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Designing Together – A Conversation about the Operating Model of Te Pūkenga

27-28 January 2021

This document outlines the views of TEU members and staff as they relate to the preliminary development of the operating model of Te Pūkenga. These perspectives emerged out of a two-day forum, *Designing Together – A Conversation about the Operating Model of Te Pūkenga*, organised by TEU in Wellington on 27-28 January 2021.

The forum involved more than 65 TEU members; TEU staff; members from TIASA and AASC; Te Pūkenga Chief Executive, Stephen Town; five of the six Te Pūkenga Deputy Chief Executives; Director of the Reform of Vocational Education, David Strong; NZQA Chief Executive, Grant Klinkum; and members from the Ernst Young and Ernst Young Tahi teams.



Our vocational education sector should be primarily oriented toward providing quality, transformative education that is accessible by all learners throughout Aotearoa. As per our definition, vocational education and training is about providing

the comprehensive foundation and ongoing innovation needed in broad fields of practice for professions and lifelong vocations. It does so through developing an awareness of self and culture, knowledge of practice, the technical base of practice, and the attributes needed for the integration of students into both professional life and society. This can be provided in all levels of education and includes research-based vocational bachelors and postgraduate degrees taught in institutes of technology and polytechnics.

TEU definition of vocational education

The heart of the operating model: Te Tiriti o Waitangi, learners, staff, and universal design principles

If Te Pūkenga is to successfully fulfil its role and functions in the interest of providing transformative, quality education, then it needs an educational operating model that places Te

Tiriti o Waitangi, learners, staff, and universal design principles at the heart of its operating model. By doing so, the operating model will be conducive to supporting other fundamental elements of the operations of Te Pūkenga as well as, more broadly, a vocational education system that both empowers staff and meets the changing needs of learners and their whānau, communities, iwi, hapū, and industry.

Collegiality and high-trust relationships

Quality education needs to be accessible to all learners throughout Aotearoa. In order to ensure accessibility, we need a genuine network of provision. A genuine network can only be built on collegial relationships between, among others, learners, staff, iwi, hapū, industry stakeholders, and Te Pūkenga leaders underpinned by a high-trust model of human resource management.

Co-operation, co-design, and consistent rules and processes

For positive relationships to flourish, everyone involved needs to be on the same page. This means the operating model needs consistent rules, processes, and tools – the generation of which must acknowledge and integrate the expertise of staff through genuine co-design and co-production processes. Staff must be granted responsible autonomy and empowered to practice their expertise and skills in a way which contributes to the transformational impact that vocational education is set to have on learners, communities, and wider society. As such, the operating model must be conducive to co-operative models of operating, collective practices of provision, the personal and professional development of staff, and the sharing of resources, knowledge, and practices across the network.

Accountability through meaningful evaluation

In order to ensure the new vocational education system is operating in a way that continues to align with the underlying aims of RoVE, the Tertiary Education Strategy, the Charter of Te Pūkenga, and the broader ‘public good’ function of tertiary education, an educational operating model of Te Pūkenga needs to implement mechanisms that involve meaningful evaluation and foster a culture of self-reflection across the network. As such, these mechanisms must avoid replicating the cumbersome and punitive accountability measures that proved to be problematic throughout the pre-RoVE system. Instead, the operating model must include measures that will explicitly work to improve the quality of teaching and learning and enhance the transformational scope of vocational education for learners and communities.

Striking a balance between consistency and flexibility

Fostering the above factors *in practice* requires policies which account for and balance the tension between consistency and flexibility. Developing and implementing policies should be an iterative process which integrates staff expertise through the practice of co-design and co-production; as per the Te Pūkenga Charter, staff should be empowered by way of co-creation and the ability to exercise their right to make decisions relevant to policies that have implications for the way they go about their day-to-day, on-the-ground work. There needs to be clear strategies for ensuring access to robust and relevant information, transparent communication between staff and



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management, harmonisation across the network, meeting the true needs of staff and learners in the regions, and the appropriate delegation of decision-making authority and responsibilities across all levels of Te Pūkenga. Following this, the operating model must also ensure adequate resourcing so that staff are able to engage meaningfully in the process of co-design and co-production.

