Investing For Outcomes? Funding, knowledge exchange, and strategic contexts in New Zealand VET

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Ako Aotearoa: National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence

Through a focus on enhancing the effectiveness of tertiary teaching and learning practices, the Centre will assist educators and organisations to enable the best possible educational outcomes for all learners.

Key activities:

- Supporting research projects.
- Undertaking our own projects (in partnership with others).
- Providing professional development for tertiary educators.
- Facilitating the sharing of good practice.
- Leading strategic discussion on relevant issues.
Our View of Good Tertiary Education

- Learners are varied, and value different specific outcomes.
- Different approaches to teaching and assessment suit different learners (and different disciplines).
- But all learners value **fit-for-purpose** education.
  - ‘Purposive’ education
  - ‘Supportive’ education
  - ‘Responsive’ education
Evidence-Based vs Evidence-Informed

“Good [practitioners] use both individual clinical expertise and the best available external evidence, and neither alone is enough. Without clinical expertise, practice risks becoming tyrannised by evidence, for even excellent external evidence may be inapplicable to or inappropriate for an individual patient. Without current best evidence, practice risks becoming rapidly out of date, to the detriment of patients.”

New Zealand’s Education System

Early Childhood (under 5)

Primary School (ages 5-12)

Secondary School (ages 13-17) -> Compulsory Education

NCEA Levels 1, 2, 3

Tertiary Education

Employment
The New Zealand Qualifications Framework: Backbone of the education system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Qualification Types</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Doctorates</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Masters Degrees</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diplomas and Honours Degrees</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Bachelor Degrees</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Diplomas</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Certificates (including NCEA)</td>
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</tbody>
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- **Postgraduate and advanced Education**: Doctorates (10), Masters Degrees (9), Postgraduate Diplomas and Honours Degrees (8)
- **Skilled Technical and Professional Education**: Bachelor Degrees (7), Diplomas (6, 5), Certificates (3, 2)
- **Basic Trades**
- **Foundation Education**
New Zealand VET Organisations

Public sector (Tertiary Education Institutions)

- Institutes of Technology & Polytechnics (ITPs): Mainly levels 1-7, with an emphasis on applied disciplines.
- Wānanga: Varying focus, but work within an explicitly indigenous framework.

Private sector

- Private Training Enterprises (PTEs): Privately-owned and specialised (usually only a handful of qualifications) at levels 1-7.
- Industry Training Organisations (ITOs): Industry-owned but government-recognised bodies for training and skill development in industries. Arrange workplace-based education (mainly at levels 1-4).
Policy Settings Through 90s/ early 2000s

- Heavily free market approach. All parts of the sector encouraged to compete with each other.
- Key goal was simply to maximise participation.
- Assumed competition and informed student choice would drive up quality…
- No clear drivers to incentivise successful participation.
- Quality assurance had input and systems focus (i.e. ‘audit’).
Policy Settings early 2000s Onwards

- More strategic approach guiding government investment.
  - *Tertiary Education Strategy.*
  - Negotiated Investment Plans.
  - Prioritisation of Māori and Pacific success in tertiary education.
  - Prioritisation of success for 16-24.
  - Emphasis on literacy and numeracy

- Greater focus on organisations’ performance, including Education Performance Indicators (EPIs) and evaluative quality assurance.
Self-Assessment and External Evaluation and Review

Six Key Evaluation Questions:

• How well do learners achieve?
• What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders?
• How well do programmes and activities match the needs of learners and other stakeholders?
• How effective is the teaching?
• How well are learners guided and supported?
• How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

And how do you know this?
Self-Assessment Case Studies

- Joint project between Ako Aotearoa and NZQA meant to ‘let the sector speak’.
- Five case studies of TEOs:
  - Two PTEs: People Potential and Tūranga Ararau
  - Two ITPs: Otago Polytechnic and EIT
  - One ITO: BCITO
- Each case study:
  - Summarises that TEO’s approach.
  - Describes the benefits they’ve seen.
  - Discusses the challenges they’ve faced.
  - Identifies some of the success factors.

http://shop.akoaotearoa.ac.nz/P-14-SELFAS-ALL
The Secondary-Tertiary Transition Space

- Increasing recognition of the complex nature of the transition out of secondary education; now being seen as a ‘phase’ where we’ve traditionally considered it a ‘point’.

- And an increasing recognition that for VET-based pathways, this space has been neglected.

- Key strategies:
  - Rethinking careers advice/ education/ management.
  - Developing different models for direct secondary-tertiary cooperation (e.g. trades academies).
  - Vocational Pathways.
Graduate with NCEA Level 2

Pathway to Level 2–6 industry skills or pathway to university professional study for industry
VET Qualifications Reform

• **Mid-to late-2000s**: Common perception that the qualification landscape was fragmented (~6000 qualifications) and confusing for employers & learners.

• **2008-2009**: Review undertaken of the qualification system.

• **2010 on**: New environment implemented, including:
  – All existing qualifications reviewed to remove duplication and unused/ not fit-for-purpose qualifications.
  – A small number of (nationally-owned) qualifications, with organisations developing programmes that lead to qualifications.
  – All qualifications are now required to undergo regular, nationally-mandated review.
The Foundation & Bridging Qualifications Review

Stage One

- Needs Analysis
- Draft Outcomes Development
- Consultation
- Revision

Application to Develop submitted

NZQA Review, Feedback & Approval to Develop

Stage Two

- Draft Qualification Development
- Consultation
- Final Qualification Development

Application to list
The Big Trend

Encouraging Reflective Practice and Focusing on Outcomes:

Why are we doing what we’re doing, and what’s actually happening as a result?
What Does This Mean For Us?

- Synthesising the work we fund.
- Providing opportunities for knowledge exchange.
- Reflecting on the outcomes we ourselves create.
Ako Aotearoa’s Funding Approach

We fund evidence-informed change projects with a high potential to benefit learners. We do not fund research projects (although every project has a strong research element).
Our Funding Principles

1. Principle of Partnership: We work with our teams.

2. Principle of Co-funding: Our fundees must have ‘skin in the game’.

3. Principle of Commitment: Funded organisations must agree to act on findings.

4. Principle of Impact: All projects will be involved in our Impact Evaluation Process.
Understanding Impact

- Interested in dissemination activities, outputs and outcomes after project completion.
- Conversations with our project teams at 6, 12 and 24 months post project completion. Focusing on:
  - outputs (reach)
  - impact on practice
  - impact on learners
  - impact on project teams
- Focus on enabling and support – not ‘policing’.
Tertiary education (including VET) is about *outcomes for learners*: everyone has a right to educational opportunity and to be given the best chance of success.