feedback is very positive about the training provided, noting that supervisors have observed that their employees develop improved confidence on the job, and increases in productivity. In one industry sector, an employer interviewed at this evaluation noted that 'tutors exceed the minimum standards for this industry', and that tutors are on occasion used as 'advisors to employers on current industry best practice'.

The SCIRT project is an example of TPP working through an extensive process to match the widely divergent needs of its local community, such as the need for retraining following redundancy as well as the skill needs of contractors involved in the Canterbury rebuild. During this evaluation the phrase, 'Tell us what you want and we'll do it' was heard in a variety of contexts, but it was within the planning and initial rollout of this project where it was particularly evident. TPP has in the past delivered a range of programmes relating to civil plant, and quarrying and mining, and for this project the National Certificate in Infrastructure Works (Level 2) forms the core of this programme. However, the core programme has been modified and reviewed with the Christchurch-based SCIRT team in collaboration with the other parties involved in the Canterbury rebuild. While this evaluation is not able to reach conclusions as to how well this programme will perform over time, early indications

are that the planning and consultation have been detailed and well planned and have contributed to the success of initial delivery. The programme is likely to be successful in matching the needs of stakeholders, including learners.

TPP's processes for determining how well it is matching the needs of stakeholders, including learners, are robust and consistent across most faculties. However, the evaluators noted that there was some variation in the completeness or documentation of industry feedback. Staff members are aware of this and there are clear plans to improve by enhancing the employer survey form questions and improving the collection and collation of ad hoc employer comments for future review and reflection to identify areas for improvement.

1.4 How effective is the teaching?

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**.

Evidence of effective teaching was apparent across all focus areas. This was evidenced through student achievement rates and students gaining work-readiness skills and progressing on to employment. There is a good level of engagement and rapport between tutors and students, positive student survey comments and positive statements from students during this evaluation.

Staff in all areas included in this evaluation have or are in the process of gaining appropriate technical and adult learning qualifications, and industry experience, for example in the Music faculty all tutors are practising musicians and also hold appropriate academic qualifications, with three currently working to complete their Master's degrees. In the Allied Trades faculty, staff hold relevant qualifications, licences and industry 'tickets' and have credibility within their respective industry sectors. Outdoor Education staff members hold appropriate academic qualifications and NZOIA instructor ratings or certificates. The interviews at this evaluation with employers and students concurred that tutors had industry credibility, which gives them the ability to motivate and inspire students by drawing on extensive real-world experience.

Robust and consistent internal moderation processes ensure assessment material is fit for purpose and judgements are consistent. Standard-setting bodies, industry training organisations and the NZQA Tertiary Assessment and Moderation unit have in the main determined that TPP is assessing at the national standard and using appropriate assessment materials. Where gaps have been identified in assessment practice, TPP's internal moderation practices are taking appropriate steps to address them.

Staff members undergo an annual performance appraisal process which is linked to professional development opportunities, and commonly includes peer or programme leader observations, self-identification of areas for improvement,

discussions and development of a professional development plan. While there is some variation in this process across the focus areas, the evaluators considered this was of value because of the flexibility of the process, which can be adapted to best fit staff and faculty needs.

One indicator of the encouragement of quality in teaching is that in the past year TPP Council has introduced teaching awards. One faculty team has received the TPP Excellence in Teaching Award, and this team is currently collating a proposal to Ako Aotearoa for the National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award. In another faculty, the programme leader was a finalist in the TPP Excellence in Teaching Award in 2012.

Programmes are well resourced with current industry relevant materials, and in some cases resourced beyond the essential needs of the programmes, for example the state of the art recording studios in the Music faculty. This was valued highly by students interviewed at this evaluation.

The organisation's processes for self-assessment are robust and consistent across faculties, and include student programme evaluations and student tutor evaluations. The organisational restructure over the last 18 months has facilitated improved communication processes and access to information, encouraging a culture of reflection within faculties and between faculties. This development is adding potential strength to the organisation's ability to review and internally benchmark the quality of teaching. As mentioned in section 1.1 above, there is room to further develop the depth of analysis of a range of performance factors, such as student achievement data, to identify areas of particular learning and teaching strengths and opportunities for improvement.