In order to account for the above considerations and ensure the transformational potential of vocational education in Aotearoa, the operating model of Te Pūkenga must be underpinned by the following seven key principles:¹

1. **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** Te Tiriti o Waitangi must permeate every aspect of the operating model, including the remaining six principles outlined below; *kotahi te kohao o te ngira e kuhuna ai te miro ma, te miro pango, te miro whero*² – Te Tiriti it is the eye of the needle through which everything else is thread.
2. **Equity:** the operating model must be oriented toward eliminating inequality and ensuring equity throughout the tertiary education sector.
3. **Societal transformation:** the operating model must be conducive to vocational education fulfilling its function as a public good by meeting the requirements of the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES).

The TES comprises a number of priorities which ask tertiary education organisations to focus on:

- the achievement and wellbeing of all learners
- ensuring that places of learning are safe and inclusive and free from racism, discrimination, and bullying
- reducing barriers to success and strengthening the quality of teaching to give learners the skills they need to succeed in education, work, and life
- taking account of learners' needs, identities, languages, and cultures in their planning and practice
- incorporating te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into their everyday activities
- collaborating more with whānau, employers, industry, and communities to support learners to succeed in work.

¹ N.B.: although these principles are numbered, it is not our intention to present a hierarchical list of priorities. The exception is the first principle, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which members felt should function as an overarching principle that informs the remaining six principles.

² Literal: "Through the eye of the needle pass the white thread, the black thread, and the red thread." See <https://poutamapounamu.org.nz/module-7a/1-whakatau%C4%81k%C4%AB>, accessed 05 February 2021.



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- 4. Wellbeing:** the operating model must involve the principle of mana atua, mana tangata; prioritise student and staff wellbeing; and adopt measures and motivators which involve the evaluation of wellbeing at all levels of the network.

Te Kaupapa Whaioranga³ – Mana atua, mana tangata

This principle demands that all decisions being made by and for the sector ensures whaioranga for those who participate in the sector – the total wellbeing of all staff and students. Decision-making must be based in whakanui; should foster kōtahitanga; and promote ōritetanga. That is, decision-making must be based in respect for oneself and others; unity and inclusiveness; and attitudes and processes that promote equity, equality, and democracy.

- 5. Interrelationship:** the operating model must involve the principles of mana whenua and ahu kāwanatanga; that is, meaningful, collegial, and high-trust relationships must be fostered through the practices of co-design, co-production, and transparent communication at all levels of the network, including with grassroots movements.

Te Kaupapa Whaioranga – Mana whenua

This principle demands that decisions being made by and for the sector foster ahikā – the interrelation of people and the land, including whether such decisions support a sense of tūrangawaewae for all individuals and groups, fostering a sense of place and belonging. The outcomes of decision-making must result in the creation of engaging work and study environments for all individuals and groups, fostering a sense of place and belonging. The outcomes of decision-making must result in the creation of engaging work and study environments which in turn foster te taiao – innovation and creativity.

Te Kaupapa Whaioranga – Ahu Kāwanatanga

This principle demands that decisions being made by and for the sector encourages mahi tahi – in all aspects of their work, staff and students must be able to develop collaborative approaches and collective contributions.

- 6. Consistency:** the operating model must balance and accommodate the inevitable tension between harmonisation and varying 'types' of flexibility across the network; policies and processes must make clear delegations that allow for responsible autonomy to be exercised; decision-making must involve collaborative processes which apply consistent rules in similar areas of concern.

³ See https://assets-global.website-files.com/5c6dcbdefb133660ed1ad071/5d058fbde0bec31d37297e8b_Te%20Kaupapa%20Whaioranga%202013.pdf, accessed 05 February 2021.

