# **ASSURANCE PLAN 2024**



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#### 1. PURPOSE (TE WHAINGA MATUA)

The purpose of this document is to outline the Assurance Plan for 2024 for Waihanga Ara Rau. The 2024 Assurance Plan builds on the work undertaken in 2023 and the reflection undertaken by the Assurance Team at the end of 2023. The Plan outlines the approach, principles, and deliverables for 2024 only. The 'how' each function will be undertaken is supported by various process and guidance documents as listed in Section 3.

#### 2. APPROVAL (WHAKAAETANGA)

Approved by	
Date Approved	
Next Review	31/01/2025

Version	Date	Nature of Amendment
1.0	10/01/2024	New document created.

#### 3. BACKGROUND (PAPAMURI)

In 2023 the Assurance Team developed an Assurance [Transformation] Plan that was based on moving away from the compliance-centric process of traditional moderation to holistically evaluating the quality and inclusivity of the vocational education and training (VET) system. The term 'Assurance' was a core component of the innovative approach and involved a review and improvement cycle.

Assurance was seen as an approach, grounded in guiding principles, which appraises and informs the learning and assessment system, and the level of confidence all stakeholders can have in it. Along with moderation, assurance included:

- Ensuring alignment of programme learning outcomes to the graduate profiles of national qualifications
- The independent review of a provider's self-appraisal of internal policies and practices, through external elevation of the quantitative and qualitative evidence.

The assurance process was supported through an understanding and embodiment of the following principles that underpin it. Assurance:

- Ensures greater consistency of graduate outcomes, irrespective of mode of learning, provider type, or assessment context, by moderating learning outcomes to ensure national standard.
- Ensures activities identify where ākonga may be disadvantaged by assessment practices and that steps are taken to address this.
- Provides confirmation that a provider's internal moderation is working effectively.
- Takes a collaborative and evaluative approach to reach well-informed, consistent, and reliable evidence-based judgements about the capability of each provider.
- Understands assessment as an organic and cumulative process. Oftentimes, it is a, seemingly, isolated end-of-learning event. However, assessment is innately natural and takes place throughout the learner journey.
- Assures industry that provision of training is consistent, of high quality, is equitable, and is meeting the needs of Māori, Pacific People, disabled, and other underserved ākonga.

The principles of Mātauranga Māori were embedded into the assurance model. Tēnei Te Ara Poutama is a Mātauranga Māori Process Strategy for Waihanga Ara Rau that was designed specifically for the Assurance Team and defined how we undertook our functions.

#### 4. ASSURANCE PLAN 2024 (RAUTAKI AROMĀTAIRUA 2024)

The 2024 Assurance Plan will be based on the principles outlined below in Section 4 and the deliverables and measurables outlined in Appendix A. The deliverables align to the Waihanga Ara Rau Operational Plan.

'How' the Assurance Plan is implemented is aligned to the following documents:

- 2024 Moderation Plan
- Moderation Process
- Consent to Assess Process
- Consent and Moderation Requirements (CMR)
- Engagement Process

- Self-Assurance Process
- Programme Endorsement Process
- Tēnei Te Ara Poutama Framework

# 5. PRINCIPLES (NGĀ MĀTĀPONO)

# a. Tēnei Te Ara Poutama

# What is Tēnei Te Ara Poutama?

The five principles in action give effect to the framework whereby 'Tenei Te Ara Poutama' symbolises the pathway that the Kahui Aromatairua are actively traversing together with providers and akonga.

'Tēnei Te Ara Poutama' in our assurance context translates to 'This is the path to success.' The 'Tēnei' part acknowledges that we are not only committed, but we are initiative-taking in the provision of support to all our stakeholders. The five principles are:

- Mahi Tahi Collaboration
- Tūhura Exploring
- Wheako Experiences
- Kohikohi Capturing and Collecting
- Wānanga Agreed Outcomes.

# What is the relevance of Mātauranga Māori in Assurance?

"Our Assurance Plan ensures the VET system continues to improve its quality, equity, and efficiency of learning and assessment. It is also crucial to increasing the transparency and trust between industry and educational providers."