1.5 How well are learners guided and supported?

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

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

Students receive a high level of support from a range of staff. TPP has broadened its approach to student support services since the previous EER in 2011, resulting in improvements to students' experience, such as clearer information about where and whom to go to for support, improved 'handover' between tutors where this is required, and an improved complaints process. Changes have also included support for staff to visit colleagues in highly performing polytechnics to share good practice, build networks and learn about what is working well at other institutions.

Library staff numbers have been increased, which has facilitated increased support for students in the learning environment, for example with academic writing, referencing and research skills, and a staged introduction of a wireless network at Greymouth – currently in progress in response to student feedback for easier and better internet access.

In 2012, TPP contracted an independent review of its compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. This review indicated a number of areas where the organisation was not fully compliant. An action plan has been developed and is being progressively implemented, addressing the identified issues. This review was instigated by the director strategic projects (including international).

Self-assessment practices have improved over the last 18 months, and student support and guidance is monitored and reviewed in a more robust and coherent manner across all sites and faculties.

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

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

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

The changes to the leadership and management structure over the last 18 months, as well as improving access to achievement information for all staff, has resulted in a shift across the organisation to focus directly on the quality of learning and teaching, and educational achievement. This was clearly evident during this evaluation, across all staff levels and delivery sites. TPP's key self-assessment documents also include more emphasis on discussing and analysing what faculty staff know about how well students are achieving and what is causing or influencing the results.

Some of the structural changes that are facilitating this cultural change are:

- Three times a year a leadership group meets to discuss student issues, improvements, trends and challenges to build improved understanding across faculties.
- Programme staff present to the management team their programme annual self-assessment documents and defend their ratings, providing a two-way exchange and sharing of knowledge. The programme summaries now include reporting on trends on an on-going basis so the management team as well as the Council have a clear picture of individual programme performance.
- The academic board and management team meet to reflect on the organisation's performance, review changes and assess how well this has assisted students and where value can be added.
- The appointment of a new chief executive and the introduction of a weekly newsletter between the chief executive and staff is resulting in improved communication and visibility of management to staff. The Council is also

being seen as more accessible and visible to staff, with members visiting the TPP sites away from the West Coast.

- Changes to programme management structures have provided an opportunity for professional support from management peers. This is evident across the focus areas, with programme managers working in a more collaborative manner.
- The management group involved in developing the organisation's investment plan has been expanded, thus broadening faculty involvement and ownership. Reports from management to Council now include issues, improvements and trends, so Council now has direct knowledge of and can provide support for initiatives to improve student achievement.

TPP has made major changes in the recent past to build on the aspects of self-assessment that were working well and to support all staff to be more reflective and to put more time into collecting evidence of student achievement across a range of factors. The evaluators observed a consistent approach across the organisation to review, challenge and identify strengths and areas for improvement, including at senior management and Council level. There are several areas where performance data could be further analysed and these are discussed throughout this report.

Focus Areas

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

2.1 Focus area: Governance, management and strategy

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

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

With the appointment of a new chief executive in 2011, the focus of both the Council and senior management has significantly shifted towards creating a culture of accountability, open communication and support for students to achieve. Examples of these improvements include: changes to internal communications; improved reporting and access to student achievement data so all personnel, including the Council, have regular access; and reducing layers of management shortening the 'chain of command', and increasing accountability at all levels. The effectiveness of these changes was commented on by all staff, and was evident to the evaluation team. Many staff commented that these changes have made the organisational purpose and goals of improving student learning and developing TPP's sustainability clearer and more achievable.

TPP operates in a long and narrow geographical area (8.7 per cent of New Zealand, and the longest region) and has a widely dispersed small population (2012 estimate 32,900, approximately 0.8 per cent of the New Zealand total). The geography and relatively small population of Westland poses significant challenges to the organisation to deliver training to meet the needs of its region. In recent years, TPP has renewed its focus on meeting local needs while maintaining a presence as a national polytechnic to manage its sustainability.

The evaluation team saw strong and consistent evidence from all focus areas that the Council, management and staff were aligned in their focus, and have become more proactive and focused on meeting local and national stakeholders' needs as well as meeting students' needs. This was clearly evidenced with the current collaboration with the SCIRT project, designed to meet local redundant miners' training needs, and the skill requirements for the Canterbury rebuild, specifically in civil infrastructure.

