External Evaluation and Review Report

Christchurch Institute of Business and Technology Limited trading as UC International College (UCIC)

Date of report: 1 February 2024

About UCIC

UCIC is wholly owned by Navitas Ltd, whose focus on supporting student pathways to university includes ownership of over 100 colleges and partnerships with 35 universities around the world. UCIC's foundation studies and university transfer programmes (UTP) are NZQA-approved training schemes. They are available only to fee-paying international students. Successful completion of these training schemes provides graduates with an entry pathway into certain University of Canterbury degree programmes.

Type of organisation:	Private training establishment (PTE)
Location:	Alice Candy House, Corner Clyde Road and Arts Road
Eligible to enrol intl students:	Yes
Number of students:	International: 83 full-time students at the time of the EER. No domestic students are enrolled.
	110 equivalent full-time students enrolled in 2022
Number of staff:	Full-time equivalents: management and administration 10; teachers three
	Part-time teachers: 10
TEO profile:	[Christchurch Institute of Business & Technology Limited](#)
Last EER outcome:	At the previous external evaluation and review (EER), reported in January 2020, NZQA was Highly Confident in UCIC's educational performance and Highly Confident in their capability in self-assessment.
	In February 2021, NZQA monitored the University Transfer Programme (Level 5). The outcome result was 'satisfactory'.
Scope of evaluation:	• University Transfer Programme (Level 5) incorporating Commerce, Engineering and Science pathways (refs: 115817, 115818, 116586)

- International Student Support and Wellbeing

MoE Number:	7177
NZQA reference:	C55165
Dates of EER visit:	8-10 November 2023 (closing feedback was provided on 13 November)

Summary of results

Students at UCIC are achieving well and benefit from course work which is clearly aligned with and well taught to prepare them for success at the University of Canterbury. This is supported by effective governance, management and leadership at all levels of UCIC. Self-assessment is insightful, ongoing and suitably documented. UCIC identifies areas for improvement, and any actions taken are well considered and discussed with stakeholders.

Highly Confident in educational performance

Highly Confident in capability in self-assessment

UCIC has a clearly focused course and programme delivery model which is shaped by the academic requirements of the University of Canterbury as well as student needs. This leads to strong student retention and course completions.

UCIC has aligned course content and the key features of teaching and assessment to the value offer of 'university preparedness' and completion of up to 120 credits of degree-level work. From the UTP programme, successful graduates can gain direct entry to stage 2 of a University of Canterbury degree.

UCIC monitors and reviews how well it meets the needs of both the students and the University of Canterbury. The university also maintains its alignment with UCIC to ensure academic quality and collegial teacher relationships across both institutions.

UCIC has management, teaching and support staff who collaborate well to achieve academic and wellbeing outcomes for their students. Governance, management and leadership are similarly effective in supporting student achievement.

UCIC has robust academic quality management, data utilisation, internal communication, record-keeping and information sharing.

UCIC has maintained alignment with NZQA requirements since the last EER. This report contains one recommendation relating to the increased reporting on student support and achievement outcomes.

Key evaluation question findings[1]

1.1 How well do students achieve?

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	UCIC monitors three key performance measures in relation to student achievement: a 75 per cent target pass rate for each course subject; 70 per cent of students being retained in study by cohort, each trimester; and student completions by cohort each trimester. Overall pass rates in the 11 trimesters since the last EER range from 87 per cent in semester I, 2020, to 78 per cent in semester II, 2023.
	The highest pass rate was 88 per cent in semester III, 2018. The lowest pass rate was 73 per cent in semester I, 2023. The median pass rate was 84 per cent (see also Appendix 1). There has also been some variability in pass rates at the individual course subject level. More broadly, UCIC targets are most often being achieved and withdrawal rates have decreased.
	Achievement is reported to and monitored by UCIC management as well as at board level. This includes tracking achievement against the target benchmarks. The reasons for variations in achievement were credibly explained to NZQA. Overall achievement has been well maintained.
	For academic integrity purposes, tests and exams are held at UCIC and invigilated. Where there is insufficient space, university premises are used. Students who fail a course must repeat that course as resits are not offered.
	The University of Canterbury recently made broader achievement data available to UCIC. In total, of those completing their UCIC study in the focus area programme, 87 per cent became eligible to progress to University of Canterbury studies (against a performance expectation of 90 per cent).

