

Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality

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Strategic Directions

2004-2007



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Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality

Mission

To provide an excellent quality assurance service to Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics in New Zealand.

Purpose

ITP Quality aims to assist Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics to demonstrate their fitness as accredited providers of quality tertiary education programmes and services. We do this through effective quality assurance processes of approval, accreditation, monitoring and audit.

Goals

To achieve our mission, ITP Quality is committed to:

- maintaining an efficient, knowledgeable and impartial approval, accreditation, and audit agency;
- fostering the development of quality strategies, programmes and procedures in ITPs;
- promoting a quality systems approach in ITPs that is consistent with NZQA's Register of Quality Assured Qualifications, which includes the National Qualifications Framework;
- providing ITPs with leadership and support in quality assurance matters, including a system of audit with qualified knowledgeable accreditation and audit panels; and training provision for Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics on all relevant aspects of quality assurance;
- promoting public confidence in the quality of ITP programmes.

Principles

The following principles and values underpin all of our activities:

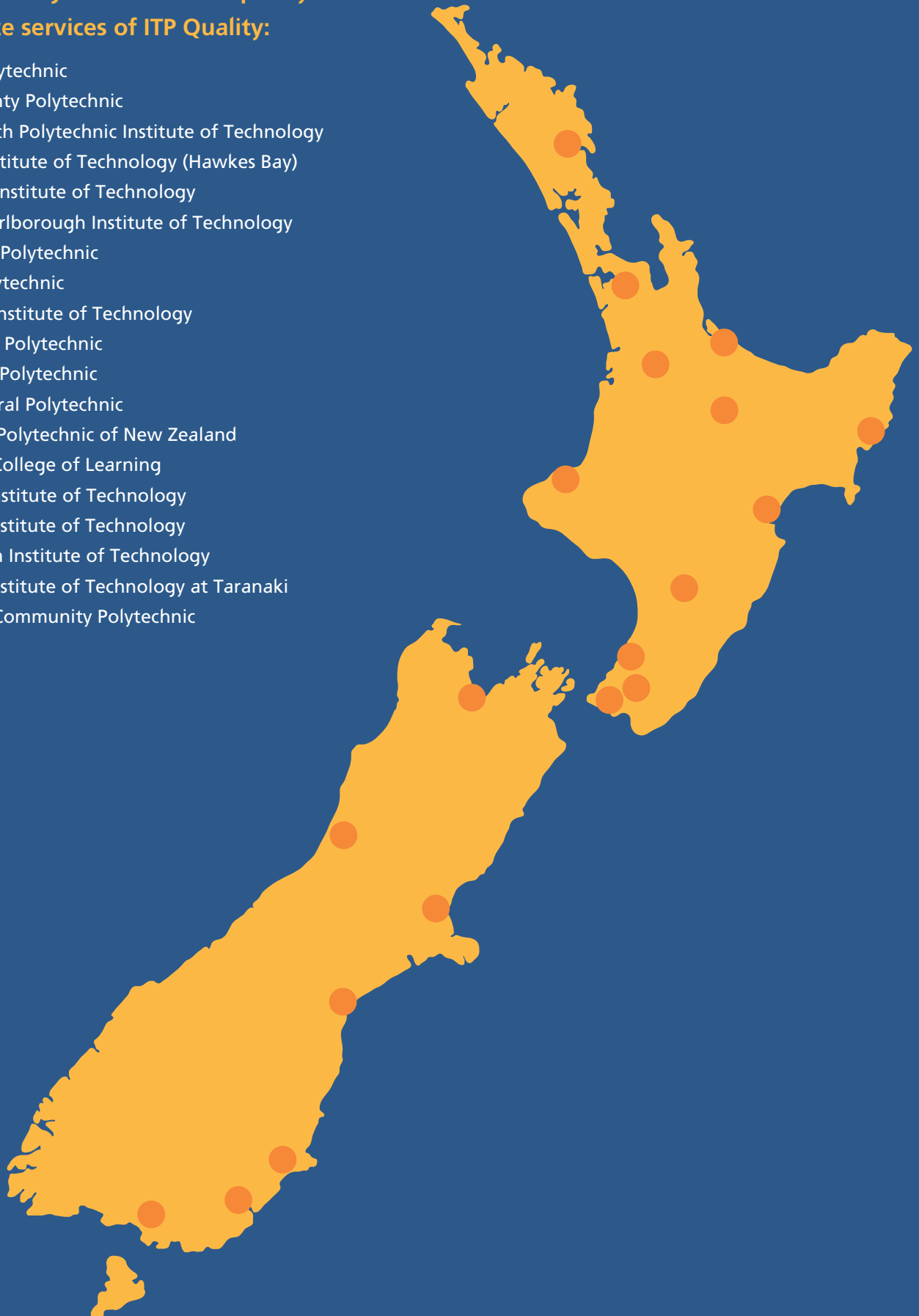
- a commitment to excellent quality education and training among ITPs;
- a respect for the autonomy of each institution, and the diversity within the ITP sector;
- support for the concept of continuous quality enhancement;
- a commitment to working in an impartial, fair and open manner;
- recognition of the need to work closely with the NZQA and other quality assurance bodies;
- a commitment to work closely with ITO's, industry bodies and professional groups.



Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics in New Zealand

The following ITPs utilise the quality assurance services of ITP Quality:

- Aoraki Polytechnic
- Bay of Plenty Polytechnic
- Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology
- Eastern Institute of Technology (Hawkes Bay)
- Manukau Institute of Technology
- Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology
- Northland Polytechnic
- Otago Polytechnic
- Southern Institute of Technology
- Tai Poutini Polytechnic
- Tairāwhiti Polytechnic
- Telford Rural Polytechnic
- The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand
- Universal College of Learning
- Waikato Institute of Technology
- Wairariki Institute of Technology
- Wellington Institute of Technology
- Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki
- Whitireia Community Polytechnic



External factors

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Following is a discussion of the principal external environmental factors that are currently impacting on ITP Quality's work.

Political environment

Government strategy for tertiary education

The Government established the Tertiary Education Commission in early 2003. Depending on the future role the TEC plays in quality assurance of tertiary education, we may need to adjust our strategic direction over time.

Three Government reviews that have been completed in the last three years will have implications for our work at ITP Quality. These are the review of industry training¹; the review of adult and community education; and the review of training opportunities and Youth Training². Publication of the adult literacy strategy is also relevant³.

In addition, the Government has released its Tertiary Education Strategy 2002-2007, which sets out six broad strategies with defined objectives. The first strategy is to *strengthen system capability and quality*, with one of its objectives being that *learners and the wider public have confidence in high levels of quality throughout the system*. This objective includes the following statement:

"The New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) will be continuing to refine, develop and enforce quality assurance measures and benchmarks, while facilitating innovative responses to changing needs. NZQA will have developed a strong working relationship with the TEC in order to ensure effective communication with providers regarding quality management and assurance issues."

Social environment

Increased expectations

Societal expectations of what the education system should deliver are increasing. These pressures are felt in ITPs, and challenge everybody involved in vocational education and training to keep lifting the quality of the education that is delivered.

More New Zealanders are enrolling in tertiary education programmes, as society develops an expectation that near universal tertiary education is necessary in order to participate in today's knowledge economy.

The level of skill that is required to function in society and in the workforce is growing as the world becomes more complex and sophisticated. Advances in technology, greater complexity in the workplace, developments in the handling of information, the changing requirements of service and production

At ITP Quality, we anticipate the need to regularly review our strategic approach to take into account changes in the wider government strategy for tertiary education.



¹Skills for a Knowledge Economy: A Review of Industry Training in New Zealand Office of the Associate Minister of Education (Tertiary Education), March 2001.

²Building Futures Te Aro Whakamua: A Review of Training Opportunities and Youth Training

³More Than Words: The New Zealand Adult Literacy Strategy Office of the Minister of Education, May 2001

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industries, and the emergence of different work-life patterns in the twenty-first century are affecting everyone's lives.

These trends put pressure on ITPs, both from younger students who have left school and look to an ITP education to provide them with vocational skills and competencies, and from greater numbers of mature students who are turning to an ITP education for upskilling or refreshment.

Demographic pressures

The ITP sector is likely to face an ongoing mix in its student population. The number of students in the 18 to 24 year-old group is likely to reduce in the short-term, although demographic pressures on the secondary school system will lead to longer-term increases in the ITP participation of this age cohort. These participation changes may not be uniform across the country, as urban migration affects participation in regional ITPs. It is likely that there will be increases in numbers of Maori and Pacific Island students in ITPs.

