

Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality

Mana Kounga ä-Pütahi Hangarau, ä-Kuratini

Academic Audit

Summary Report

Waiariki Institute of Technology

(June 2006)



INTRODUCTION:

This report presents a summary of the findings of the third full audit of the Waiariki Institute of Technology.

Waiariki Institute of Technology was first established as a Community College in 1978 and has grown in size and the scope of the programmes offered since those early days. Its traditional boundaries were adjusted in 1982 when the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic was established in 1982 to serve Tauranga and the Western Bay of Plenty Districts.

Waiariki's main Mokoia campus is in Rotorua with smaller campuses in Waipa, Taupo, Whakatane and Tokoroa, and with current or foreshadowed 'points of presence' in the Rotorua CBD, Mokai, Turangi, Murupara, Kawerau, Opotiki and Te Kaha.

The Institute achieved 2,862 EFTS in 2005 which was an increase of 170 over 2004. However, in 2006 current projections are for a drop of 17% or 490 EFTS with courses and programmes in the Tourism portfolio worst affected. The Institute has only a very small and diminishing involvement in International Education and remains an ITP that has focused almost totally on the needs of the community within its regional boundaries through the network of regional campuses. EFTS projections at each of the three principal regional campuses for 2006 are:

- Tokoroa 101 EFTS
- Whakatane 178 EFTS
- Taupo 134 EFTS

The Institute was founded on and operates within a bicultural philosophy. Some 50% of student population is Maori. Late in 2000 the Institute signed the Tangata Whenua Deed of Agreement with Te Mana Matauranga, representing the iwi and hapu having tangata whenua status in the Waiariki region. The Deed of Agreement provided for the Council and Te Mana Matauranga to establish a sub-committee comprising five (5) members of each party. This sub-committee has the status of a Council Committee and as such may accept delegations within the boundaries of the current legislation. To the extent possible, through this mechanism, the Council provides Maori with the opportunity to make active contributions to the Institute rather than simply giving advice.

The Quality Management System, referred to as the Performance Management Framework (PMF), embraces the 12 ITP New Zealand Standards. A review of the system was completed by mid 2005. Significant changes in the programme approval process were recommended and implemented and, likewise, in a large number of other processes.

The Audit Team noted the Institute's strategic goals which include the following:

- "to be student centred and provide students with supportive learning, social and cultural experiences."
- "to be recognised as a provider of high quality programmes delivered across the Region in flexible and innovative ways."
- "to develop graduates who are technologically current, globally enabled and vocationally

- ready.”
- “to become sustainable by having a range of viable student component and self-funded educational services.”

The Institute sees that the achievement of these goals will require some departure from traditional programme structures and delivery modes. A better alignment of the Institute’s tertiary education capacity with the needs of the region will require a closer involvement with a network of regional organisations within the educational, business, social and local body sectors. The establishment of the Rotorua Tourism Incubator (RTI) is a good example of the initiatives being developed. It was funded by the Business Links Programme and established in 2005, and achieved a successful start which has been recognised by further funding in 2006.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

The first full audit of the Waiariki Institute of Technology was conducted in September 2002 by ITP Quality in accordance with NZQA’s delegation of powers under Section 258 and 259 of the Education Act 1989. Acting on the report of the Audit Team the ITP Quality Board delayed the award of provisional quality assured status to the Institute until October 2003. A further full audit took place in November 2004 at which time the need for a further and significant corrective action was affirmed. The ITP Board re-instated provisional quality assured status in March 2005. Since then the Institute has made steady and rewarding progress under a largely restructured academic management team in its quest for unqualified quality assured status.

The third 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 Institute was audited over a period of four days in April - May 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 eleven (11) programmes of study and ten (10) areas of academic support. On the basis of this sample and other evidence collected the Audit found that the Institute continues to meet all the twelve Academic Quality Standards. The Audit Team has recommended to the Board of ITP Quality that the Waiariki Institute of Technology’s Quality Assured Status be extended for a period of four (4) years subject to, after two (2) years, a confirmatory Mid Term Review and, additionally, a report on the implementation and effectiveness of work planned and in progress in three areas: (a) on-line document control and storage, (b) re-development of health and safety systems, and (c) research strategies and management

In arriving at their final recommendation the Audit Team agreed to adopt an approach that recognises the determined and successful work undertaken in the last 18 months to strengthen the Institute’s academic quality systems. The Audit just completed demonstrated how far the Institute has progressed and, while work remains to be done in the three key areas identified in the previous paragraph, the objectives are clear and sound and the Institute is working steadily towards their achievement.

The Audit identified a number of areas of good practice that deserve inclusion in this summary.

Included in the Charter goals of the 2006 – 2007 is the requirement that Waiariki’s strategic and operational management, together with its teaching and learning activities and all associated

support services, occur within a bicultural framework that acknowledges the Treaty of Waitangi principles of participation and protection. The Audit Team are impressed with the two current initiatives to give effect to this commitment; namely, the biculturalisation of the quality management system and the indigenisation of the curriculum.

The Academic Statute, as now approved, is a well designed guide to the operation of the academic committees, including the Academic Board and those beneath it. These committees are well focused in their operation and are functioning effectively with clear terms of reference and complementary delegations. The Audit Team believes there is some need for the respective roles of the Executive Committee and the Academic Board to be clarified in relation to the programme approval process, to ensure that the Academic Board can give full and proper effect to the delegations it holds from the Council.

The learning experiences of students stand in evidence of how well a teaching institution is fulfilling its mission. Undeniably Waiariki Institute of Technology has had difficulties in the past particularly in the context of higher-level programmes. Nonetheless all the student groups interviewed by the Audit Team, in the conduct of this Audit, were enthusiastic about the quality of teaching and the level of support provided by individual staff and support services.

It is important that the Institute continually monitors internally its own compliance with the quality systems now in place. The Institute has systems of internal audit and review that are impressive in both their scope and operation. The Audit Team was particularly impressed by the incisive and discerning nature of the internal audits and the focus on matters material to student learning. Equally commendable are the processes being used to put in place corrective actions where needed and, in particular, the speed with which the Quality Manager can access resources for identified shortcomings through the interfaces with Senior Management and the Academic Standards Committee

On the basis of the preliminary document reviews undertaken and the audit experiences over the four days, the Audit Team believes that Institute's achievements in the past 18 months coupled with the good work in progress qualify the Institute for a period of Quality Assured Status whereby decisions of the Academic Board in relation to the approval and modification of programmes and courses need only to be referred to ITP Quality for approval subject to ITP Quality processes.

ITP Quality Board decision (7 July 2006)

That Waiariki Institute of Technology be awarded Quality Assured Status for a period of four years subject to the Mid-term review and additionally at the time of the Mid-term review, a limited scope audit by the Evaluators on the effectiveness of the work completed in relation to each of ITP New Zealand Standards 2, 3 and 11.