[1] The findings in this report are derived using a standard process and are based on a targeted sample of the organisation's activities.

Conclusion:	Overall, most students are passing their courses and completing their programme of study. There is some variability in pass rates at the course subject level. Self-assessment is comprehensive, all students are closely monitored as regards progress, and the quality of data is sound and matches the requirements of the programme.

1.2 What is the value of the outcomes for key stakeholders, including students?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	UCIC's primary value proposition to students is the provision of programmes designed to increase English language capability and readiness for study to a level acceptable to the University of Canterbury. In the focus area, this comes through an NZQA-approved training scheme which incorporates 120 credits at level 5. These credits transfer into a range of degree majors. This value has been obtained by most graduates of UCIC, and this has been mostly maintained since the last EER.[2]
	Retention and achievement data analysed by the University of Canterbury for UCIC is also positive. The university found that '...as of January 2023, 629 of the 1,094 students who transferred to UC since 2015 have completed their degrees. Another 466 had not completed degrees at the time of data capture, but out of those, 350 (75 per cent) are still enrolled at UC'. This recent analysis (see footnote 4, 1.5) found some variability in degree completion rates between degree major and year of study at the University of Canterbury.
	Other dimensions of value include:
	• merit-based scholarships awarded annually by UCIC to recognise achievement and assist students with their further study
	• former UCIC students hired by New Zealand businesses after their graduation from the University of Canterbury

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[2] There was some turbulence, in some cohorts, during the pandemic.

	• plausible economic benefits for Christchurch from the UCIC student inflow.
	UCIC students directly benefit from being on campus at the University of Canterbury, with access to the same resources and services as the university students. UCIC staff benefit from engagement with peer academics in the related university programmes.
Conclusion:	UCIC students and graduates gain high value from their studies. Recent University of Canterbury review evidence as well as UCIC graduate surveys and other feedback support this view.

1.3 How well do programme design and delivery, including learning and assessment activities, match the needs of students and other relevant stakeholders?

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	UCIC has a range of policies and procedures to ensure the relevance of programme content. The PTE monitors the teaching to ensure it meets the needs of the students as well as the University of Canterbury as the key stakeholder. UCIC also contributes to meeting the needs of industry stakeholders within Canterbury and beyond.[3]
	The university determines course content which is regularly revised. The content is then further approved as equivalent to the university's first year/stage 1 programmes. Course outlines are signed off by a university moderator for each course within the UTP programme. Both UCIC and university staff conduct pre- and post-assessment moderation. There is a formal joint academic advisory committee which oversees processes for teacher approval, quality of programme delivery, assessment, appeals and other academic matters. Trimester reviews are comprehensive.
	Programme convenors provide well-reasoned and experienced academic leadership to subject specialist

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[3] Notably in information technology, commerce and engineering. UCIC and the University of Canterbury have jointly identified a new pathway into software engineering and will offer this from 2024.

	teachers. Most of these are currently on part-time contracts. Underpinning this are a teaching and learning committee and a teaching and learning plan. This plan provides a robust framework for the content, programme delivery and assessment, and helps ensure consistency of delivery. Bicultural elements have recently been boosted.
	Students have English language classes and other academic support. In combination, these contribute to supporting student achievement and smooth the transition to university. Students at risk are identified and assisted. A recent innovation is a focused 'transition to University of Canterbury' course.
	The pandemic border closures led to a switch to online delivery and some new teaching approaches. This experience has shaped changes to the learning management system which the students say is helpful and easy to access. Students also described UCIC teachers as approachable and prompt in returning marked work or providing responsive individual feedback.
	Teaching staff are appropriately qualified and have a diverse range of academic and teaching experience which aligns well with the course content. Targeted and relevant professional development and mentoring is provided to all teaching staff, mainly by the academic director. The teachers continually look for improvement opportunities and are responsive to student needs. They said there is 'space for innovation' in their teaching.
	UCIC is well placed to assess its performance and adjust accordingly. The PTE does this by tracking student retention, attendance and completions; by surveys on student satisfaction; and from students' own feedback.
	Student satisfaction surveys show that on the whole students are well satisfied with both the content of the programmes and the teaching. The recommendations from a recent University of Canterbury review (see 1.5) identify some areas for further improvement. UCIC has adopted these for an improvement plan.
Conclusion:	The completion rates of students at UCIC and later when they transfer to university show that the teaching and learning in subject-specific areas, along with English language teaching, is mostly highly effective. Student and stakeholder needs are mostly well met. There is a strong

	focus on supporting student success: from data tracking and reporting, to using student feedback and monitoring by the joint committee.

