

# DRAFT Strategic Directions 2011-2015

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Version 2: June 2010

### Introduction

Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality) is the Quality Assurance Body (QAB) for the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnic (ITP) sector in New Zealand. ITP Quality is a standing committee of Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics New Zealand Incorporated (ITP NZ Inc), operating the powers delegated to ITP NZ Inc. by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

The following document sets out ITP Quality's five-year strategic direction. It aims to ensure that New Zealand's ITP sector delivers and maintains programmes that are recognised nationally and internationally as being of the highest quality. It recognises that tertiary education is undergoing some major changes of direction and emphasis and that ITP Quality needs to adjust its priorities to meet and support these changes.

The draft strategy has been prepared with a number of environmental considerations in mind. These are listed in Attachment 1.

### Vision

To be a world class quality assurance body for New Zealand's Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics.

[The terms 'world class' and 'quality' are explained in Attachment 2]

### Mission

To provide independent quality assurance services that give students, government, employers and other interested parties authoritative information about the quality of education and training provided by New Zealand ITPs.

### Principles

The following principles underpin all of our activities:

- Independence
  - Evidence-based decision making
  - The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi
  - Transparency
  - Integrity
  - Excellence
  - Collaboration
  - Respect for institutional autonomy
  - Cost-effectiveness.
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## The Value Proposition for a Sector-led Quality Assurance Body

ITP Quality carries out its quality assurance tasks under delegation from NZQA. The stakeholders of ITP Quality and the ITPs themselves must be confident that this delegation brings added value. ITP Quality will provide a Quality Assurance system that:

- Is independent of the ITPs which make up the sector and brings specialist knowledge and expertise of that sector to bear
- Is responsive to the requirements and challenges of the ITP sector and is committed to working with ITPs to improve the quality of student outcomes
- Encourages ownership and mutual accountability for quality assurance across the ITP sector
- Provides an opportunity for all ITPs to collaborate to pursue excellence across the sector
- Challenges the ITP sector to match its performance against world standards for the provision of vocational education and training.

## Goals

The following goals will be priorities for ITP Quality over the next five years:

### 1. Improve Student Outcomes

To deliver robust and cost-effective systems for course approvals, accreditations and external evaluation reviews that demand continuous improvement in student outcomes across the ITP sector.

### 2. Enhance the reputation of the ITP sector for quality and value

To ensure the confidence of government, students, employers and the general public in the quality and value of the ITP sector through clear communications and information, and leadership in public debate on quality matters.

### 3. Enhance sector capability

To provide leadership and advice that will ensure that by 2015 all ITPs have the capability to self assess and evaluate their performance in improving student outcomes.

### 4. Develop world class organisational capability as a Quality Assurance Body

To build the capability, capacity and financial viability of ITP Quality to be a world class Quality Assurance Body working on behalf of the NZ ITP sector.

## Objectives

- Each year the Executive Director will develop an Annual Business Plan that will contain specific, measurable, results-orientated objectives to give effect to the Goals contained in the Strategic Plan
- The objectives will be approved by the ITP Quality Board and distributed to ITPs for their information
- Achievement against the annual objectives will be a significant part of ITP Quality's accountability and form the basis of the Executive Director's Annual Performance Agreement and Annual Report.

### Attachment 1: Environmental Factors

The environment in which ITPs and ITP Quality operate is undergoing rapid change. The following environmental factors have exercised particular influence in the development of this strategy:

#### External environmental factors

- The delegation from NZQA remains the most important factor influencing ITP Quality's work and strategy.
- The shift from an audit framework to a quality evaluation approach represents a fundamental change in quality assurance for both ITPs and ITP Quality. These changes include:
  - A greater emphasis on institutional self assessment
  - A greater emphasis on outcomes rather than inputs or processes
  - A new focus on monitoring and publicising the level of confidence that institutions are achieving quality outcomes
  - The likelihood that decisions on funding and provision will be linked increasingly to assessments of quality
- The review and rationalisation of qualifications across the tertiary education sector
- The Tertiary Education Strategy 2010–2015 with its strong focus on ensuring that tertiary education is supporting economic development, that course and qualification completion rates are improved, that greater investment is made in higher level qualifications and that Māori are supported to develop as Māori.
- The national and international economic situation will mean that funding for the ITP sector, and by implication for ITP Quality, is likely to be capped or at least seriously constrained for the foreseeable future
- ITP Quality's working relationships with a number of professional accreditation bodies require ongoing review and development
- ITP Quality is operating increasingly in an international quality assurance environment which will demand greater attention to international standards and best practice
- There is an increasing expectation that New Zealand professional and vocational qualifications will be aligned with international expectations.

#### Internal environmental factors

- The reshaping of ITP New Zealand Inc. in 2009 has had a number of implications for ITP Quality:
    - The ITP Quality Board has had to take on a number of governance functions formerly discharged by ITP NZ including finance, strategic direction and employment
    - ITP Quality will also need to assume a stronger role in communicating the work of the ITP sector to stakeholders, the ITP sector and the wider public and in providing leadership in public debate on quality matters
    - ITP Quality has a similar responsibility to ensure clear communications within the ITP sector on quality and quality policy issues
    - Increasingly ITP Quality is being challenged to work with more complex groupings of ITPs rather than with individual institutions or the sector as a whole
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- The shift to an Evaluative Quality Assurance system will require ITP Quality to take a larger role in assisting and advising ITPs in undertaking their Self Assessments/evaluations
- ITP Quality will be challenged to contain the compliance burden and cost of its services to ITPs even as it assists in the introduction of Evaluative Quality Assurance.

## Attachment 2: Clarification of Terms

This strategy aspires to *world class* status for ITP Quality. This means that ITP Quality will commit to international best practice standards for all its work and it will expect its performance to be judged against those standards.

The term *quality* must be understood in terms of ITP Quality's formal delegation. Formerly, quality was operationally defined by sets of standards and criteria that applied to the various processes of course approval, institutional accreditation, monitoring and periodic quality audit. These standards and criteria served as performance thresholds that institutions were required to achieve rather than as performance targets or challenges to which they might aspire.

The new Evaluative Quality Assurance approach challenges institutions to evaluate their performance and quality by addressing a series of 'key evaluation questions'. These questions effectively expand the operational definition of *quality* to include questions about learner achievement, value to stakeholders, programme relevance (i.e. match with learner and stakeholder needs), teaching effectiveness, learner support and governance and management effectiveness. Just as importantly, this approach challenges ITPs (and ITP Quality itself) to aspire to continuous improvement and excellence rather than simply satisfying a set of threshold criteria.

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