Mātauranga Māori in assurance focusses on the way we as the Kāhui Aromātairua not only identify mātauranga Māori but how we consciously gather all mātauranga, how we respectively manage all mātauranga and how we further develop the benefits we create collaboratively that derive from mātauranga Māori.

By acknowledging that there is inclusive and exclusive mātauranga across our motu, while also having a shared appreciation and understanding that, that mātauranga exists, we can better understand the diversity of people and mātauranga in both the providers and industries that we serve.

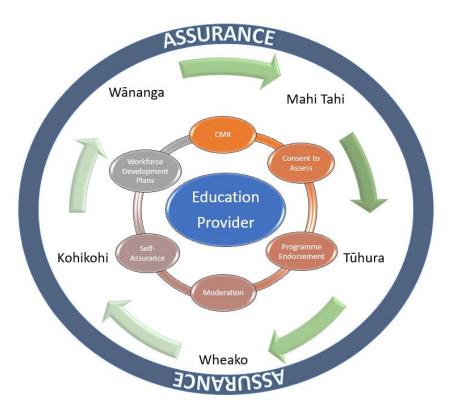
#### **Refer** - Tēnei Te Ara Poutama Framework

#### b. Transformation vs Continuous Improvement (Te whakaahuatanga me te whakahaere whanaketanga)

In the 2023 Assurance Plan we have used the word transformation to align with the intension of the Reform of Vocational Education era. Although the terms are very similar, transformation is the change that you want to bring about, but continuous improvement is the process of making small incremental changes that add up to significant change over time. Continuous improvement is more aligned to our assurance process and what we are trying to achieve over time and is the term we will use to explain our approach and thinking going forward.

Our concept of assurance is described by the diagram below, where assurance surrounds the model, with our Mātauranga Māori framework part of everything we do. The educational provider is at the center of the model, where the outcome of the continuous improvement cycle incorporates the following:

- Moving away from a prescriptive model of assurance where moderation is driven by the SSB and aligns to a one-size-fits-all approach, to a combined cooperative and Self-Assurance model.
- Moving moderation from a granular model to a more holistic model. This means lifting the focus from moderating multiple singular unit standards, to moderating at a programme or learning outcome level.
- Incorporating the requirement for providers to be continually meeting the Consent to Assess requirements. This maintains currency by ensuring providers continue to have the staff, facilities, equipment, and learning resources which consistently produce graduates who always meet the expectations of industry.
- Putting a focus on a providers' capability to self-assure and aligning this self-assurance to their context and needs. A provider already has obligations around internal evaluation processes, and this does not need to be duplicated by Waihanga Ara Rau, as the SSB. By aligning the assurance model to a provider's current evaluative processes, we are capitalising on what is already occurring, rather than duplicating or putting additional demands onto a provider. This also naturally incorporates Mātauranga Māori as an integral part of the process.
- Becoming specialised and specific to the programme(s) delivery context, unlike the all-embracing homogenous evaluation already being undertaken. It allows teaching and learning to be aligned to the provider, the programme(s), and demographic of the ākonga enrolled. This means that learning and assessment can be more flexible; individual learners have their individual needs met, rather than being forced into a one-size-fits-all model.



# Refer: Self-Assurance Process and Engagement Process

# c. Self-Assurance (Te aromātairua motuhake)

Self-assurance aligns to a provider's requirement to have their own systems and practices to systematically monitor, evaluate, and continually improve their training outcomes and performance. It ensures that they have a focus on:

- Quality of delivery and assessment.
- Continuous improvement.
- Maintaining currency through continuing to meet consent and moderation requirements.
- The achievement of learning outcomes for programmes that lead towards qualifications, micro-credentials, or assessment standards.

Self-assurance includes:

- internal moderation (pre-assessment and post assessment)
- programme review
- programme endorsement
- gaining feedback from ākonga and employers
- support from industry for the delivery of current programmes or the development of new educational products
- having the appropriate staff and learning resources in place
- honoring Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and
- providing for Māori, Pacific Peoples, and other underserved learners.