The labour market will also face a relative increase in the numbers of middle and older age groups as the general population ages. The effects of this trend on ITPs include more mature students enrolling for further education, and possibly more pressure on part-time and distance education enrolments as well as increasing requests for work-based programmes.

ITPs already provide a range of programmes to meet the varied education demands of New Zealand's communities. Over the next 20 years, the range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds of ITP students will further diversify. By 2020, nearly half of ITP students, and an increasing proportion of New Zealand's work force, will identify as Maori, Pacific Island or Asian.

Teaching staff in the ITP system will need to be retrained and/or upskilled in order to meet the specialised training needs of this increasingly heterogeneous population. Programme content, delivery methods and research undertaken in ITPs will also need to recognise and cater for this diverse student clientele.

Global influences will continue to affect New Zealand. These include international economic developments, the impact of new technology, changing patterns of trade and immigration, and increasing labour market mobility. More overseas students are coming to New Zealand to study, and many New Zealanders continue to head offshore for their OE.

The Internet provides unprecedented opportunities for overseas qualifications to be offered to New Zealanders, and for New Zealand providers - including ITPs - to market their qualifications internationally. These trends will offer students more choices and opportunities. Accordingly, ITPs will need to develop strategies that are more global in character, and we at ITP Quality will need to develop appropriate policies in order to respond to these international developments.



A strategic response

To deal effectively with the challenges posed by the external political and social factors identified above, we have prepared a strategic approach for the next three years. ITP Quality's key strategies are outlined below:

1. Promoting excellence

The promotion of excellence and international best practice standards is critical for ITPs to maintain their central role in New Zealand education. Quality teaching and learning support are also necessary to ensure the best possible student outcomes are achieved. ITP Quality will monitor and finetune its processes and practices to ensure ITPs offer consistently high quality programmes, and to promote a culture of continuous improvement among ITPs.

2. Assuring quality through audit

The nature of ITP Quality's work is changing rapidly from front-end approval and accreditation, to audit. However, the legislative responsibility will continue to be approval of programmes and accreditation of ITPs because audit is not deemed a quality assurance process in tertiary legislation. Yet we at ITP Quality are using audit as a means of making approval and accreditation decisions.

ITP Quality audits Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics against standards developed by the ITP Sector in 1999. These standards are under review in 2004 in preparation for the next audit round from 2006.

We are aware that the credibility of the audit process relies very much on the strength, calibre and professional judgement of audit teams, comprising well-qualified and respected auditors. We are currently working with the Quality Society of Australasia (QSA) to have our lead auditors fully qualified, and internationally recognised. Consistency of audit decisions is another critical factor, and regular meetings of auditors will assist in this.

We are also amassing a wealth of data and information as part of our audit of ITPs. It is our intention that ITP Quality becomes a source of information and shared good practice principles within the ITP sector, through the publication of regular good practice guides.

3. Responsibility for degrees in the ITP sector

The Education Act 1989 and subsequent amendments gives NZQA the right to delegate approval and accreditation functions to inter-institutional bodies. NZQA has delegated to the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics in NZ (the inter-institutional body for ITPs) the right to approve, accredit and monitor degrees offered by ITPs at under-graduate level. ITP Quality has been operating the delegation from 1 July 2003.

ITP Quality has been working closely with NZQA to ensure an effective transfer of responsibilities for degree approval. ITP Quality will collaborate with NZQA in contracting personnel for the degree-related activities.

In time, ITP Quality expects to extend its jurisdiction to post-graduate programmes so that all ITP programmes are incorporated into the scope of ITP Quality's role.

ITP Quality

4. Inter-institutional collaboration

At ITP Quality, we are actively seeking opportunities to collaborate and share expertise with the audit agencies of other inter-institutional bodies.

