

Āta-tuhi: Te Korowai Kahurangi Analysis of End of Year PEPs (2018)

Purpose

The report begins with a commentary on process developments and the extent to which they are aiding improvement in the evaluative culture of programme teams; it includes identification of further areas for improvement in reporting and recommendations toward that.

The report also identifies common themes arising from the six KEQs programme teams wrote to.

Executive Summary

While there is room for improvement in evaluative writing, self-rating, and goal setting, investment into several changes to the culture and resourcing of the End of Year PEP process for 2018 in the wake of feedback is, in the words of a Head of School, as well as “humanising the process...signalling its growing significance in the self-reflective process.” Further recommendations are proposed for continuing improvement.

Eight weighted findings from the content of the PEPs are noted to inform institutional discussion.

The Programme Evaluation Process

Every year the process of Programme Evaluation provides an opportunity for evidence-based self-assessment and the identification of actions for the next period. In 2018, with an EER visit scheduled, an Interim PEP cycle was resolved upon, in addition to the usual End of Year PEP.

A particular concern recorded in the Analysis of the 2018 Interim PEPs revolved around the process and their writing. It was noted that “many are overwritten...including pages of data, and/or are descriptive rather than evaluative,” 51% arrived after the due date (set at October 12th) intimating that “PEPs are more a reporting chore than integral to our life as educators,” and “the number of programmes speaking from generic data, more than programme-specific, suggests an intentional culture of owned and well-informed self-evaluation needs further developing.” Meanwhile, “a number of programmes seem unaware of how to set SMART goals” and “PAQC responses suggest that, for many, there is still work to be done in solidifying their purpose and authority.”

A question also emerged from the Interim process regarding feedback loops. When programmes speak up, who is listening and how is that being communicated to best effect change?

Research was undertaken, with thirty-five HOPPs, ALs and AQAs consulted. For the 2018 End of Year PEP the template was edited, including the PAQC review, and an online Guide – including exemplars – created.¹ Āta-kōrero, a process for prioritizing evidenced-based evaluative conversations in programme teams built on Te Noho Kotahitanga, was developed, overseen by the Kaihautū (particularly TeUrikore Biddle) and the Reo and Tikanga Committee. (See Appendix 1). Alongside, a team of reporting analysts created a student dashboard gleaming data from TEC’s Ngā Kete to produce a standard-format Student Performance Data Report for every programme.²

The due date for the End of Year PEPs was set for 18 April 2019. On the 4th and 6th March ninety Heads of School and Academic Leaders attended two workshops introducing Āta-kōrero as a

¹ <https://thenest.unitec.ac.nz/TheNestWP/teaching-and-research/te-korowai-kahurangi/mo-nga-rangatira-for-programme-leaders/guide-to-programme-evaluation-and-planning/>

² It must be noted that the nature of this reporting does not advantage programmes with multiple intakes, mid-year intakes for year-long courses, and/or summer delivery. There is a need to investigate how best to report, particularly, for programmes in the School of Trades & Services, and Environmental & Animal Sciences.

process. Fifteen pilot Āta-kōrero workshops were then conducted with nine Schools across the rest of that month with 157 people from nominated programme teams participating in evaluative conversation and/or writing.³ Twenty-one Academic Leaders interacted one-on-one around writing.

Āta-kōrero, drawing from collaborative understanding to speak to the Data reports and other gathered evidence, and facilitated by members of Te Korowai Kahurangi, was positively received as a method for growing capability in self-assessment.⁴ Meanwhile, the average size of reports halved and the quality and focus of the writing improved, particularly amongst those who participated.⁵

Āta-kōrero was piloted with one team per School. A few extra teams participated but it was not possible to follow up with others, nor to offer writing support to all programmes, for timing, availability and resourcing reasons. Only 52% of the End of Year PEPs arrived on the due date (fifty-three out of 102 PEPs from nine Schools); the timing competed with first-half-of-semester workload.⁶ That End of Year PEPs are being delivered four-five months into the following year prioritises retrospection rather than in-time proactivity. It was also difficult, as a number of teams noted, to recall 2018 halfway through Semester 1, 2019. Evaluative commentary, done excellently by a few, is patchy in quality overall; more training in the genre is needed. SMART goals still need work by most; while some included all actions, others failed to write any. According to feedback, the PAQC questions were much improved, but the diagnostic questions were missed in about half of the PEPs.