Self-assurance should be:

- flexible enough to be appropriate for all providers regardless of size, type, operating context, and self-assurance maturity.
- aligned with best practice assessment principles.
- emphasising internal moderation
- focused on continuous improvement rather than merely compliance.
- simple and easy to understand.
- encouraging and supporting providers to fully integrate self-assurance into their business ('organic')
- meaningful and of value to providers.
- backed by effective support, guidance, and education by Waihanga Ara Rau.

Self-assurance should not be:

- overly prescriptive.
- encouraging providers to just 'tick the box'/achieve the minimum requirements.
- onerous.
- causing self-assurance to become an additional business process for providers.
- duplicating existing requirements of providers.

**Refer:** Self-Assurance Process and Engagement Process

#### d. The Educational Provider (Te whare ako)

The educational provider incorporates all educational providers delivering and assessing against one of the qualifications, micro-credentials, standards, or other products that Waihanga Ara Rau are the Standard Setting Body (SSB) for. This includes secondary schools, who are considered providers in the same way tertiary ones are.

Waihanga Ara Rau needs to understand all the educational providers delivering training and assessment for the Construction and Infrastructure sectors. Indeed, understanding is essential if we are to support a lift in their capability and provision of high quality educational outcomes for *all* learners. The engagement with providers is based on a collaborative model of continuous improvement and should be aligned to the individual provider.

It is important to understand who the provider is and how they contribute to the Construction and Infrastructure sector. All educational providers are unique, and a one size fits all approach is not appropriate if we genuinely want to see continuous improvement in the way that educational products are delivered and assessed to meet the needs of industry and all ākonga. Our process will be tailored to the individual provider, or a group of providers in the case of secondary schools.

All educational providers will be allocated a 'Lead' from the Assurance Team who will be their point of contact for Waihanga Ara Rau.

#### **Refer:** Engagement Process

#### e. Waihanga Ara Rau Self-Assurance. (Te aromātairua motuhake ā Waihanga Ara Rau)

It is important that the Waihanga Ara Rau Assurance Team have their own self-assurance system in place. Robust self-assurance ensures consistency across all the team and ensures our own continuous improvement. This will include:

- The identification of themes or insights from core functions, discussions with providers, or through on-going internal reflection. Theme or reflections will be captured through monthly and quarterly reporting, culminating in a synopsis of annual reflections (what went well, what did not go so well, what would we like to improve on) at the end of each cycle.
- Review of all processes on an annual cycle
- Regular peer review of pre and post assessment moderation
- An annual review of the Assurance Plan for the next cycle.

The self-assurance process will be based on continuous improvement and how we can support the provider network across the Construction and Infrastructure network.

#### **Refer:** Self-Assurance Process

#### f. Projects (Ngā hinonga)

In order to bring about change and continuous improvement it will be necessary to undertake specific projects that support the business as usual activities. Where a theme or insight is identified we have the opportunity to collaborate with providers to change behaviour and implement a solution. The basis for doing this will be through a series of projects.

A project will initially be identified through our self-assurance process. A project proposal shall be submitted to the Assurance Management Team for discussion and approval. Following approval, a project scope document will be developed for final approval. The project scope should:

- Identify the project purpose.
- Describe the problem and/or the opportunity.
- Describe the proposed solution. What is the project expected to produce, create, or do.
- Establish measurable goals and objectives.
- Establish project requirements. (Budget, resources, timeline, limitations, roles).
- Define in scope and out of scope activities.

Projects will need to be prioritised and will be defined by the internal resources available. No project shall be undertaken unless the Assurance Management Team have approved the full project scope.