We are an integral member of the Inter-institutional Quality Assurance Bodies Consultative Group (IIQABCG). This group is coordinated by NZQA, and meets four times a year. Other members include New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics in NZ (ITP New Zealand), New Zealand Vice Chancellors Committee (NZVCC), Committee of University Academic Programmes (CUAP), New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit (NZUAAU), Association of Colleges of Education in New Zealand (ACENZ), and Colleges of Education Accreditation Committee (CEAC). Similarly, we are part of a group of academic audit agencies that meets every three months. This group now collaborates closely, sharing auditors, and audit expertise. For example, the Group has negotiated guidelines for mutual acceptability of audit evidence with the Office of the Auditor General. NZQA and ITP Quality will also now share auditors for the full audits of ITPs and PTEs (where NZQA require two auditors, one may be an ITP Quality audit team member).

Other initiatives include working with NZQA and Ministry of Education to find a more efficient way to transfer approval/accreditation decisions to the MOE's new database, and working with NZQA to implement the necessary requirements for its Register of Quality Assured Qualifications, which became operational in August 2003.

5. Communications

We recognise that good communications promote better understanding, and greater accountability, of ITP Quality's work.

In order to promote public confidence in the quality of ITP programmes, and to foster understanding of quality assurance issues within the ITP sector, we have developed a website. The website is operational at the following address: www.itpq.ac.nz

Currently, the ITP Quality annual report is published as part of the ITP New Zealand Annual Report. From 2004 onwards, we intend to produce and circulate a separate formal annual report, as a way of increasing ITP Quality's visibility, and improving communications with our key stakeholders. This report will also form part of the published ITP New Zealand report.

Vince Catherwood
Chairman

Peter Scanlan
Director



looks ahead

Appendix

Brief history of NZPPC/ITP Quality

In 2004 NZPPC changed its name to ITP Quality, however for the purposes of the history of the Committee it is referred to in this appendix by its original name.

The New Zealand Polytechnic Programmes Committee (NZPPC) was established as a Committee of the Association of Polytechnics in New Zealand (APNZ) in 1991 after the Education Amendment Act 1990 was passed, which allowed for NZQA to delegate its quality assurance functions to inter-institutional bodies.

The delegation became effective on 1 January 1993. 2004 year marks our 12th anniversary in operation.

Initially, NZPPC's primary role was accreditation of Polytechnics to deliver the existing, nationally approved certificates and diplomas, which preceded the advent of national qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This focus changed as more unit standards and qualifications were registered, to a point where NZPPC's main role from 1994 to 1997 was accreditation of Polytechnics to assess against unit standards.

In 1998 and beyond, the focus of the NZPPC's accreditation activity moved away from NQF accreditation towards approval and accreditation of local Polytechnic programmes. This peaked in 1999 with NZPPC approving 354 local programmes. This was a five-fold increase on 1997 figures, largely due to the perception that programmes would need to be externally approved to secure public funding, which had been signalled in the Government white paper on tertiary education.

In 2000, the focus of NZPPC quality assurance activity again changed towards academic audit. The APNZ had previously established a working party to develop audit standards for the Polytechnic sector, which were adopted by NZPPC. The NZPPC began with the first of its "Focus" audits in July and completed 10 such audits during 2000. The basis of the audit process was the APNZ *Standard Development of Qualifications and Educational Programmes*. The remaining 12 Polytechnics completed the focus audit process in 2001.

As a result of the focus audit process, NZPPC changed the system on which it based its approval process for local programmes for Polytechnics that successfully met the audit standard. Since then, it has given more autonomy to Academic Boards and accepted internal programme approval processes as the basis for making external approval decisions.

In 2001 the process of full academic audits against 12 academic standards began. While NZPPC continues to accredit Polytechnics to deliver units and qualifications registered on the NQF, its primary focus is now as an audit agency. By mid 2003, NZPPC will have completed the first round of full academic audits.

In November 2002, NZQA extended the delegation to APNZ to approve, accredit and monitor degrees in the Polytechnic sector at under-graduate level, effective 1 July 2003. The delegation currently excludes bachelor degrees with honours, post-graduate certificates and diplomas, masters and doctoral degrees.

In November 2003 the Association of Polytechnics in New Zealand changed its name to Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics New Zealand (ITP New Zealand) to reflect the fact that over half the polytechnics were called Institutes of Technology. NZPPC changed its name to **Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality)** in 2004.

Quality Assurance
for the ITP Sector

Approval Accreditation Audit



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For more on ITP Quality go to www.itpq.ac.nz

