

Āta-tuhi: Te Korowai Kahurangi Analysis of Interim PEPs (2019)

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to

- provide commentary on the processes around the 2019 Interim Programme Evaluation and Planning (PEP) process
- describe continuing improvement in the work of growing capability in programme evaluation
- briefly note developments emerging from the areas examined by the requested reporting

Executive Summary

With PEPs currently happening half-yearly there is continual opportunity for improvement in the process. Recommendations made in the analysis of the 2018 End of Year PEPs have either been actioned for the 2019 Interim process just gone or are being actioned in Semester 2 for the End of Year PEPs. Several key resourcing initiatives are underway for the 2019 End of Year PEP process, whose Āta-kōrero period has been set for 2 December 2019 through 7 February 2020, with reports due 21 February 2020. Meanwhile a number of developments have emerged from foci in the 2019 Interim PEP that will strengthen support and reporting going forward.

The Interim 2019 Programme Evaluation Process

In the previous Analysis report 'Āta-tuhi: Te Korowai Kahurangi Analysis of End of Year PEPs (2018)' eight recommendations were made for improving the Programme Evaluation process. They sought to see Āta-kōrero: Evaluative Conversations embedded as the Unitec means for approaching PEPs, a prompter time-frame established for review, a shorter template offered for the interim round, the review of online surveys to improve granularity in evidence received for evaluative discussion, the resourcing of SMART goal writing, the embedding of effective feedback loops in terms of value of outcomes for stakeholders, and a partnership of Te Korowai Kahurangi with Te Puna Ako to establish a bank of best practice to disseminate good ideas across Unitec.

Each of these either began implementation in the Interim 2019 PEP process or are in train for the future.

This time, with the agreement of the Academic Board, all programme teams were required to engage in an Āta-kōrero process. To enable this several staff from Te Puna Ako as well as a few from Schools worked alongside staff from Te Korowai Kahurangi in facilitation and note-taking. In total 65 workshops were held across ten Schools. One-on-one support was offered to a number of leaders of expiring programmes. The School of Bridgepoint worked independently as they had already conducted evaluative conversation before the PEP process window opened (from July 16th). They have booked in Āta-kōrero for the End of Year PEPs. Feedback was sought from APMs and ALs on the process and is informing development.

The PEP process was set to begin on the 16th July – immediately after the Grade Publishing period. It was drawing upon live data from PeopleSoft but a problem in the Data Cube was discovered, delaying Data Report publishing until 19th July. Where necessary manual work was done to provide information. The problem with the Data Cube is now permanently rectified.

The Āta-kōrero period was tight, caught up in the brief and pressured mid-semester break and the beginning of semester two, with the report due date set for 16th August. While a significant majority of Āta-kōrero were completed by 9th August, reports for only 13 programmes were received by the

due date. By the end of August PEPs had been received for 50/94 programmes. At 10th October PEPs for 10 programmes remain outstanding.

The template for the Interim PEP addressed components of three Key Evaluative Questions – Student Achievement, the Value of Outcomes for Stakeholders and Compliance Accountabilities – with programmes also being asked to reflect upon the Effectiveness of their Action Planning. These were in focus because of Unitec's ongoing concern for the success of students, particularly of priority groups, and of issues that had emerged from the 2018 End of Year PEPs around feedback loops and compliance, as well as inconsistency across programmes in effective goal setting. Questions were quite specific, enabling drill-down into such areas as literacy and numeracy (identified in the 2018 End of Year PEPs as an issue for 29 programmes and deserving of closer exploration), the tracking of graduate destinations, and understanding of employment across the disciplines in response to earlier critique of what was considered by some to be a too-narrow definition in the Graduate Survey.

The remaining recommendations from the previous Analysis of PEPs have been carried over and are being actioned or are in planning in the second half of 2019. A common goal set by programme teams mid-year, however, was around the formal capture, particularly of industry feedback, speaking to the recommendation around embedding feedback loops.

