

**Institutes of Technology and
Polytechnics Quality**
Mana Kounga ä-Pütahi Hangarau, ä-Kuratini

Academic Audit
Summary Report

Waikato Institute of Technology
(November 2006)



1 INTRODUCTION:

The academic quality audit that has been undertaken at Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec) is the second full audit carried out by the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (ITP Quality). The first one, in November 2002, resulted in the recommendation to ITP Quality that Wintec be awarded quality assured status. The Mid-Term Quality Review in December 2004 recommended confirmation of this status. The audit team which visited Wintec for this 2006 academic audit received full documentation prior to the visit, and was provided with all additional documents and resources requested during the five-day visit. The major documents sighted, and people or groups interviewed, are listed within Appendix A.

The strategic plan of Wintec emphasises its commitment to academic delivery, Māori and Pasifika, research, internationalisation, quality and risk management, and organisational transformation and modernisation. The audit team found evidence of sound business planning at all levels, including schools. Quality and risk management is a focus of the ITP, with the Quality and Academic Unit (QAU) having a central role in this. An external risk management consultancy has been contracted to plan and implement a series of quality and risk management audits, the first of which has already occurred. There are some effective strategic planning organisational initiatives in place, including the Ideas Group, the purpose of this group being to ensure that ideas coming from a variety of sources (departments, faculties, students, industry, professional and community groups, CEO and Council) are examined immediately to maximise opportunities for development. Planning is further supported by the Business Development Unit and Commercialisation Manager. Wintec's commitment to internationalisation is evident through the strength and activities of the Internationalisation Centre (see Standard 6 within this report). The audit team was impressed with the overall quality of academic delivery at Wintec, and with the strategies in place for monitoring this and rewarding good practice.

Many of the audit team's recommendations for improved practice arise from the fact that many changes have occurred at Wintec over the past few years, both in senior management personnel, and around areas and details of strategic planning and policy development. Changes made to the terms of reference and representation on the Academic Board, for example, have focused on its role in strategic planning, and, at least until recent changes to its terms of reference, have lessened its role in discussion and debate around important academic matters. The audit team noted that, as an example of those recent changes to its terms of reference, the Board now receives all degree monitor reports. Wintec has two delegations of authority from its Council concerning academic matters: to the Academic Board and to the Programme Approval Committee. The terms of reference of the latter include responsibility for approval of academic policies and procedures. The audit team acknowledges the validity of this arrangement, however notes the low membership by academic staff of this committee and notes the continuing importance of robust debate, by the Academic Board, of matters relevant to institutional academic quality, in line with the revised ITP Quality academic quality standards, particularly Standard One.

Because there is a recommendation concerning the review of the terms of reference and interrelationships of academic committees, including the Academic Board (within Standard 1), and a number of recommendations, as well as a corrective action required, within Standard 2, the audit team considers that there should be a limited focus audit at the time of the mid-term Academic Quality Review, which includes Standards 1 and 2 in its scope. This report recommends to ITP Quality that this action be taken.

2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

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

Three instances of corrective actions required were found during the audit, each one deemed to be of low risk to student learning. The ITP accepted these findings when they were reported in the closing meeting of the audit, and will implement appropriate corrective actions, by 31 March 2007. In addition, the audit team made ten recommendations for improved practice, all of which are contained within the body of this report, and summarised at its end.

The corrective actions related to:

- an external advisory committee affiliated to each of its programmes, as required by its quality management system;
- internal and external moderation; and
- staff engagement in research in the Bachelor of Applied Social Science (Social Work) at regional sites.

The ten recommendations within the report were concerned with:

- the terms of reference and interrelationships of academic committees, including the Academic Board;
- the format of the Annual Programme Report template;
- the structure of the Certificate in Trade Technology (Plumbing, Gasfitting and Roofing);
- a review of the Bachelor of Social Science degree and all of its endorsements;
- a review of the Certificate in Te Pu o Te Toi;
- a review of library management and holdings at regional campuses;
- re-consideration of policy and procedures for student handbooks;
- entry requirements for the Graduate Diploma in Business Studies;
- procedures for work experience arrangements;
- monitoring of research in the Bachelor of Business.

The audit team concludes that Waikato Institute of Technology has met ITP New Zealand Academic Quality Standards 1-12. It is confirmed that corrective actions relating to the three identified low-risk non-compliances, with appropriate time-lines, have been determined.

Therefore the audit team recommends that ITP Quality award Waikato Institute of Technology Quality Assured Status, and that there be a limited scope audit of Standards 1 and 2 carried out at the same time as the scheduled mid-term Quality Review.

ITP Quality Board decision (4 December 2006)

That Waikato Institute of Technology be awarded Quality Assured Status for a further four years and that there be a limited scope audit of standards 1 and 2 carried out at the same time as the scheduled mid-term quality review.