#### **Refer:** Self-Assurance Process

#### g. Moderation (Aromātairua)

As part of the implementation of the annual Assurance Plan, Waihanga Ara Rau has implemented a more collaborative and coordinated approach to the planning for moderation. Moderation activities will be determined by one or more of the following activities:

- 1. Focus classifications: Focus classification for both providers and standards.
- 2. A providers **internal** moderation plan: Aligning the sampling to the providers internal moderation planning.
- 3. **Themes** based moderation: Aligned to identified themes that have been captured during a moderation cycle. This may include specific themes for an industry, across a number of providers, or targeted standards.

#### **1.** Focus classifications:

Waihanga Ara Rau will use a focus classification approach to determine focus areas, the frequency of moderation, and the standards moderated for each moderation cycle. The primary aim is to target moderation activities where they provide the most benefit to providers, learners, and employers. This maybe at an industry, standard, or outcome level. Waihanga Ara Rau will use the following classifications for both providers and standards:

- 1. Low focus
- 2. Medium focus
- 3. High focus

#### 2. A providers internal moderation plan:

A provider may not be aligned to the focus classification standards identified above, or there are insufficient standards aligned to that provider. It is important that post moderation is called within each moderation cycle and that the quantity of the sampling is sufficient to be able to identify a theme.

Post-assessment moderation sampling under this activity shall be aligned to the providers current internal moderation plan. Where an internal moderation plan is unavailable, the selection of standards shall be determined by the standard results reported through the annual NZQA Traffic or quarterly reports.

A minimum of five standards shall be called within the first quarter of an assurance cycle.

#### 3. Themes based moderation:

As part of the annual Assurance Plan 'themes' will be determined from across several of our functions. Themes may align specifically with standard/s, assessment, or assessor practice. Where themes are identified an industry, standards, or a specific practice may become a focus area within the current or future moderation cycle.

The purpose for including themes based moderation is to ensure a solution is identified and implemented as part of the continuous improvement cycle aligned with our Assurance Plan. Themes may also be project based depending on the planned action.

#### Moderation focus for 2024:

The focus of moderation for 2024 shall be based on the following:

- 1. High focus unit standards that are based on the practical application of skills and knowledge at Level 3, or above, where there have been more than 1000 assessments results reported. Standards of 15 credits or more shall also be a focus. The achievement of a related theory based standard must be considered as part of the evaluation.
- 2. High focus providers that have reported more than 10,000 assessment results overall.
- 3. Providers and schools based in the Cook Islands.
- 4. The Crane and Scaffolding industry sectors.
- 5. Capstone standards.
- 6. Māori medium schools and schools that have reported electrical or civil infrastructure standards.

Refer: 2024 Moderation Plan and Moderation Process

# 6. BENEFITS OF THE ASSURANCE PLAN. (NGĀ HUA ME NGĀ PAINGA O TE MAHERE AROMĀTAIRUA)

With any plan, there needs to be benefits, although some benefits will only be initially perceived, and not wholly evident or measurable within a full cycle.

# For Providers:

- Waihanga Ara Rau has an in-depth understanding of who the provider is and how they contribute to the Construction and Infrastructure sectors.
- Interaction with the SSB is collaborative rather than compliance driven. The process aligns to business-as-usual processes for any tertiary or secondary provider. They should already be doing all the functions aligned to self-assurance.
- Continuous improvement becomes the focus, with the SSB working more collaboratively with a provider to continuously improve what they are doing.
- The process is unique; aligned to that provider and the context they provide training in. It is not a one-size-fits-all model.
- More flexible learning and assessment models will be available to support all learners, including Māori, Pacific Peoples, and other underserved learners.

# For Industry:

- Industry will have more confidence in the ability, capability, and capacity of graduates.
- Industry can be confident that providers' programmes meet the graduate outcomes of qualifications, and that training is consistent and of high quality.
- Industry will have a true picture of the overall provider network for their sector and support providers where additional capability or specialist delivery is required.

# Waihanga Ara Rau:

- An understanding of all providers and the context in which they deliver training and assessment within the Construction and Infrastructure sectors.
- Able to work with providers collaboratively to continuously improve quality, delivery, and assessment opportunities for all learners with a particular focus on Māori, Pacific Peoples, and other underserved learners.