Thirty-five queries were logged during the Āta-kōrero process regarding the reporting of data, requests for granularity, where possible, informing the ongoing building of the Student Dashboard. PEPs from Environmental & Animal Sciences and Trades & Services and, in the case of the latter, conversations during three workshops, noted that Successful Course Completion data based on SDR reporting is problematic for programmes with multiple intakes, mid-year intakes for year-long courses, and/or summer delivery.

Reliance on the results of Unitec online course and graduate surveys to evaluate student satisfaction, and graduate employment rates, progression to further study and the relevance of programmes to employment is problematic because the response rate is poor. The total Unitec-wide response in semester 2 to student surveys was 28%; it was 37% in Semester 1. Meanwhile, Creative Industries noted in their PEPs that in graduate surveys the distribution of paid and unpaid work, salaried and contract work, and self-employment would be useful to know, as the nature of their industry means graduates can take 3-5 years to grow a reputation and even then might not be “employed” as commonly assumed. Trades & Services would also appreciate granularity around this. To date it has not been recorded how many surveys sent to graduates compare with numbers returned; this will be added into future reporting.

There is a need in our writing to continue to improve our evidencing of how engagement with stakeholders – students, graduates, and industry, but also communities/iwi – is creating feedback loops in terms of the relevance of graduate outcomes and of programme design and delivery. Specific questions seeking evidence of this have been proposed and approved for the Interim 2019 PEP.

³ Members of Te Korowai Kahurangi, Rosemary Dewerse and Jackie Tims, facilitated, with Michelle Sun (Quality Reporting Analyst) on call to respond to data queries and problems.

⁴ See the article that was published in the NEST on Friday 12 April 2019. <https://thenest.unitec.ac.nz/TheNestWP/growing-capability-in-evidence-based-self-evaluation/>.

⁵ The Interim PEPs averaged twenty-seven pages; End of Year PEPs, fifteen.

⁶ By 30 April PEPs for sixty-five programmes from eleven Schools had been submitted. By 31 May all PEPs for 102 programmes had been submitted, including postgraduate programmes under Te Puna Ako.

Programmes are required to self-rate for each KEQ. PAQCs are then required to rate the programme team on their self-evaluative capability. While caution in self-rating needs to be practised by a few teams, many are fair. A number of PAQCs missed details and over-rated programmes, however. Only very occasionally was a PAQC more cautious than they needed to be.⁷ (For detail on this see the judgements from Te Korowai Kahurangi provided in the Schools' Annual Plan documentation). Excellence in self-evaluation by teams and their PAQCs exists in: nine programmes from Bridgepoint; NZCITE (Computing); four programmes from Creative Industries; BHSMI (Healthcare); NZCPG (Trades & Services).

With the PEPs being read and analysed across May, ratings of performance by teams, and of self-evaluative capability by PAQCs and Te Korowai Kahurangi, accompanied by brief commentary, were provided early in June for the Schools Portfolio Presentations. School-specific evaluative feedback was also delivered to HoSs in writing, with some choosing further face-to-face conversation.

Commendation

The commitment of many Schools and their programme teams to improving in evidence-based evaluation was evident in this PEP cycle. Participation in Āta-kōrero at a busy time in the semester was very encouraging. Overall the tone and nature of many of the reports received has been more transparent, rigorous and focused than for the 2018 Interim cycle; there is also evidence of much good practice occurring across Unitec.

Grateful acknowledgement needs to be made of the proactive support offered by the Heads of Schools.

Recommendations

1. Embed Āta-kōrero, requiring it of all programme teams in each round of evaluation going forward so that evaluative conversation, its recording and reporting, becomes instinctive at Unitec. [currently underway]
2. Set Āta-kōrero for programme evaluation in motion from Day 11 after the end of the semester or year in focus. [currently planned for 2019 Semester 1]
3. Conduct an Interim PEP for 2019 focused on five key success indicators: educational performance, achievement by priority learners, graduate outcomes, compliance management, and effectiveness of action planning. [Recently been approved by the Academic Board]
4. Review the questions and process of online course and graduate surveys toward improving response rate and granularity.
5. Te Korowai Kahurangi resource the writing of SMART goals and effective PAQC review for Āta-kōrero in 2019.
6. Te Korowai Kahurangi continue to monitor PEP self-evaluative ratings and provide feedback on the quality of this to Heads of Schools.
7. Embed into evaluative review and programme life the implementation of effective feedback loops with students, graduates, industry and communities/iwi, particularly in terms of the value of outcomes for such stakeholders, with accountability in this to PAQCs in the first instance.

