

Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality

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Academic Audit

Summary Report

Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology

(May 2007)



INTRODUCTION:

In its “Guiding Philosophy – Kaupapa” statement CPIT defines its purpose as providing “applied tertiary education and research contributing to the future social, economic and cultural wellbeing of the people, communities and organisations particularly of Canterbury”. The first priorities in its vision for 2020 are:

- to be the preferred provider of applied and vocational learning opportunities in Canterbury, and
- to have students who are well cared for and taught by high performing staff.

“Quality” is defined at CPIT as “delivering what we promise to a recognised professional standard”. In the Annual Report for 2006 it is noted that a Quality Management System “is never finished” and that “the optimum level of quality is never reached” – hence the QMS Manual is entitled *Towards Quality*.

In its Profile 2007-2009 CPIT has identified the following specific areas of high strategic relevance for the Institute with regards the network of provision across its region:

- Health, well being, and social services
- ICT, including both computing and electronics engineering
- Technician and trades training in all major areas
- Business
- Māori development
- Foundation studies
- Design
- Adult and Community Education (ACE)
- Languages

The Institute has multiple programmes operating in these areas and aims to grow its capacity and develop new offerings.

Forward planning by the Council is giving considerable attention to the development of models which will enable the Institute to address the requirements of the new directions being signalled by TEC. To this end the CEO has developed a draft Strategic Plan which has been endorsed by Council. This includes a “Guiding Philosophy – Kaupapa” which will inform business and investment plans for 2007 and beyond and encourage further stakeholder consultation.

The Guiding Philosophy – Kaupapa describes the purpose and values of the Institute, the Council vision through to 2020 and the key success indicators to be used. Strategic priorities and goals, together with success indicators, have been developed for 2008-10 with a priority planning focus on

- TES/STEP Priorities;
- Foundation Education;
- Stakeholder engagement; and
- Organisation sustainability.

CPIT affirms its pride in its history of providing Adult and Community Education and the quality of its offerings and has confirmed its commitment to providing quality learning experiences in this market. Although it expects to experience a slight reduction of offerings, it expects to retain a reasonably stable commitment to, and portfolio of, adult community education over the long term. This will be guided by the goals included in the 2006 business plan to

- enhance connections with communities to be able to understand and meet their needs;
- provide learning opportunities when and how communities prefer; and
- meet the needs of those fostering community development.

Courses developed to meet these goals are expected to conform to the recommended ACE priorities.

Programmes are delivered on two main campuses in Christchurch and a small campus in Auckland. Most programmes on the Sullivan Avenue Campus are under the auspices of the Trades Innovation Institute and it is also host to the innovative TradeFIT initiative. A Diploma in Interior Design is the only programme housed on the Auckland Campus. Although the programme offered in Auckland was not part of the audit sample, a short visit was made by the Lead Auditor to the Auckland Campus prior to the main audit to check on the ways in which the quality systems of the Institute are implemented in such a remote setting. Discussions with staff and students confirmed that effective contacts were maintained at management level and there was no evidence to suggest that the general standards of the Institute were not being met on this campus.

In 2006 the Institute achieved an EFTSs total of 5,966 of which 4,981 were full cost recovery. This compared with 6,168 (5,023 full cost recovery) in 2005.

It is noted that there have been changes in the organisation of the Institute since the last audit, and that a new Chief Executive, Dr Neil Barns, took up his position in July 2006. Changes that have occurred within the last eight or nine months or are currently underway include:

- *Creation of a new faculty*: Te Puna Wanaka
- *Merging of faculties*: Health & Sciences and Humanities have been merged into a single faculty and further mergers are planned to reduce the number of faculties to four.
- *Amalgamation of service divisions*: six previous divisions have been merged to create two new divisions - Education Services and Corporate Services.

It was also noted that there have been a number of changes in senior managers over the past two years and that in some cases substantive appointments are yet to be made.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

In its Profile 2007-2009 CPIT identified nine areas of study as being of high strategic relevance for the Institute with regards the network of provision across its region and now has multiple programmes operating in all these areas with the aim of growing its capacity and developing new offerings. The targeted areas are:

- Health, well being, and social services
- ICT, including both computing and electronics engineering
- Technician and trades training in all major areas
- Business
- Māori development
- Foundation studies
- Design
- Adult and Community Education (ACE)
- Languages

Forward planning by the Council is giving considerable attention to the development of models which will enable the Institute to address the requirements of the new directions being signalled by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and to this end has approved a draft Strategic Plan which includes a “Guiding Philosophy – Kaupapa” intended to inform business and investment plans for 2007 and beyond.

In 2006 the Institute achieved an EFTSs total of 5,966 of which 4,981 were full cost recovery. This compared with 6,168 (5,023 full cost recovery) in 2005.

CPIT has a mature Quality Management System which has evolved over the last fourteen years and systematically conforms to the twelve standards of ITPNZ. The system is comprehensive and, although management and administrative staff are able to navigate their way through the requirements without difficulty, there are compliance costs associated with such a detailed system. It is recognised that much of the complexity and detail is driven by the need to comply with external agencies, but it is important that the Institute continues to review procedures with a view to streamlining them wherever possible.

The Institute’s commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi is clearly evident throughout its operations and a commitment to Maori education is reflected in the management structure, policies and practices (including the active role played in Te Tapuae o Rehua). Te Puna Wanaka has been established as a full faculty with its own Dean.