- Be able to identify and share examples of best practice across the provider network.
- Provide educational/professional development opportunities for providers about assessment, working with underserved learners, changes in the industry, new initiatives.
- Be proactive with discussions regarding offering new programmes or specialist subjects as we have a better understanding of a region's network of provision, and a provider's capability and capacity.
- Provide more robust insights and information to TEC and NZQA about the provider network and individual providers.
- Have a better understanding of the quality of delivery and assessment, including the ability to lead change in a collaborative environment.

# 7. WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE? (HE AHA KEI TUA O TE PAE TAWHITI?)

As the continuous improvement cycle progresses, and through the implementation of annual Assurance Plans, there will be the opportunity to look at further initiatives. These may include:

- Implementing the plan, or components of the plan, across Ohu Ahumahi.
- Introducing regular online seminar sessions for all providers. These sessions would focus on education for providers, updates from Waihanga Ara Rau, emerging trends for the VET sector. There is the opportunity for these sessions to be common across all Ohu Ahumahi.
- Introducing a provider-based conference across all Ohu Ahumahi. This would involve working with an external organisation and the focus would be on emerging trends, qualification and programme updates, assurance updates, and networking across the VET sector.
- Having one WDC responsible for a provider where a provider is shared across Ohu Ahumahi. This would involve collaborate across WDC's and the provider network.
- Introducing an 'Assurance Mark' for providers where we have real confidence in their self-assurance processes. This may reduce the need for Waihanga Ara Rau to undertake all pre-assessment or post assessment moderation, and support the provider, through beneficial testimony, in programme endorsement and consent to assess applications.
- Assuring industry of equitable outcomes through evaluation of learner journeys, in their entirety, where progression is understood and communicated meaningfully.
- The opportunity to share Workforce Development Plan information with providers to highlight the contribution that the vocational education and training sector has on workforce development nationally and in the regions.

# APPENDIX A: 2023/2024 ASSURANCE DELIVERABLES (2023/2024 HOAKETANGA AROMĀTAIRUA)

Strategic Pou	Priorities	Deliverables	Measurables	Projects					
Pou Tāhuhu	Pou Tāhuhu								
	Develop and implement a 2024 Assurance Plan	<ol> <li>Implement our 2024 Assurance Plan</li> <li>Survey schools and providers annually re the effectiveness of our engagement and Assurance Plan.</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>90% of Assurance Plan delivered.</li> <li>60% of schools and providers are satisfied with our engagement and implementation of the Assurance Plan.</li> </ol>	1. School and Provider survey.					

Pou Tuatahi: Whakahōnore i te Tiriti o Waitangi									
	Ensure we have a Mātauranga Māori framework that aligns to our Assurance mahi.	<ol> <li>Ensure Tēnei te Ara Poutama framework is reviewed annually to align to current Assurance Plan.</li> <li>Ensure regular training for assurance staff against the framework.</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Tēnei te Ara Poutama framework has been reviewed and integrated into all team activities.</li> </ol>						
	Develop an understanding of how Assurance can give effect to te Tiriti o Waitangi. In particular, Article 3.	<ol> <li>Develop a framework for giving effect to te Tiriti o Waitangi.</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Te Tiriti framework developed, and team understand their obligations.</li> </ol>						
	Develop resources for providers to understand how they give effect to te Tiriti o Waitangi and Mātauranga Māori.	<ol> <li>Identify Māori providers.</li> <li>Scope good practice guidelines for providers.</li> <li>Develop guidance for all providers on Mātauranga Māori and te Tiriti o Waitangi.</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Mātauranga Māori and Tiriti o Waitangi guidance document produced and shared with all providers.</li> <li>All Māori medium schools and providers identified and engaged in the Assurance Plan.</li> <li>Mātauranga Māori and Te Tiriti Tools and guidance for providers.</li> <li>Mātauranga Māori and Te Tiriti Tools and guidance for providers.</li> </ol>						

Pou Tuarua: Relationships, Partnerships & Influence								
Engage with providers to	1.	Gather and analyse insights/themes	1.	Monthly and quarterly themes report	1.	Improvement project for		
lift quality and improve		from providers. (What they are		developed and shared across		schools.		
system responsiveness.		hearing, barriers, opportunities)		Waihanga Ara Rau.	2.	Data collection and analysis.		