Two pieces of staff research sighted by the evaluation team examining the factors leading to Māori and Pasifika success rates have the potential to make a significant impact across TPP, and possibly the wider tertiary education sector. The significance and value of these papers is also in terms of TPP supporting a developing culture of research prior to offering degree-level programmes.

The organisation's self-assessment strategy and processes have been well embedded, and a culture of self-assessment and reflection was clearly evident

across all levels of the organisation. The areas for further development in self-assessment are, for example, around strengthening processes to collect and review feedback from industry, including employers of graduates.

2.2 Focus area: International student support

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

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

Students receive clear and helpful information at the time of enrolment, which supports their introduction to studying and living in New Zealand. The student support team is available for international students, and examples were discussed of where specific and successful one-to-one support was provided. With the low number of international students, each student is known by staff, 'as in a family environment', with staff being proactive in identifying students' needs. One example was the library manager providing support in the weekend, arranging computer log-in codes to enable one student to make contact with their family at home.

With the appointment of a director of strategic development in early 2012, who has responsibility for the implementation of the international strategy, an independent external review of TPP's compliance with the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students was undertaken. This review indicated a number of areas where the organisation was not fully compliant. An action plan has been developed and is being progressively implemented to address the identified issues.

International students' achievements, including graduation rates, are aggregated across the total student body, although the evaluators did not see evidence of processes to monitor international students' success separately. TPP has very few international students (currently seven, individually well-known to staff) studying full-time and their achievements are recorded in the student management system. However, the organisation has plans to grow international student numbers, and formal processes and practices to monitor their success are needed.

Improvements noted at this evaluation included management facilitating a more coordinated approach to systems and practices, many of which apply to domestic as well as international students, such as regular team meetings and team discussions of issues to share information and solutions, as well as improvements to complaints processes.

2.3 Focus area: SCIRT (Stronger Canterbury Infrastructure Rebuild Team)

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

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

This is a collaborative partnership between TPP and SCIRT to address the skill shortages for the rebuild of the horizontal infrastructure in Christchurch (roads and pipework). The project is based on civil infrastructure needs and includes the TPP Certificate in Civil Plant Operations (Introductory) (Level 3) and the National Certificate in Infrastructure Works (strand in earthmoving) (Level 2). The planning allows for up to 200 students per annum to be trained and ready to enter employment. As has been publicly documented, the Christchurch rebuild has been slower than anticipated and the SCIRT project has been affected by this.

However, the SCIRT initiative has resulted in two programmes being offered so far, resulting in very high achievement, satisfaction and employment rates. The first programme was designed to provide training for Spring Creek miners, recently made redundant, and offered 28 credits towards the National Certificate in Extractive Industries (Introductory Skills) (Level 2). This programme ran twice in November 2012 with a total of 36 students, resulting in 99 per cent finishing the programme, 97 per cent achieving all component of the programme, and 88 per cent of those surveyed gaining employment. The second programme was associated with the Christchurch re-build, and offered 57 credits towards the National Certificate in Civil Infrastructure Works (Level 2), the Site Safe Passport, and the NZTA Traffic Controller Level 1 Certification. Students with appropriate licences completed the Wheels, Tracks and Rollers licence endorsement (80 per cent). One programme with 12 students was run between February and April 2013, resulting in 99 per cent completing the programme, 99 per cent achieving all components, and high student satisfaction.

At the time of this evaluation, TPP expected that at least one programme of training would have been completed. However, this was not the case due to factors outside of TPP's control. Early indications are that the 12 students currently engaged in training are successfully learning new knowledge and skills and gaining confidence in using civil infrastructure equipment, and are 'keen to be contributing to the Canterbury rebuild'. Trainees interviewed at this evaluation said the course had 'exceeded [their] expectations and their skill acquisition was directly relevant to their [potential] employment'. The first course has been in operation for eight weeks and there are no student survey results or final outcomes yet.

