

Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality

Mana Kounga ä-Pütahi Hangarau, ä-Kuratini

Academic Audit

Summary Report

Bay of Plenty Polytechnic

Te Kuratini o Poike

(June 2006)



INTRODUCTION:

This report presents a summary of the findings of the second full audit of the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic (BOPP).

The BOPP's quality philosophy is set out in the Institution Profile 2006-2008 and described in the following terms:

Excellence in teaching and learning is encouraged through

- Ensuring staff have appropriate teaching skills
- Being aware that the teaching/learning process is evolving and including the developing role of technology into programmes particularly through use of 'Blackboard' - (more recently 'Moodle') - a student programme management system
- Encouraging attendance and presentations at conferences
- Providing avenues for improvement and sharing of ideas, e.g. workshops, full staff meetings, 'Forum' – quarterly collection of academic writings
- Providing a feedback process that assesses teaching and learning and facilitates improvement
- Ensuring evaluation processes are oriented towards ongoing development

Relevance in teaching and learning is ensured through

- Ensuring the staff who are employed possess the necessary vocational knowledge and skill base for delivery of their content area
- Encouragement of a professional development component that includes continuing liaison and updating with their industry/profession
- Exploring a range of models that will enhance the linkages between Bay of Plenty Polytechnic and regional and national industry
- Encouraging appropriate involvement in research activities to 'inform' teaching

Access to teaching and learning is ensured through

- Exploring ways of providing pathways into qualifications at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic
- Providing a focus on learning support, pastoral care and ensuring a safe learning environment for students
- Pre-programme commencement 'orientation' and 'study weeks'

The Audit Team considered it important to add that access to higher degree level qualifications is facilitated by a deliberate and well-conceived policy of developing relationships and agreements

with other tertiary institutions. These provide the opportunity for graduates with BOPP qualifications to enrol in degree programmes of Waikato University, AUT and UNITEC with substantial credits.

This quality philosophy is delivered through a well constructed quality management system that has recently been amended (1 January 2006) to take account of the revised ITP New Zealand Academic Quality Standards and the internal three year policy review cycle.

The Draft 2005 Annual Report shows that the Polytechnic achieved 3303 EFTS in that year including 3022 funded by the MOE, 67 from overseas and 214 from other sources. There has been a pattern of steady growth in student numbers from 1308 EFTS in 1995 to more than double that figure over the next 10 years. This, to an extent, reflects the population growth within the region that has increased 14.5% in the period 1996 to 2001. The population is projected to increase from 130,000 in 2001 to 198,000 in 2021 and 284,000 in 2051.

Just over 10% of those employed in the Western Bay of Plenty work in the agricultural industry and 13.4% work in the retail trades. Other significant industries include health, construction, transport and storage.

The Polytechnic's learner base is predominantly bicultural with 21% students in 2005 being Maori, with participation and success rates at all levels of study from introductory/foundation courses to degree programmes. The Maori population base of the Western Bay of Plenty is 17%.

The profile of student study levels in 2005 shows 24% of EFTS are generated by Introductory/Foundation Level 1 & 2 programmes, 46% by Certificate, Level 3 & 4, 21% by Diploma Level 5 & 6 and 9% by Level 7 Degree programmes.

BOPP has its main campus (20 hectares) at Windermere Drive wherein are the Schools of Education and Humanities, Applied Science, Retail and Design, Applied Technology and Tutara Wananga (Centre for Maori Education, Research and Development). All the Senior Managers for the support areas are also resident at Windermere together with the institution's Pacific Coast Applied Research Centre.

The Bongard Centre where the School of Business (including Tourism, Computing and Real Estate) is based is sited in the central city area some 9 km from Windermere.

There is a small teaching facility at Edgecumbe delivering agricultural programmes and leased accommodation in the Bayfair Shopping Mall for Community Computing and the International Computer Drivers Licence programme serving the developing populations of Mount Maunganui and Papamoa.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The first full audit of the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic was conducted in November 2001 by ITP Quality in accordance with NZQA's delegation of powers under Section 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989. Acting on the recommendation of the Audit Team the ITP Quality Board awarded the Polytechnic Quality Assured Status for four years. A Mid Term Review conducted by ITP Quality in 2004 confirmed the Polytechnic's continuing use of internal academic audit

and review to maintain desirable standards of academic quality in both the delivery of its programmes of study and the supporting services.

