

Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality

Mana Kounga ä-Pütahi Hangarau, ä-Kuratini

Academic Audit Summary Report

Northtec
(August 2008)



INTRODUCTION:

NorthTec is Northland's largest provider of tertiary education with campuses and learning centres in Whangarei, Kerikeri (Bay of Islands Campus) Rāwene, Dargaville, Kaikohe (Te Tai Tokerau Wānanga) and Kaitaia. NorthTec's vision is to provide relevant, accessible, innovative tertiary education which transforms lives and builds communities. Its mission is to develop the North and Te Tai Tokerau and their people through tertiary education. The NorthTec Strategic Plan 2008-2012 outlines how the Polytechnic will foster and strengthen partnerships with Iwi, community, industry and other education providers to ensure the skills and training provided is relevant and meaningful not only to local communities but also to global society.

In the past few years, NorthTec has been engaged in a business re-engineering process designed to take tertiary education to the region's communities where and when it is needed. This process, encapsulated within a strategy of flexible delivery of learning, is transforming the way the Polytechnic conducts its business. It has resulted in the delivery of about half of NorthTec's EFTS outside Whangarei.

In 2007, NorthTec achieved a total of 3139 EFTS, with the following breakdown across its learning centres:

➤ Whangarei	1608 EFTS
➤ Kaitaia	206 EFTS
➤ Kaikohe	164 EFTS
➤ Kerikeri	120 EFTS
➤ Rawene	91 EFTS
➤ Dargaville	49 EFTS

There were also 57 EFTS delivered at Ngawha prison and 904 EFTS delivered at other regional sites.

The main campus in Whangarei is Raumanga and there are five other Whangarei learning centres: ASB Leisure; Downtown; Health and Safety Education; Marine Technology and Primary Industries. Several programmes are offered at a wide variety of teaching sites throughout Northland. 64 individual site approvals were processed by Quality Services in 2007, including marae, community halls, farms, schools, etc. The main programmes offered in this way are National Certificate in Horticulture Level 2, Northland Polytechnic Certificate in Environmental Studies, and various workplace safety courses.

The 2007 EFTS were split between the programme areas as follows:

➤ Arts	149
➤ Computing and Information Systems	345
➤ Transition to Tertiary	201
➤ Primary Industries	682
➤ Applied Environmental Sciences	286
➤ Business and Hospitality	253
➤ Sport and Recreation	88
➤ Nursing and Health	176
➤ Social Services	117
➤ Te Puna o te Matauranga	308
➤ Technology and Trades	594

Māori made up 47% of these EFTS.

NorthTec currently offers five first degree programmes, six national diplomas, about 16 local diplomas, and about 100 certificate programmes. In 2007, about 65% of NorthTec's TEC funded EFTS (excluding ACE) were at NQF Levels 2 and 3, with 35% at NQF Levels 4-7. 140 ACE EFTS were delivered.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

This full academic audit of NorthTec was conducted against the twelve ITP New Zealand Academic Quality Standards over five days in May 2008, in accordance with NZQA's delegation of powers to ITP Quality under Section 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989. The audit was undertaken in accordance with the agreed schedule of audits by ITP Quality to determine the continuation of NorthTec's Quality Assured Status. A team of four ITP Quality academic auditors audited eleven programmes of study and the support services provided to enhance the learning of the Polytechnic's students.

Overall the audit team found that NorthTec is effectively supporting the learning of students and making an important contribution to communities throughout the North and Te Tai Tokerau. Every group of students consulted, both on the Whangarei Raumanga Campus and across the region, were positive about their experience at NorthTec and expressed particular appreciation of the skills and dedication of their tutors and lecturers. The Polytechnic is focused on improving outcomes and has been working closely with community and industry representatives to ensure that what is offered meets the needs of stakeholders. Several innovative initiatives are being implemented and others are planned as NorthTec strives to "develop the North and Te Tai Tokerau and their people through tertiary education".