TPP has been delivering programmes in Civil Plant Operation (Introductory) (Level 2) for some time from its Christchurch base, and while these have not been directly linked, the results are a relevant indicator of the likely success of this SCIRT project, given that it is a related industry area. Results for the Civil Plant Operation programme for 2011 were very close to the overall ITP (institutes of technology and polytechnics) subsector medians. Course completions were 79 per cent (ITP

median 78 per cent), and qualification completions 57 per cent (ITP median 64 per cent), both reasonably strong results and consistent with other TPP programme results.

TPP has carried out a thorough review of the initial SCIRT programmes, including students' success on the programme, students' satisfaction with the programme and with tutors, and has reviewed employer and SCIRT Training manager feedback. Students interviewed at this evaluation indicated that they were developing a strong sense of good health and safety practice, were well supported, and have been assessed for literacy and numeracy needs. Personnel at the SCIRT noted that, 'TPP had been responsive, flexible, adaptable, able to think out of the square and on their feet'. These are all good indicators that the programme has the potential for longer term success.

2.4 Focus area: Music (part of MAINZ)

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

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

Students enrolled in the Certificate in Contemporary Music Performance (Level 4) and the Diploma in Contemporary Music Performance (Level 5) are achieving at a consistently high level. In 2012, course completion rates were 87 and 85 per cent respectively, and qualification completion rates were 86 and 99 per cent respectively. The certificate course results were approximately 20 per cent higher in 2012 than 2011, and the diploma results were at a similar level to 2011. These are significant achievements for this group of students when combined with the high student progression rate from the Certificate in Foundation Sound and Music (Level 2) programme to the certificate and on to the diploma, and the fact that the foundation programme is open-entry. The diploma programme leader was a 'finalist' in the TPP Excellence in Teaching Award in 2012.

Student withdrawal rates on the level 4 certificate and diploma programmes are very low, indicating students are well motivated and supported. The foundation certificate has provided a challenge with its open entry resulting in a higher level of student withdrawals. The faculty sees value in maintaining open entry to allow access to students who may otherwise not be able to enter this industry. There was a good level of evidence showing that the support provided at the foundation level is addressing student retention and supporting students well. The faculty has instituted a range of strategies to reduce the withdrawal rate, such as close monitoring of attendance, contact with student's homes and adjusting assessment processes, for example allowing students to complete assessments and deliver presentations in small groups, which has been a successful strategy to address students' whakama (shyness). Staff consider that currently these strategies are having a positive impact.

Self-assessment has identified that beyond the technical music skills, students are making significant gains in other life skills such as literacy and numeracy, as shown in the results of the Tertiary Education Commission online literacy and numeracy tests.

Self-assessment has also identified that Māori and Pasifika students are achieving at a similar or higher rate when compared against all students. As noted earlier in this report, a senior staff member has produced a research paper exploring success factors behind high Māori and Pasifika student achievements. The learnings gained from this paper are currently being shared across other faculties. This is a significant piece of research and a valuable strategy that is likely to have a positive impact across TPP.

2.5 Focus area: Outdoor Education

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

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

The Outdoor Education faculty is achieving consistently high course and qualification results (between 84 and 93 per cent for course completions and 72 to 94 per cent qualification completions for 2011 and 2012 across the two programmes), as well as graduates gaining employment. All of the 20 students enrolled in the Diploma in Outdoor Instruction and Guiding (Level 5) in 2012 gained employment in a related field, a very clear indicator of the value and relevance of this programme. The Certificate in Ski Patrol (Level 3) has consistently high course and qualification achievements, and although the employment outcome rate sits at around 50 per cent, this is mitigated to a large extent by the seasonal nature of the ski industry. Further to this, a number of students are understood to move to the Northern Hemisphere for the northern winter ski season, and are therefore harder to track to verify their employment status. One local employer interviewed at this evaluation, noted that, 'Nearly all our [ski] patrollers are from TPP'.

Self-assessment across this faculty is strong, well embedded and is used regularly to develop improvements, such as incorporating business skills into the programme. An example was provided where this had directly resulted in a benefit derived from a work experience placement. Following the student's analysis of the (work experience) business products and services, they suggested improvements that led to 'improved marketing, product and incident reporting procedures', resulting in an improved financial return to the business.

The programme advisory committee for Outdoor Education has been reformed and reinvigorated recently and is now providing more robust input and guidance from the business community. This is also providing a vehicle for a current improvement project exploring how best to track employment outcomes beyond that following graduation. This was noted in the organisation's self-assessment and confirmed through the interviews with employers and committee members.