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7. **Sustainability:** the operating model must be oriented toward the sustainability of the network as well as wider environmental sustainability; the vocational education system must contribute to the government's four wellbeings – social, economic, environmental, and cultural – across all regional and community contexts.⁴
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Regarding the specific components of the operating model, the lists below outline raw data from the forum pertaining to the factors, principles, and examples members identified as being necessary to include. This data is provided here in order to demonstrate the nuance which underpins the seven key principles outlined above. As a general note in relation to each of the generic components of the operating model, members asserted that there needs to be a shift away from corporate language to language that is education focused (for example, the operating model should be referred to as the *educational operating model*, and, as outlined below, 'Service delivery' could be changed to 'Teaching and learning,' etc.).

People, organisation, and culture

- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** bi-cultural framework led by Māori; te ao Māori; tikanga; whakawhanaungatanga
- **Equity:** gender equality; diversity of representation; fair remuneration; accountability for non-compliance
- **Culture:** respect for staff; HR should empower, enable, and grow staff; culture of wellbeing; transparency; high-trust and collaborative environment; strong communication; responsible autonomy; focus on providing education; diversity
- **Processes and practices:** flatter structures that are more responsive to the needs of learners, staff communities, iwi, hapū, and industry; clear processes for staff voices to be heard and included; rituals and practices should be built into structures, including time to practice and carry out rituals; adequate (according to end users) resourcing (time; buildings; professional learning and development; support teams); utilise the skills and expertise of staff in decision-making; efficient payroll system; the network should be audited for their treatment of staff with respect to conditions, collaboration, redeployment, wellbeing, as well as their response to regional communities; enhanced mobility for staff across the Te Pūkenga network; limits to cycles of 'restructuring'

Policy processes

- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** Te Tiriti framework should be embedded (with adequate resourcing) across the entire institute; co-governance model
- **Equity:** equitable workload policies (with accountability for non-compliance)
- **Culture:** inclusive of Pasifika (with multi-lingual resources); value and respect allied staff; alignment between departments (involving staff from across the network meeting)

⁴ See <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/four-well-beings-core-local-government's-role>, accessed 05 February 2021.



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regularly); clear communication; constructive (rather than punitive) policies; flexibility (allow for staff and regional autonomy as necessary); diversity; zero tolerance

- **Processes and practices:** ensure iwi and hapū voices in co-design processes; consider regional needs and contexts in the development of policies; utilise staff expertise in the development of policies; student representation at all levels; workplace democracy as the way to empower staff; robust policies based on current best practice; mechanisms to review policies; active listeners as leaders and on boards; clear guidelines surrounding the implementation of policies so staff can efficiently enact them; ensure policies are visible and accessible; plain language; design thinking must be used to create policies; hyperlinks to related documents; retain guidelines so there is still reference material to work to; policies (including HR principles) must be consistent across the network; authentic collaboration with staff in decisions that affect their work; co-design rather than consultation involving staff at all levels; information flows that are clear and open; policies developed in conjunction with TEU; IT platforms and software needs to be compatible across the network

Governance interactions and strategy

- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** Te Tiriti must be embedded throughout governance model and strategies and led by Māori; co-governance; partnership; decolonising tertiary education; Māori should be in a position to raise difficult questions without the need to apologise or feel reactive; iwi/Māori equal power sharing in relation to NZQA
- **Culture:** effective communication; transparency; robust processes should be made to work with issues of workplace bullying from managers and senior leaders; staff and students should have a strong voice in governance (beyond “advisory roles”)
- **Processes and practices:** elected representatives need to be visible; regular meeting cycles between boards, managers, and staff; flatter structures that avoid top-heavy leadership; limit to excessive leadership salaries; include student and non-academic voice in all decision-making spaces; executives must be required to plan for longer term, to prevent reactionary short-term decision-making; devolve decision-making from executive tiers to senior managers closer to workers for issues that concern them; collaborative approach among executives for staff must be required, monitored, and assessed; alignment between strategic direction and academic plan; boards should be representative of local communities; union representation on governing bodies and boards; representation from all campuses; ensure diverse community voices are heard; ensure Māori and Pacific voice is heard; involve education experts on boards; KPIs for senior staff to include accountability looping back to staff and students;; connection to rūnanga; input from community stakeholders, including whānau, hapū, and iwi; genuine co-design before any decision is made regarding programmes and/or restructures; minimise restructuring

