

# **Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality**

**Mana Kounga ä-Pütahi Hangarau, ä-Kuratini**

## **Academic Audit**

## **Summary Report**

**Manukau Institute of Technology**  
(November 2006)



## **INTRODUCTION:**

In its 2005 Report Manukau Institute of Technology identified its role as serving a diverse range of students seeking tertiary educational opportunities, with a focus on sub-degree programmes. In the report it was noted that significant bridging and foundation programmes, relationships with PTEs and Te Wananga O Aotearoa provide multiple pathways for a population in need of support and appropriate entry points if the rate of participation and success in the Manukau region is to increase.

The Institute affirms that it is mindful of the fact that projections of the population in the Manukau region show significantly higher numbers of Māori, Pasifika and Asian students than in any other part of New Zealand and this is reflected in the programmes offered and the support services provided.

The region has a major concentration of industry and commerce and the Institute has established a network of advisory groups to ensure that new programmes are relevant and maintain that relevance.

It is noted that there have been no significant changes in the organisation of the Institute since the last audit, with a management structure centred on a small Executive led by the Chief Executive and high levels of devolution of responsibility to teaching departments and service areas.

Important new initiatives are being taken to reinforce and further develop cooperative projects with relevant other Tertiary Education Institutes (TEIs) and the Manukau City Council (MCC). Of particular significance is the proposed partnership with MCC and AUT to develop a new tertiary campus in the heart of Manukau City. This has now been endorsed by the relevant councils and by the University of Auckland which would be expected to continue its presence on the Otarā Campus.

The Institute has made a commitment to align itself with the aspirations of Māori by extending its special relationship with the tangata whenua, developing greater relationships with the mana whenua of Tainui and fostering a closer working relationship with the local marae.

The Institute's quality philosophy is embodied in the statement in the charter that MIT "is committed to high levels of excellence in all that it does and seeks assure this through processes and procedures that rigorously assess quality and value in programmes, support services, administration and community relations". This is manifest in the Quality Management System which was developed "on the principle of continuous quality improvement" "to assure MIT's wide range of stakeholders that the institute is providing vocational and professional education that is relevant and up-to-date."

In addition to the three Otarā Campuses, delivery of programmes takes place in the following settings:

- Maritime House (Quay Street, Auckland city)
- Distributed classrooms (10 sites for delivery of ACE Computing)

- National Subcontracted Teaching Sites, e.g. Papakura, Rutherford and Solomon Group (venues in Panmure and Manurewa, sub-contracted foundation programmes),
- Overseas contracted Teaching Site - Lautoka, Fiji (currently being phased out).
- Various teaching sites nationally (Self funded short courses)
- Various work experience sites.

In 2005 the Institute achieved an EFTS count of 8,497 of which 1,623 were full cost recovery.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:**

Manukau Institute of Technology's aim is to serve a diverse range of students seeking tertiary educational opportunities, with a focus on sub-degree programmes. Foundation and bridging courses provide multiple pathways which serve well a population in need of such support. New initiatives are being taken to reinforce and further develop cooperative projects with other providers of tertiary education and the Manukau City Council. Opportunities are also provided for advancement to degree level studies in selected fields. The management of the Institute is centred on a small Executive led by the Chief Executive, with teaching departments and service areas having high levels of devolution of responsibility.

The Institute is committed to excellence in all that it does. It seeks to assure this through processes and procedures that rigorously assess quality and value in programmes, support services, administration and community relations. This is manifest in the Quality Management System (QMS) which was developed on the principle of continuous quality improvement. The QMS assures MIT's wide range of stakeholders that the institute is providing vocational and professional education "that is relevant and up-to-date." It is made up of a collection of policies and procedures which relate directly to the 12 ITPNZ Standards and clearly assign responsibilities for academic quality. These policies and procedures appear to be generally understood by staff and students and are consistently applied by those responsible for the academic management of the Institute.

The Institute has adopted a set of goals and objectives for Adult and Community Education (ACE) based on and incorporating the TEC objectives for ACE. It offers significant and well conducted ACE and Foundation Programmes which are fully consistent with the requirements of the NZQA. It was recommended, however, that the TEC objectives be made more explicit in the formal QMS.

The Institute continues to demonstrate its commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in its organisation and practices. The principles of partnership and participation have been the focus of the Institute's treaty responsiveness through governance, internal and external involvements. This was apparent in the development and operation of all the programmes audited.

Concern for the responsible and effective use of resources is shown in the processes used to develop and monitor programmes. In particular, the business case for a new proposal provides information which allows the Executive to consider issues of public interest before detailed planning for any new programme starts. The Institute has clearly defined and well structured procedures for the final approval of new programmes and for changes to existing programmes. These processes require genuine consultation with a range of stakeholders. There is a particular

emphasis on input from Advisory Committees and other representatives of industry and employer groups as well as the Komiti Tangata Whenua.

The recent development of a Bachelor of Applied Social Work provides an excellent model for “partnership” in the development of programmes with a specific Māori dimension. The two participating departments (Social Science and Te Tari Matauranga Māori) are to be commended for the effective way in which they have cooperated with each other and with community and professional groups to develop a programme relevant to the needs of the community.

The main tool in the regular review of programmes and qualifications is the Annual Programme Report (APR). An APR is prepared each year for each programme or related group of programmes. The reports ensure internal accountability and nurture improvement based on reflective practice. The APR draws on information from a range of sources, including student evaluations, statistical data such as retention, completion and success rates and advisory committee discussions.