	<ol> <li>Gather and analyse performance data from providers to identify themes and measure improvement.</li> <li>Identify and share examples of best practice teaching and learning across the provider network.</li> <li>Identify opportunities for new provision for providers.</li> <li>Identify and deliver professional development opportunities for providers.</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>6 to 8 case studies of best practice shared across the provider network.</li> <li>95% of providers have a current 'Provider in Profile' document.</li> <li>Accurate reporting of data in Aka Korero to enable accurate analysis and reporting to external agencies.</li> </ol>
Develop and implement a process for the recording of themes and insights from providers.	<ol> <li>Record themes and insights in Aka Korero or appropriate solution.</li> <li>Analyse themes and insights on a monthly or quarterly basis.</li> <li>Develop a process for sharing themes and insights across Waihanga Ara Rau and potentially Ohu Ahumahi.</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Monthly and quarterly themes report developed and shared across Waihanga Ara Rau.</li> </ol>

Pou Tuatoru: Trans	forming the Workforce			
	Develop and implement 2024 Moderation Plan	<ol> <li>Review high risk, high educational risk, and capstone unit standards.</li> <li>Identify unit standards for annual moderation plan based on risk matrix or identified sector need.</li> <li>Identify new or high risk providers.</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>90% of 2024 Moderation Plan delivered.</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>Assessor and Assessment Practice</li> <li>Moderation at the outcome level</li> <li>Industry focus – Cranes and Scaffolding.</li> <li>Compliance Training/Notional Hours</li> </ol>
50	Develop and implement a focus and project framework for Waihanga Ara Rau Assurance Team focus areas.	<ol> <li>Identify focus areas.</li> <li>Implement project framework. (Purpose, outcome, who, timeframe)</li> </ol>	<ol> <li>All projects tracked and completed on time and within budget.</li> <li>Focus area outcomes are monitored and achieved</li> </ol>	
	Effectively contribute to the achievement of the	1. Contribute to the evaluation of programme endorsement applications.	1. 95% of CMR's are reviewed and current.	1. Review of CMRs

achi	nievement of core	2.	Undertake Consent to Assess	2.	75% of all projects are evaluated	
func	nctions.		evaluation.		within the required SLA target.	
		3.	Contribute to the evaluation of micro-			
			credential support applications.			
		4.	Ensure all CMRs are reviewed and align			
			to Assurance Plan.			

Pou Tuawhā: Operational Excellence								
	Develop and implement our people plan to support a diverse, capable and high- performing team who are proud to work at Waihanga Ara Rau. Establish a robust self- assurance framework for the Assurance Team.	2. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	Ensure all Assurance Specialist meet the minimum standard of training (4098, 11551, 11552). Ensure continual professional development is a planned and undertaken through the performance review process. Undertake an annual self-assurance process across Assurance. Complete the annual NZQA NEM self- assessment report. Undertake peer moderation of Assurance Specialists. Analyse assurance data to identify themes and monitor improvement. Ensure Community of Practice is functional and effective.	1. 2. 1. 2.	All Assurance Team staff have a minimum of US4098, 11551 and 11552. A Community of Practice (CoP) is established and operational for Assurance Specialists and Administrators. NZQA NEM report developed and submitted to NZQA by agreed timeframe. Team self-assessment reports completed at end of year.			
	Improve consistency and cohesiveness across the Assurance Team	2. 3.	Ensure clear and agreed processes for our range of assurance activities are documented and current. Develop common templates for each of our reports. Establish and implement a document management process.	1. 2. 3.	A 'Library' of concise, fit-for-purpose documents that is easy to navigate is in place. All staff activity reflects agreed processes and guidance. All process and guidance documents are reviewed and current.	1.	Assurance Document Control Project Standardisation of documents	