NorthTec is clearly committed to maintaining high standards of excellence in education and training, with due concern for the public interest and the wellbeing of students attending the Polytechnic. This is particularly evident in its Strategic Plan 2008-2012 and its Investment Plan 2008-2012, which was recently approved by the Tertiary Education Commission.

The Polytechnic is committed to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi, and the audit team found evidence of this commitment at both strategic and operational levels of the organisation.

NorthTec has sound, effective processes for the development, approval and review of its qualifications, programmes and courses. Stakeholders are regularly consulted, and are involved in the development and review of programme outcomes. The processes used to identify and allocate financial, administrative, human and physical resources ensure that programme and course outcomes are achieved and health and safety requirements are met. Admission and enrolment processes were found to be effective and a comprehensive range of student support services is provided.

The auditors were impressed by the learner-focus, competence and commitment of staff at all levels of the organisation. NorthTec's teaching and learning practices are educationally sound and appropriate to the programmes of study. Off-site workplace components are effective and integrated into curricula. Assessment and moderation systems ensure the fair, valid and

consistent assessment of student achievement, and reporting and certification systems meet the requirements of students and external stakeholders.

NorthTec has well defined research objectives which are appropriate to the degree qualifications it delivers, and adequate resources and support are available to meet these objectives. Internal academic audits, and improvements arising from such audits, were found to be effectively managed. The Polytechnic's quality management system is currently being reviewed and updated.

Ten areas of good practice were highlighted by the auditors:

- The implementation of an annual Hui-ā-Iwi with Māori community representatives from across the region
- The effectiveness of NorthTec's engagement with advisory committees and industry and community groups in the development and review of programmes
- The peer mentoring system in place to support new tutors
- The quality of NorthTec's Library service and support for students wherever they are studying in the region
- The overall effectiveness of the teaching delivery of all of the programmes selected
- The use of a wānanga style of teaching in some courses
- The way the Learning Innovation and Technology Services Team are working with academic staff to enhance learning practices in a number of programmes
- The comprehensive nature of the information supplied to students and placement supervisors for the Bachelor of Applied Social Service and the Bachelor of Nursing
- The Nursing Journal Tai Tokerau Wānanga, which is edited and published by Bachelor of Nursing staff
- The comprehensive and user-friendly Adult and Community Education and Short Courses booklet

No corrective actions were identified. Thirteen recommendations for improvement were made and these are summarized below:

- That senior management team members work with regional managers and programme managers to ensure that their respective roles are clarified
- That the delegation of authority and responsibility to individual programme staff to admit students is documented
- That Boards of Studies are made formal sub-committees of the Academic Board
- That NorthTec identify and implement mechanisms to enhance the support systems available for Māori staff, increase consultation with Māori staff, and review, from a tikanga Māori perspective, the way in which the Polytechnic is advertised and promoted
- That three regional teaching sites be formally approved and the site approval process tightened
- That NorthTec develop and implement an integrated risk management plan
- That a review be conducted of the appropriateness and accessibility of computers for use by students at all regional learning centres and teaching sites
- That NorthTec identify and implement mechanisms to enhance consultation with Māori staff at all stages of the appointment process for all staff
- That the outstanding agreed corrective actions addressing issues identified in the 2007 Human Resources internal audit be given urgent attention

- That the issue with regard to the lack of availability of a doctor and/or nurse to students on the Raumanga Campus is resolved as soon as possible
- That NorthTec consider introducing a flexible learning module into the Certificate of Adult Teaching programme for new tutors.
- That support for staff conducting research is further enhanced; that research staff be encouraged to produce quality assured research outputs that meet PBRF criteria; and that, the annual research report in the NorthTec Annual Report be focused on quality assured research outputs and other research categories covered by the NZQA definition of research.
- That the number of internal audits undertaken is reduced, and the management of implementation of agreed corrective actions is tightened.

The audit team concluded that NorthTec has met all twelve of the ITP New Zealand Academic Quality Standards. As a result, the team recommended that the ITP Quality Board extend the Polytechnic's Quality Assured Status for a further period of four years.

BOARD DECISION (4 August 2008)

That Northtec be awarded Quality Assured status for a further four years, consistent with ITP Quality requirements.