The Institute’s resource planning, budget setting and capital expenditure processes are well established. They provide adequately for all essential items needed for teaching. However, it was reported that in some cases rapid growth in student numbers have placed strains on departments due to space limitations and the availability of specific resources. There is strong praise from lecturers and students for the Library staff, the services they provide, and the resources made available. There is a good student orientation service and excellent support for academic staff undertaking research.

There is evidence of a strong health and safety culture at MIT. One example of this is the newsletter issued every three months assists in raising awareness of health and safety matters. There is a good system for the induction of new staff and students and a Health and Safety Plan is prepared annually. There is evidence that in recent months some recording practices have been deviating from the required procedures. Corrective action is required to ensure that all practices required by the Institute’s health and safety procedures are effectively implemented. It was noted that the Health and Safety Coordinator has recently resigned and that the new appointee will give priority to reviewing the Health & Safety Reports and Hazard Registers to ensure that they are completed according to the requirements of the policy.

The effectiveness of the Institute’s procedures for staff selection was evidenced by the generally high standard of qualifications of teaching staff in all departments. Of particular note is the high proportion of degree teaching staff with post graduate qualifications. This has contributed significantly to a major improvement in research capability. The performance of all staff is appraised on the basis of a self appraisal, student appraisals and, where relevant, research performance. Lecturers have an entitlement for up to ten days per year for professional development and financial support is available at a level which enables staff to maintain their professional standing. Māori staff have been provided with the opportunity to attend Te Toi Tauira o Te Matariki (the Māori Tertiary Educators Conference).

The staff of the Information and Marketing Centres provide comprehensive information and services to students. Publicity material is vibrant, eye catching, accurate and informative with photographic imagery reflecting the student population. In addition to the on-campus facilities there is an Information Centre in the Manukau Shopping Centre. This provides easy access to

information for the general public. A well presented publication provides information to schools and prospective students on the range of foundation, bridging and work experience programmes available and students confirmed their value. A number of students had entered degree programmes by way of a Foundation Programme. These programmes prepare older students for study and fill the gaps when students do not have an academic background in key disciplines.

Students generally feel very comfortable in approaching teaching staff for assistance with their learning and the help given is normally sufficient to meet their needs. This informal process is backed up by centralised services and there is a good working relationship between the Learning Centre and teaching departments. A student mentor system provides a first point of contact for students seeking advice on where to seek more specific help.

A number of practices have been established within departments to ensure that programmes are delivered to a high standard. These include the sharing skills and knowledge among teaching staff, the assignment of coordinators to oversee academic activities, team meetings, staff forums, and debriefing session at the end of each course. It was noted that MIT acknowledges eLearning as an important and constructive element of learning and teaching. The Learning Technology Centre has significant expertise and equipment relating to eLearning.

The Institute has an effective procedure for the approval of academic contracts with private providers. Once in operation, there is regular liaison between the MIT Lecturers responsible and the staff of the provider. It is evident that in such situations there is a good relationship between the parties and a commitment to quality delivery. Advisory group members for the Pathways to Tertiary Education programme confirmed that the relationship with MIT is pivotal to the pathway this programme provides to students. They noted that many Maori and Pasifika students learn better in a smaller, whanau-based learning environment. This learning experience provides a good starting point for students to gain confidence and succeed before progressing with their studies at a larger institute.

Work experience is a significant element in some programmes and procedures are in place to ensure safety and effectiveness. It was noted that in the case of Nursing there was a contract with the District Health Board and other providers which covers all requirements for clinical placements. Preceptors, who supervise students in the clinical setting, are provided with training by the Institute and their participation is recognised by an annual award. All students on placement are covered by insurance.

Information regarding assessment regulations and practices is given to students in writing in student handbooks and course outlines. They are also explained to students in the orientation and induction processes. Students were familiar with the relevant assessment regulations, and generally felt that assessment was fair and appropriate to the courses of study. The opportunities for re-sit, resubmission and extension were well understood and applied consistently. Course results are issued to all students within ten working days of the final course examination. While this places some pressure on staff in terms of workload, it provides a good service to students and other stakeholders. The Academic Registry has good procedures in place to monitor amendments to published results. A key used to identify the reasons for changes ensures that the system is subject to continuous improvement.

Departments take responsibility for planning and managing research activity, while the Executive maintains an institute overview. This approach is proving to be effective in fostering the development of research in those departments that offer degree programmes. The Institute is now a participant in the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF). It is noted, however, that the NZQA definition is wider than the PBRF's, and some relevant research projects may need to be supported outside this framework. Research activity within the institute is also evaluated through the degree monitoring process. Recent monitors' reports have confirmed that staff are performing to expectations. It was noted that departments involved in research are developing plans which focus on research topics relevant to the main focus of their curriculum.

The Institute has a well established procedure for internal audits. These are undertaken by a team of trained auditors drawn from a range of teaching and service departments. Heads of Department and Service Section Managers take responsibility for addressing any requirements in their own department or section. The Academic Auditor is responsible for ensuring that the agreed actions are completed.

On the basis of its audit of MIT programmes and service sections against the twelve ITPNZ standards, the audit team has recommended that ITP Quality confirm Manukau Institute of Technology's Quality Assured Status for a further period of four years.

### **ITP Quality Board Decision (6 November 2006)**

**That Manukau Institute of Technology be awarded Quality Assured Status for a further four years, consistent with ITP Quality requirements.**