⁷ The rating from Te Korowai Kahurangi was based on the quality of evaluative commentary, self-rating, SMART goals, and PAQC review.

8. Te Korowai Kahurangi partner with Te Puna Ako in creating and maintaining a register of current examples of best practice to disseminate ideas across Unitec.

Findings

Programme Evaluation and Planning reports ask for evaluative commentary on NZQA's six Key Evaluative Questions, informed by the Tertiary Evaluation Indicators. The following themes emerged across the PEPs submitted for eighty-eight programmes. (Fourteen submitted summary PEPs because they are being discontinued and are close to closure.)

- Fifty-one PEPs (58%) from nine Schools speak about issues impacting SCC, particularly of those under 25. Twenty-nine PEPs from nine Schools (Applied Business, Architecture, Bridgepoint, Computing & Information Technology, Creative Industries, Engineering & Applied Technology, Environmental & Animal Sciences, Healthcare & Social Practice, Trades & Services) expressed concern over low literacy and numeracy rates generally, but especially among the under 25s, impacting SCC. Programmes in Bridgepoint, Trades & Services and Engineering & Applied Technology record Fees Free impacting retention.⁸ Twenty-eight from Bridgepoint, Trades & Services, Computing & Information Technology, Healthcare & Social Practice, also record digital literacy, mental health, poor attendance, family expectations and financial pressures impacting student success.
- According to the Programme Priority Matrix in the Student Performance Dashboard, four programmes with high Māori and Pacific EFTS and success significantly above the UIP target are BPSA (Creative Industries), BSP (Social Practice) and the BTECE and BHSD (Community Studies).⁹ Their PEPs record close attention to ways of knowing, one-on-one or small group mentoring and tutoring, and active relationships with community and whanau. Meanwhile BSHMI and BN (Healthcare), MARCH (Architecture), BCONS/GDCPM, NZDC (Construction) – programmes with high EFTS/high SCC across the groups – tell in their PEPs of interviewing and testing students for skills, running early assessments to identify areas of struggle, operating built-in feedback loops with industry, and tracking pastoral and academic needs and responding early.
- Thirty-nine (44%) programmes across nine Schools speak of processes for early identification and tracking of at-risk students and/or appointing internal staff to take special responsibility for academic/pastoral care, particularly of priority students (Applied Business, Architecture, Bridgepoint, Building Construction, Community Studies, Computing & Info Tech, Creative Industries, Engineering & Applied Tech, Healthcare & Social Practice).
- Sixty-one programmes discussed staff development, with thirty-seven of those recording their focus in 2018 (or as a goal for 2019) being workshops in Mātauranga Māori and/or the moderation badge.
- Thirty programmes (34%) across the Schools of Trades & Services, Building Construction, Engineering & Applied Technology, Computing & Information Technology, Environmental & Animal Sciences and Bridgepoint noted a range of operational issues with SEATs requiring manual record-keeping.
- One programme – the NZ Certificate in Horticulture Services – noted reputational damage from a miscommunication when it was announced, and then students were informed, that the programme had closed to enrolments. While it had been on the 2018 list of programmes under consideration for closure it was not, in fact, amongst the final list.
- Thirty-seven (42%) programmes noted issues, the majority of them repeated from the 2018 Interim PEPs with physical and technological resourcing (Architecture, Creative Industries,

⁸ NZCSC conducted an investigation with Finances into this, which evidenced a direct correlation.

⁹ The BHSD is currently in teach-out, its enrolments having been suspended. BPSA also has one of the highest percentages of under 25 EFTS.

Bridgepoint, Environmental & Animal Sciences, Trades & Services, Engineering & Applied Technology, Healthcare). Apprenticeship programmes in Trades also noted that the necessity to teach in the evenings to fit around student work commitments precludes their students from accessing library and support services.

- Twenty-four (27%) programmes from six Schools speak of ongoing enrolment errors (Bridgepoint, Creative Industries, Environmental & Animal Sciences, Engineering & Applied Technology, Computing & Information Technology, and Trades & Services.) This was noted in the 2018 Interim PEP Analysis.¹⁰

¹⁰ A constructive idea to address issues encountered in the BCS (Computing) was offered in their PEP: “A number of issues outlined by teaching staff refer to the issues of enrolments/re-enrolments, timetabling – areas which sit outside of the School of Computing and IT. It is suggested that rather than constantly passing the blame between different bodies within Unitec, we should encourage the creation of a live document in which academic staff can list all the non-academic issues arising to which the allied staff could respond to/help solve the problems. This...would create a sense of responsibility and accountability within the organization and the progress could easily be monitored by both academic and allied staff.”