The second full audit, to which this report refers, was undertaken in accordance with the agreed schedule of audits by ITP Quality to determine the continuation of Quality Assured Status. The Audit was conducted over four days in March 2006 by a team of four ITP Quality accredited Auditors. The Audit was conducted against the twelve ITP New Zealand Academic Quality Standards using a sample of twelve (12) programmes of study and six (6) areas of support services. On the basis of this sample and other observations the Audit found that the Polytechnic continues to meet all the twelve Academic Quality Standards and has recommended to the Board of ITP Quality that the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic's Quality Assured Status should be extended for a further period of four (4) years.

The Audit did not reveal any requirement for corrective actions but twelve (12) recommendations were presented for the Polytechnic's consideration and response. Further, the Audit revealed many areas of good practice for which the Auditors commend the Polytechnic. The Report records formally thirteen (13) such examples of good practice.

The Polytechnic operates within a framework of policies and procedures which make up the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic's Quality Management System. The Quality Management System is continually monitored and amended as found necessary. It provides an efficient and well understood base from which stakeholders can be assured that the quality of programme outcomes and the well-being of all students are the Polytechnic's paramount concern. Included in the Polytechnic's quality systems are policies, structures and guidelines by which it meets its obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi. While it was the view of the Auditors that there was still some work to be done to operationalise these policies effectively, the Polytechnic is strongly commended for the relationships it has developed with iwi and the structures now in place to ensure that it always has a clear understanding of the needs and aspirations of the Maori community in the Western Bay of Plenty Region.

The Polytechnic has a policy of working with other tertiary providers in ways that allow students to staircase into its qualification structures and for its own graduates to access higher qualifications that it would be difficult or unwise to duplicate within the Region. The Auditors found examples of soundly based contractual arrangements with Universities and other Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics whereby Polytechnic diploma graduates, in a number of regionally important disciplines, may access degree qualifications without undue dislocation of their living arrangements and costs. The Polytechnic may correctly be regarded as a leader in developing co-operative tertiary provision in the Western Bay of Plenty.

The Polytechnic has a range of particularly well staffed and provisioned student support services. The Audit found that these are well used and many students spoke highly about the level of interest and assistance provided by the staff. Kahurangi, is one of these services. It was established as a student learning support service aligned to assist the Polytechnic fulfil its Treaty obligations particularly in relation to the retention and success of Maori students. It is catering extremely well for those students who avail themselves of the services provided. However, the Auditors believe it would be timely to review the current strategic directions of Kahurangi such that more might be done to target areas for which preventative as opposed to "ambulance" services are provided.

A significant Polytechnic objective is to include opportunities for flexible learning in as many programmes as possible so that students may avail themselves of the improved access and the effectiveness of the learning that these techniques provide. The original short-term targets have been modified acknowledging that there is a large amount of work required in equipping staff with the skills and technologies needed. To this end the Flexible Learning Technologies Unit is in the process of establishment and one full-time staff member is already in place. The Auditors agree that this more measured approach will produce better outcomes in the long term.

Whilst the Polytechnic is accredited to offer just one degree it has, as previously noted, a number of cooperative arrangements whereby Polytechnic graduates are able to gain substantial credits within the degree programmes of other institutions. The Polytechnic recognises that these arrangements carry with them a need for the Polytechnic to develop a research culture that is owned and shaped by all staff. The Audit found that the Polytechnic is wholeheartedly pursuing the establishment of such a research culture and the Auditors commend all the initiatives so far taken, including the establishment of the Pacific Coast Applied Research Centre.

Throughout the four days of the Audit all four Auditors found an enthusiasm and commitment among both staff and students that was unmistakable and which reflects admirably on the leadership and management of the Polytechnic.

ITP Quality Board decision (12 June 2006)

That Bay of Plenty Polytechnic be awarded Quality Assured Status for a further four years, consistent with ITP Quality requirements.