Teaching and learning (service delivery)

- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** Te Tiriti should underpin all teaching and learning

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- **Principles:** inclusion; diversity; support; universal design for learning; learner- and education-centred; fit for purpose; reciprocity; identify barriers and prioritise meeting the needs of learners; dynamic; flexible; autonomous; holistic, 'whole person' approach; acknowledge learners as representing the needs of their communities; prioritise Māori and Pacific learners, students with disabilities, and learners based in the regions; accessibility; contextualised learning
- **Culture:** high-trust; strong relationships between colleagues and students; strong integrated pastoral care, including pastoral care in online/distance learning; recognise pastoral care and other 'care work' that is predominantly carried out by women; community engagement
- **Technical:** replace 'service delivery' with 'teaching and learning'; multiple modes of delivery (face-to-face; blended; distance); delivery from anywhere in the network; consistency across the network; build on what is already working; professional development provided by team across the network; the network should support staff engaging in collegial groupings across the network; teaching staff should have a teaching qualification; avoid relying on student enrolments solely as a form of financial gain; Te Pūkenga should provide release for staff to moderate assessments across the network; adequate resourcing; a balance between local and national goals; offer a broad range of courses (undergraduate and postgraduate); avoid corporate language; re-establishment of foundation programmes; consistent staircasing through levels of programmes/pathways; dual qualifications (e.g. education and careers skills, as per engineering); no short-term agreement staff; succession planning; contextualised learning; union involvement; learner mobility; time for research; staff ratios; avoid over-reliance on digital delivery

Measures and motivators

- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** change the assessment model in partnership with Māori; decolonise; bi-lingual resources
- **Culture:** build a culture of reflection; recognise staff expertise; ethical practices; trust and accountability (avoid surveillance models); workplace democracy; focus on staff and student wellbeing; fairness; transparency; diversity of staff and learners
- **Equity:** fair salaries across Aotearoa; motivators should include fair pay (including Living Wage), equal employment opportunities, fair conditions, and career development opportunities
- **Technical:** student achievement based on pass rate, employment, and graduation; staff measurements based on student achievement and performance review (nationally agreed promotional schemes i.e., SASM/PASM); time to do jobs properly; mix 'n' match programmes to motivate students (self-selection to make up a programme of study) and flexible delivery options for staff; learner success experiences; qualitative insights and quantitative information; avoid excessive reporting requirements; the network should be audited for authentic collaboration, environmental sustainability, equity processes and outcomes, and professional development; multiplicity of measures; progression; avoid



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'tick-box' models; KPIs that staff can actually do something about; fees free funding; success vs retention (remove retention metrics); distance travelled vs success; publication of senior staff salaries as percentage of total spending; professional standards across the board; discontinue PBRF; student engagement vs achievement; avoid bonus systems; individual review plans adequately resourced; resources for professional development; address workload issues; staff:student ratio; salaries that meet the social worth of education – easy progression; de-couple enrolments, completions, and pass/fail rates in the funding model (i.e. need to consider context for non-completion); student loan/allowance access/eligibility must be redefined; more scholarships; redefine "success" for learning; adequate funding for learner success

Tools and technology

- **Principles:** accuracy; fit for purpose; flexibility concerning particular, regional needs; transparency; user-friendly systems; push boundaries (e.g. virtual reality); share equipment wisely; balance consistency and flexibility; global focus
- **Technical:** ensure control over own data – privacy, ownership, intellectual property; resources (professional development, time, and funding) for those who have to change to new systems; consistent platforms across Te Pūkenga; greater on site learning technology support, including specialist staff, and regular training for new programmes and apps; appropriate professional tools; address the digital divide – devices for students and hotspots for learners that cannot afford wifi; national online learning platform; single sign-on; access to up-to-date equipment and systems; end user should be involved in purchasing decisions of technology; adequate data, email space, and computer storage space; innovation; single payroll/leave system that is easy to use; single student management system for all of Te Pūkenga; excellent analytics