Concern for the public interest and the responsible and effective use of resources is being very effectively managed by the Institute through the Academic Board and Management. Before programmes are approved (or re-approved) faculties are required to establish their strategic value to the satisfaction of the Management Team. They are then required to develop a detailed business plan which includes a justification for the use of the financial resources involved. Final approval through Management Team and Academic Board includes an assessment of academic relevance. The development process for any new programme is multi-dimensional and comprehensive. It is designed to ensure that, not only is the programme educationally sound, but that it is also financially viable and meets the priorities of both the Institute and the government.

Annual surveys are conducted to assess student satisfaction and students generally indicated

satisfaction with the process and outcomes.

The Institute has developed a course approval process for Adult and Community Education courses which takes full account of the need to provide an assurance that they conform to both the Institute's goals and nationally established priorities.

Resource planning permeates the Institute's activities - from individual training and study programmes, through Schools and Faculties, to the Institute as a whole – and staff with management responsibility are very clear as to the procedures for budgeting and negotiating resources.

The Institute's complex administrative system places significant time demands on deans and administrators, notably in those faculties where restructuring has resulted in amalgamation of administrative units and where new appointments have been made. The audit team considered that CPIT would benefit from reviewing its current administrative structures and compliance activities now that more staff are research-active and rapid advances in knowledge, technology, educational resources and practice are absorbing more work time.

Considerable effort is being made to ensure that students have access to the often very expensive high technology equipment that many of them expect to use when in employment. Initiatives in this regard include the donation or loan from industry and supervised student access to modern equipment in local plants and factories. The developments planned for the Sullivan Avenue campus (notably the Plastics Centre of Excellence and TradeFIT) should ensure that CPIT has a larger and more current portfolio of technological facilities in the future.

The Institute has comprehensive health and safety policies and procedures which apply to staff and students on, as well as off, campus.

Staff are appropriately qualified, have a history of relevant work experience and maintain strong links with industry and professional associations. They impressed with their enthusiasm and commitment to the provision of quality educational delivery. The passion to provide the very best learning experiences and the support to enable learners to succeed was evident in the academic staff as well as colleagues in support and management positions.

In general the performance appraisal system was recognised as adding value to the on-going development of staff, with its linkage to professional development plans for the forthcoming year. There was, however, some variability across the Institute with regard to the implementation of staff appraisal and professional development requirements. It is expected that the forthcoming review of Human Resources procedures will consider how compliance with, and consistency of, these requirements can be most effectively achieved. This review will also consider how completion of teacher training requirements can be effectively monitored. The lack of recent staff appraisals in one School was seen as requiring corrective action and this was agreed with the Institute.

A recent restructuring, which took effect at the beginning of 2007, saw the amalgamation of pastoral care and learning support services within one team and this structural change has facilitated easier communication between staff and students. The Institute is effectively auditing its provision of pastoral care for International Students and is particularly effective in monitoring the operation of its homestay programme.

It was noted that the re-accreditation procedure has been replaced with a system of biannual programme reports with a full review every three to five years. This is expected to strengthen institute-wide communication of issues and their resolution.

Active industry advisory committees provide input into wider curriculum issues, including in some cases, tangible contributions to effective delivery, such as work experience and equipment, as well as advice. The regular cycle of programme review, with its requirement for industry consultation, ensures that programmes offered by CPIT remain up-to-date and viable. Staff have, as a result of the introduction of regular audit events, come to see the programme document as a 'living' document, which provides the basis for consistent quality, whilst at the same time it is continuously evolving to meet changing industry needs.

Work placements are being effectively monitored, closely integrated into the respective curricula and supported by comprehensive documentation. Students on work placements are able to acquire an understanding of the importance of health and safety as well as Treaty issues. The former are uniformly emphasised, but the latter vary according to the nature of the qualification. Treaty issues are always to the fore in such professional programmes as Social Work and Nursing Practice and only slightly less evident in Hospitality and Recreation courses.

CPIT has joined the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) scheme where research active staff are peer assessed by panels of subject experts and the institution is ranked. Out of the polytechnics and institutes of technology CPIT has been ranked third, indicating that the research environment noted by the previous audit team has developed in the past five years. Research plans and projected outputs are discussed during annual performance reviews and there is clear evidence of a supportive research environment within the Institute. In order to increase the number of peer-assessed research outputs, competitive Publication Incentive Grants have been made available to academic staff. Considerable thought has gone into ensuring close functional links between research and teaching.

CPIT has a mature, well conceived and effective system of internal audit overseen by the Director, Academic and implemented by two contracted external auditors who are experienced and of high standing in the sector. Audit results and recommendations are presented to, and their implementation subsequently monitored by, Management Team, the Academic Board and/or Council as appropriate. Over the five year period since the formal internal audit process was introduced, programmes from all schools and faculties have been subject to audit and these audits have embraced all 12 Standards.

Therefore the audit team concludes that CPIT continues to meet all twelve ITP New Zealand Academic Quality Standards and recommends that the ITP Quality Board confirms the Institute's Quality Assured Status for a further period of four years.

ITP Quality Board decision (11 June 2007)

That Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology be awarded Quality Assured status for a further four years, consistent with ITP Quality requirements.