

# **Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality**

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## **Academic Audit**

## **Summary Report**

**Western Institute of Technology**  
(June 2008)



## **INTRODUCTION:**

The academic quality audit that has been undertaken at Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT) is the second full audit carried out by the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality). The first one, in March 2003, resulted in the recommendation to ITP Quality that WITT be awarded Quality Assured Status. The Mid-Term Quality Review in 2005 recommended confirmation of this status. The audit team that visited WITT for this 2008 academic audit received full documentation prior to the visit, and was provided with additional documents and resources during the four-day visit.

Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki is a small-sized ITP in terms of EFTS numbers, with approximately 1500 EFTS in 2007, with a small increase (approximately 100) estimated for 2008. WITT currently offers out-of-region training through the New Zealand Institute of Highway Technology (NZIHT), which is a self-managing business, owned by WITT, and to which WITT's QMS applies. Off-site delivery also occurs, within the wider Taranaki region, under contractual arrangements with other providers: Land-Based Training (for Certificates in Agriculture), G & H Training Ltd (for Certificate in Carpentry Skills), Access Centre (for ACE Free Computing Course) and Te Reo o Taranaki Trust for Certificates in Te Reo Māori and Kaumatua Skills.

In preparation for this academic quality audit, the degree programme offered by NZIHT, the ACE Free Community course offered by Access Centre and Pokaitahi Taiahoaho (Certificate in Kaumatua Skills) offered by Te Reo o Taranaki Trust were selected for in-depth audit, and provided opportunities to consider issues around contractual arrangements and implementation of the QMS at external delivery sites. The Bachelor of Engineering (Highways) also provided an opportunity to consider the policies and procedures in place for distance delivery and block courses.

There has been a Crown Commissioner in place at WITT for the past 12 months, appointed upon dissolution of the Council. There is also a Crown Manager in place at WITT. There has been an Acting Chief Executive since September 2007, with an advertisement for the permanent position being published during the week of the audit. In recent times there has been a significant restructuring underway at WITT, with a change from several departments to a structure based on three Faculties. At the time of the audit visit, there was one new Head of Faculty appointed, and two acting Heads of Faculty. Some new executive appointments had already been made, with more appointments pending.

The audit team considered all aspects of the QMS at WITT with respect to its documented processes. Interviews were conducted with the Crown Commissioner and the Crown Manager with respect to the current arrangements at WITT for governance and management, and with the Acting CEO regarding the extensive and on-going planning towards a new organisational structure for WITT. The audit team considers that, throughout the extended period of transition towards this new organisational structure there has been a clear commitment by both management and academic staff to maintain high academic standards, and to maintain a positive and constructive environment for programme delivery. Throughout the transitional period there has been sufficient resourcing for effective programme delivery, and for involvement by key staff in new initiatives, such as taking a leading role in developing a framework across the institution for foundation learning (noted within Standard 6). There were many features noted

which are particular strengths of the ITP; these are summarised below (Section 4) and noted within the body of the report.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The audit team commended WITT for a number of instances of particular effectiveness in ensuring academic quality (see Section 4 below).

One instance of corrective action required was found during the audit, relating to the eleventh ITPQ standard (Research). The audit team considered that there was low risk to student learning. The ITP accepted this finding when it was reported in the closing meeting of the audit, and has now confirmed the implementation of appropriate corrective action. In addition, the audit team made 11 recommendations for improved practice, all of which are contained within the body of this report, and summarised at its end.

The corrective action related to Standard 11.1, specifically to the research objectives of NZIHT, and the contractual arrangements with staff who are appointed to teach within the degree programme. The audit team considered that these staff are very well-qualified, and acknowledged that they are research active, although within their other fields of employment. The non-compliance with the standard was thus considered to be of low risk to student learning. The eleven recommendations within the report were concerned with:

- document control for forms and templates on the QMS (Standard 1);
- implementation of a simpler form of performance appraisal and the keeping of recent appraisals on personal files in Human Resources (Standard 4);
- review of the departmental component of staff induction to ensure that all staff are adequately prepared for their academic responsibilities (Standard 4);
- monitoring of the information being supplied to students, where there is no requirement for an interview prior to entry;
- provision of advice to the students of the Architectural Technology programme that experience or knowledge of technical drawing and computing would be an advantage, prior to entry (Standard 5);
- self-review of Pokaitahi Mana Rangatahi, following the guidelines in the document “FLQA Requirements and Provider Self-Review Guide” (NZQA, Jan 2007) (Standard 6);
- ensuring that all contracts for delivery services of any type include a formal statement requiring compliance with relevant aspects of the WITT QMS (Standard 7);
- the amending of the *Guidelines for Research Management Plans 2008-2010* document to make clear that staff engaged in the teaching of degrees must have research recognised in their selection and promotion, workload allocation and access to necessary resources (Standard 11);
- review of the internal audit policy and procedure to include a definition of risk and defining the use of the risk category (Standard 12);
- the coaching of staff, including Heads of Faculty and Team Leaders, in the corrective action process (Standard 12).
- The conducting of an internal audit to include review of service delivery and programme of the Free Computing course.

The audit team has recommended to ITP Quality that quality assured status for WITT be confirmed.

**BOARD DECISION (9 June 2008)**

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