1.4 How effectively are students supported and involved in their learning?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Good**
Findings and supporting evidence:	UCIC runs information webinars for the students before they arrive in New Zealand. These are followed by comprehensive on-site orientation processes. Once programmes are underway, there are regular student reviews, including those at the end of each trimester. Teacher and course surveys and the student representative structure ensure wide-ranging feedback is sought from students and is acted on.
	In recognition of the increasing post-pandemic needs of students in terms of mental health and socialisation, UCIC has developed a range of resources, processes and supports to ensure students connect to the learning, to UCIC and the university, to teachers and to their fellow students.
	Students appreciate their small cohorts; there is also flexibility for them to change courses. Those students and graduates interviewed said they felt well supported in their studies and were or are being well prepared for life at university. Increased attention is being paid to student attendance and involvement, with a particular focus on those who are at risk of falling behind. There are attendance contracts and an interview with any student who fails a course. Students under 18 get additional pastoral support as is required.
	UCIC management have extensive experience in the international student sector at a range of tertiary organisations (including local universities). This shapes their strong awareness of the challenges students face in 'settlement and study', as well as knowledge of proven support strategies and compliance requirements.

	UCIC reports that one student with a disability is being supported (with special assessment considerations).
Conclusion:	The PTE has a suitably staffed, experienced and coordinated approach to academic and personal or wellbeing support. Better data capture and analysis of all these inputs may assist with gauging their impacts and help management identify trends or gaps.

1.5 How effective are governance and management in supporting educational achievement?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	The college director reports to a recently inaugurated, New Zealand-focused board of directors which has oversight of the two Navitas-owned PTEs in New Zealand. This reporting is regular, robust and presents a clear picture of the PTE's activities: student progress and achievement; compliance, quality and risk aspects; pastoral care (including the Code of Practice); human resources and finance. As noted, other committees and reporting from UCIC also support student progress and achievement as well as maintaining alignment with the goals and requirements of the partner university.

The current management structure also supports student achievement, wellbeing and successful transfer to university study and student life. UCIC has responded and adapted well to the pandemic challenges and say they are 'in the recovery and regrowth stage' as enrolments increase.

UCIC has suitable educational and managerial expertise. Those interviewed were able to describe the trends and patterns of student achievement. UCIC sets clear goals and targets. Knowledge of key external stakeholders' needs and requirements is convincing, and interactions are well documented. Data is mostly comprehensive and used well for self-assessment. In the 'recovery phase' it has been uneconomic to appoint more teaching staff on permanent contracts because of the still reduced number of students. UCIC expects this will change in the short to medium term. |

| | UCIC maintains the confidence of their key stakeholder, the University of Canterbury. The university recently completed a robust and wide-ranging review of UCIC. This confirmed the continued value of these pathways to the university and the students.[4]

The report contains 10 commendations and 23 clear and useful recommendations to UCIC, the University of Canterbury, or to both parties. Actions in response are being monitored by the PTE board and by UCIC's joint management committee. This, along with the academic advisory committee, provides the functional oversight of the student pathway programmes including academic quality and operational matters. These committees meet regularly and are also suitably documented. Actions are well monitored. |
|---|---|
| Conclusion: | UCIC has robust governance. The combination of management structure, committees, reporting, good use of data and self-review actions contribute to a well-informed understanding of student achievement. UCIC can make changes quickly as well as deliberatively as and when required. Staff are well supported and are clear on the goals and objectives that frame their work. |

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[4] *Report on the Review of UC International College (UCIC) Academic Programmes University of Canterbury 2023 - qualifications under review Foundation Studies and University Transfer Programmes.* 'The review was conducted as an ad-hoc review under the provision of the University of Canterbury's Academic Reviews Policy and Guidelines, and in accordance with the Agreement between UC and Navitas. The review covered both the University Transfer Programme (UTP) and the Foundation Studies Certificate (FS), focusing on the academic aspects of UCIC.'

