Unitec New Zealand Limited

Meeting of Academic Committee

Date of Meeting: 10 February 2021

Title	Academic Approvals Committee (AAC) Annual Report 2020
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For:	**DISCUSSION AND/OR INFORMATION**

Recommendation

That the Board receives, notes recommendations, and if necessary provides feedback on the AAC Report 2020.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to give a brief overview of Te Komiti Whakamana Hotaka Hou|Academic Approvals Committee during 2020.

The report also serves to provide an attestation to the role the Committee serves within the wider context of providing feedback and experience to both its members and the wider academic community.

Background

Including the Chair, membership consists of 19 senior members of staff from each school with representation from the priority groups, Te Puna Ako, Project Management and Finance. This allows for a well-rounded view of programme viability and delivery and enables a channel back to the respective areas to inform and guide development and best practice. The representative should ultimately guide the Programme Development Group within the school structure, be in regular attendance, and engage with the mahi of the Committee.

Overall, the successful NZQA results indicate that the Committee, its structure, and the scrutiny in assessing applications against NZQA guidelines/rules have yielded outcomes that are highly beneficial in supporting Unitec's programme portfolio.

- Our key indicator of success is gauged through the approval rate from NZQA.
- 82 applications were received, processed and assessed at 11-2 hourly meetings, in 2020.
- NZQA approved all applications that were submitted, with the exception of one application that was withdrawn and two that are currently awaiting further information.
- NZQA have reported that these applications were submitted with a high standard of clarity and were a pleasure to assess.

From a Committee self-assessment perspective, a number of key areas were highlighted for improvement and consideration, these are as follows:

- The amount of work submitted averages to seven applications per meeting. Each application involves a large amount of reading and was considered to be an excessive workload given the FTE allocation.
- Investigate the possibility of a booking system to ensure workload is achievable.
- A number of members did not attend a significant number of meetings which had a substantial impact on the rest of the Committee. There were 12/19 (63%) members who diligently attended, or sent a proxy. Seven members (37%) either did not appear or appeared sporadically without notice or a proxy. The reading and assessing of documents are a time-consuming process.
- Active members commented that the knowledge gained from this Committee was a steep learning curve, however, it was worthwhile and provided a valuable learning curve.
- A review of the applications submitted indicate that those which have had the support of Te Korowai Kahurangi tended to be of a higher standard, than those that did not.
- Some of the applications did not provide sufficient information for decision making. It was noted that not all programme teams are aware of requirements of regulatory agencies (e.g. NZQA/TEC). It was further suggested that Schools be informed of the requirements and expectations of quality in their applications through engagement with Te Korowai Kahurangi and that this is triggered by the Programme Leadership Group (PLG/ELT) approval to begin development.
- Where applications met the initial threshold to be read, there were a number of internal requests for further information (RFI) that were time consuming.
- In 2020 there was a move to change the culture of applications to ensure timeliness and this was successful from February through to December 2020.
- The Chair also determined that the check for completeness was to occur with all applications at the point of submission. While this has been occurring, the numbers do not allow for close scrutiny.
- It has also been helpful when Schools have a member from their Programme Development Group present to speak to the application.
- The AAC post-NZQA process, from approval stage, needs clarity.

This would indicate that the effectiveness of the Committee's has an excellent rate of success and, with the continuing membership, can continue to hone skills across the institute which filter into the development and management of programmes.

Summary

The Te Komiti Whakamana Hotaka Hou|Academic Approvals Committee had a successful year and, the members have supported and delivered on the mandate to ensure that any application for new or amended academic provision meets relevant internal and external requirements and, that it is aligned to the Unitec Strategic direction. The following recommendations have come from the

Committee's self-assessment and review. They support the need for engagement across the institute within the timelines set by NZQA. Moreover, there is a need for a streamlined system that addresses workload and application numbers. The existing programme portfolio for the institution will undoubtedly see increased pressure on this Committee to deliver outcomes. The recommendations will support the Committee to address a number of issues.

Recommendations | Actions

1. That the number of applications per meeting are limited to enable an achievable workload.
2. Investigate an institute-wide booking system to allow for quality management of applications and offer a realistic approach to the members workload.
3. That schools release, recognise and utilise the time commitment and valuable knowledge gained from this mahi.
4. That Academic Committee recognise and support the importance of ensuring timeframes are adhered to and that each school has a Programme Development Group with a representative from that group sitting on the AAC.
5. That the overview of Programme Development and Improvement processes be clearly articulated and adhered to by Schools from the PLG/ELT approval phase. It is hoped this will increase the number of complete applications and cut down the number of Requests for Further Information (RFI) both internally and externally.
6. That all Requests for Further Information (RFIs) from NZQA should be submitted to the next available AAC meeting for future improvements and that this be collated and shared in the end of year reporting for Programme Development and Management.
7. That submission dates for the Academic Approvals Committee be adjusted in 2021 to enable a manageable timeframe.
8. That the AAC post-NZQA approval process be further enhanced and communicated.