Appendix 1

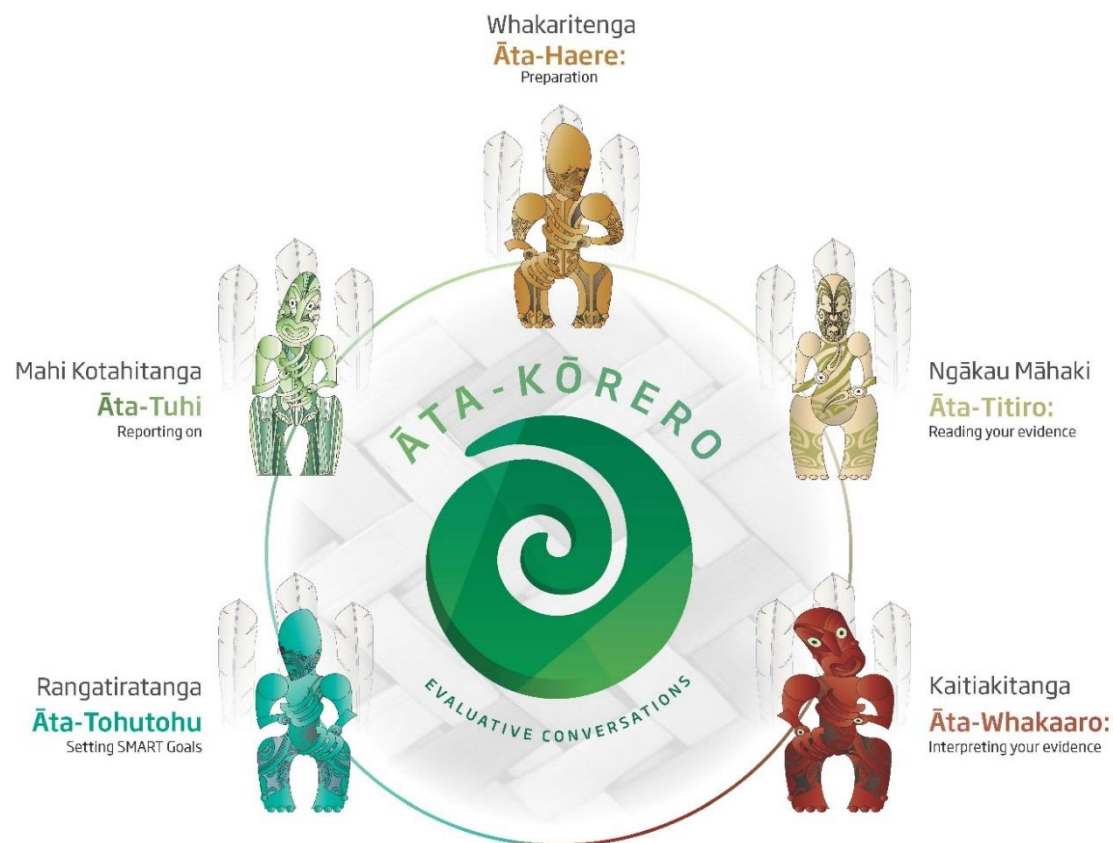


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TE WHARE WĀNANGA O MĀIRARA

Karakia

Mā te Rangatiratanga
Te Whakaritenga
Te Kaitiakitanga
Te Kotahitanga
Me Te Ngākau Māhaki
Ka tau i raro i te whakaaro kotahi
Hei oranga mō tātou katoa
Haumi ē! Hui ē! Taiki ē!

We acknowledge the mahi of Taina Pohatu that guides this process: Taina Whakazare Pohatu, "Āta: Growing Respectful Relationships" and the artistry of Hohepa Renata in creating the symbols of Te Noho Kotahitanga. Produced with permission of Unitec's Reo and Tikanga Committee.
<http://www.rangahau.co.nz/assets/Pohatu/Pohatu%20T.pdf>



The Guiding Principles of Āta:

- Kia tōtika - aspiring to standards of quality
- Kia tika tonu - acting responsibly and respectfully
- Kia pai - being considerate, deliberate
- Kia rangatira te mahi - mindful of the uniqueness of actions and people
- Kia tūpato - careful of the consequences