Plans for continuing improvement in the PEP process

As noted in a memo to the September meeting of the QAB, there is still work to be done to: strengthen lecturer preparation for quality Āta-kōrero; tighten note-taking and reporting (further), move PAQC review to a focus on evaluative results rather than the writing; and grow wider facilitation capability.

The focus for the 2019 End of Year PEP process will be on building further capacity and capability in the facilitation of Āta-kōrero and on strengthening individual preparation for team evaluation (including the use of data and other evidence) so that evaluative conversation grows in rigour.

To address this Schools are being asked to nominate one person per three programmes for training in facilitation. Āta-kōrero will continue to be facilitated by a person external to the programme team as feedback indicated that their invested outsider eyes are greatly valued. (It is intended to ask a team member to note-take). A badge in Āta-kōrero facilitation as part of Teacher Capability Development is being jointly developed by members of Te Korowai Kahurangi and Te Puna Ako with the intent to begin offering it mid-November. Participants will be mentored through, and given credit for, workshops facilitated.

Dashboards offering ease-of-access to Student EPI data, Survey results, and Student Services usage have been updated and/or being further developed. Training is freely available via tkkinsights@unitec.ac.nz. The only restriction is access to PowerBI. Ideally more licences would be available to empower more staff in reading and using the data available.

In November bite-sized resources will also be created to help teams/lecturers with effective preparation for Āta-kōrero, including how to read data reports, reflecting on your evidence (eg CEPs, Student and Graduate survey feedback, etc), and identifying actions toward SMART goal setting. Good preparation is vital for enabling rigorous and well-focused Āta-kōrero. A resource to guide PAQCs in their review will also be created.

It is not possible to develop more in the time available. Reporting will be addressed in 2020, though mentoring in writing is available from Te Korowai Kahurangi.

Meanwhile representatives of academic and support services at Unitec have been consulted on the wording and format of the template for the End of Year PEPs. An IER is planned for 2020 and the intent is that these PEPs feed directly into it. It is intended that a guide to the template will be written to aid facilitators and report writers. As for the Interim PEP round, a partial template will be created for expiring programmes and those in teach-out.

The Quality Alignment Board has approved the following dates for the 2019 End of Year PEPs:

- **2 December 2019 to through 7 February 2020:** Āta-kōrero period for the 2019 End of Year PEP.
- **21 February 2020:** Due date for 2019 End of Year PEP reports. (Semester 1 2020 starts on 24 February).

Developments emerging from foci in the Interim PEPs:

- Pastoral care. The Counseling team in Student Support have established a pilot with three schools – Creative Industries, Healthcare and Social Practice, and Environmental and Animal Sciences – to aid lecturers in supporting distressed students (with mental health challenges). Additionally, a Creative Arts Therapist has been appointed.
- Academic issues impacting SCC. Three dashboards exist in Power BI with data of student use of support services, including ADLs. Te Korowai Kahurangi Analysts are working with Student Services to compose one dashboard to provide a deeper data record of support service use, especially of ADLs in order to help Schools calibrate particular academic need. Meanwhile staff in Te Puna Ako are creating a badge to help lecturers in addressing student weakness in literacy and numeracy; and a new Academic Quality and Capability Partner has been seconded from Bridging Education and is lending her expertise.
- Relevance of outcomes to employment, and the nature of employment across disciplines. The Graduate Profile Statements for all NZ Certificate, NZ Diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes have been added to the Graduate Survey from October 2019. Graduates are being asked to rate each outcome for its relevance to their employment. Information about the nature of employment (whether salaried, waged, commission, contracted, consultancy, voluntary, etc) has been collated to add greater nuance to the Graduate Survey, whose content will be fully reviewed by a working group early in 2020.
- Effectiveness of Action Planning. 100% of programmes in the 2019 Interim PEPs have set truly SMART goals – and fewer rather than many – going forward. This compares to 58% of 2018 End of Year PEPs setting too general or too many SMART goals, or none at all.