In 2012, the Outdoor Education programme gained the 'Outdoors Mark' from NZOIA. This is a significant achievement from this professional association. The programme also uses the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council National Incident Database, modelling industry best practice for the students.

This faculty's self-assessment practices are well embedded across all staff, robust and resulting in significant improvements, such as identifying through the programme advisory committee a need for students to develop higher-level 'soft' or transferrable skills for employment such as 'managing client expectations, reading body language and high-level communication skills for working with clients in risk situations'. These have been incorporated into the programme and are acknowledged by students and employers as having added value.

2.6 Focus area: Allied Trades

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

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

Most of the students enrolled in the Allied Trades faculty are in employment and enrol in short awards or courses towards achieving national certificates.

Over the last two years, the results of the rigging, scaffolding and cranes programmes have been consistently high, with course completion rates of between 84 and 89 per cent for the National Certificate in Rigging (with strands in basic, intermediate and advanced), and qualification completions of between 65 and 80 per cent.

Qualification completion rates for the National Certificates in Intermediate Scaffolding (Level 3 and Level 4) in 2011 and 2012 are between 111.8 per cent and 84 per cent.

Course completion rates for the Short Award in Pendant Crane Use (Level 2) are between 98 and 100 per cent, and qualification achievement rates are between 77 and 100 per cent.

Students enrolled on Industrial Ropes Access (Elementary) (Level 3) achieve course completion rates of between 49 and 95 per cent and qualification achievement rates of between 44 and 59 per cent. TPP acknowledges that the statistics for the Ropes programme may be inaccurate because of a recently identified issue with reporting in the student management system regarding student results for those who had not paid their fees. Tutors felt the actual achievement rates could well be a lot higher because anecdotally they know students are achieving well.

While the educational performance indicator data noted above shows some variability, there was clear evidence that students are gaining the correct skills for the industry and there is significant repeat business from companies, indicating that their needs are being met. Feedback from students and employers in the organisation's self-assessment is very positive, and the evaluation team's interviews with employers and other stakeholders, including industry training organisations, confirmed that industry standards are being met, current industry best practice is being taught and students have access to the right range of equipment. Employers interviewed at this evaluation made specific reference to seeing 'productivity increases', staff being 'proud and confident on the job', and they now 'look at what they are doing on the job', subsequent to attending training at TPP.

Staff acknowledged significant improvements to the organisational culture and visibility of management as well as the Council, who have visited more than once, contributing to improving internal communications. These changes have included a significant lift of staff awareness and skills around self-assessment and reflection since the previous EER.

Recommendations

NZQA recommends that Tai Poutini Polytechnic:

- Continue to implement and improve its self-assessment strategies, for example to explore the 'equity' of student achievement, for example across programmes, tutors, ethnicity, gender etc.
- Continue to develop and improve processes to capture in a more formal way the anecdotal feedback of successes, from past graduates or employers.
- Continue and improve the commitment to self-assessment including trends over time, looking for opportunities for internal and external benchmarking, capturing evidence of progress with self-assessment and reviewing practices.
- Continue improve self-assessment that develops successful achievement and outcomes.

Appendix

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

Self-assessment and external evaluation and review are requirements of programme approval and accreditation (under sections 249 and 250 of the Education Act 1989) for all TEOs that are entitled to apply. The requirements are set through the Criteria for Approval and Accreditation of Programmes established by NZQA under section 253(1)(d) and (e) of the Act and published in the Gazette of 28 July 2011 at page 3207. These policies and criteria are deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under the new section 253.

In addition, for registered private training establishments, the criteria and policies for their registration require self-assessment and external evaluation and review at an organisational level in addition to the individual programmes they own or provide. These criteria and policies are also deemed, by section 44 of the Education Amendment Act 2011, to be rules made under section 253. Section 233B(1) of the Act requires registered PTEs to comply with these rules.

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 EER process approved by the NZQA Board.

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).

Information relevant to the external evaluation and review process, including the publication Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review, is available at: <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/registration-and-accreditation/external-evaluation-and-review/policy-and-guidelines-eer/introduction/>

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