1.6 How effectively are important compliance accountabilities managed?

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	UCIC recently appointed a staff member responsible for quality and compliance, who has overseen a policy refresh. Professional development supports compliance in key areas such as the Code of Practice, digital security and assessment. This has included academic integrity and AI.
	In November 2021, UCIC checked its moderation system for the foundation studies certificate training scheme (NZQA ref: 116578). This led to a Type 1 change. In June 2020, UCIC gained NZQA approval for temporary online delivery. This has now been discontinued as planned. UCIC has discussed with NZQA the best way forward for them as training schemes become superseded by micro-credentials. An outdated certificate and training scheme approval were recently retired because of this recent scan of the UCIC-approved programme portfolio. Recent leadership changes have also led to notification and document submissions to NZQA in a timelier fashion.
	A student file audit was completed during this EER. It found a high level of conformity with NZQA and Immigration New Zealand requirements. UCIC staff demonstrated a clear understanding of elements such as entry criteria, IELTS[5] levels, visas, student insurance and fee protection protocols. There is a robust policy and process for handling student personal information and complaints.
	No compliance gaps or other concerns were identified in preparing for this EER. This included considering UCIC self-assessment material and appraisal of NZQA sources.
Conclusion:	The various reporting requirements by UCIC staff to internal committees, the University of Canterbury, Navitas and NZQA show that UCIC actively addresses compliance requirements in a systematic way as part of their ongoing self-assessment and review.

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[5] International English Language Testing System

Focus areas

This section reports significant findings in each focus area, not already covered in Part 1.

2.1 University Transfer Programmes (Commerce, Engineering, Science)

Performance:	**Good**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	Overall performance in this focus area is strong. But, as noted under 1.1, there has been some variability in achievement between student cohorts. In addition, the University of Canterbury review identified several areas of educational performance for improvement. This variability is not unexpected given the pandemic, the pivot to solely online teaching, and then back to face-to-face delivery. Academic quality and student support have both been well managed. UCIC employs suitably qualified teaching staff and supports them with an ongoing professional development programme. The smaller numbers of students enrolled in the post-pandemic 'recovery stage' means most teachers are in part-time roles; some also teach at the University of Canterbury. UCIC has strengths in curriculum resources (including online). The introduction of 'learning hubs' for the teachers – and supportive and developmental teacher observations – reflects good practice. The mentoring and support given by the two programme convenors and the leadership of the academic director are notable. Teaching staff turnover since the last EER, particularly since the pandemic, has been mitigated by clear and well-socialised policies and procedures, and approaches to self-assessment which involve all staff.

This report is draft only and is subject to checking by Communications International Education Limited for factual accuracy.

10

2.2   International Student Support and Wellbeing

Performance:	**Excellent**
Self-assessment:	**Excellent**
Findings and supporting evidence:	UCIC students are appropriately supported. They have access to a range of relevant educational and personal support and wellbeing resources. This includes access to accommodation and health services, and gymnasium and other recreational facilities at the University of Canterbury. UCIC's self-assessment report on the Code of Practice was thorough and submitted on time. As a result of their review of the Code, among other measures, UCIC is broadening the means of gaining student input into decisions.

Numerous staff have attended relevant and recent student-facing professional development such as in mental health, first aid training, students-at-risk seminars, and early intervention strategy workshops.

Comprehensive teaching and course survey summaries (2020-23) as well as student representative focus group feedback provide multiple opportunities for all students to promptly make known any concerns or areas of struggle. |

Recommendations

Recommendations are not mandatory, but their implementation may improve the quality and effectiveness of the training and education provided by the tertiary education organisation (TEO). They may be referred to in subsequent external evaluation and reviews (EERs) to gauge the effectiveness of the TEO's quality improvements over time.

NZQA recommends that UCIC:

- Develop a monthly monitoring report to the management team which captures the full range of educational and pastoral support interventions. Include a brief (anonymised) commentary on outcomes which align with UCIC's student engagement and success policies and goals (this relates to key evaluation questions 4 and 5 and the Tertiary Education Strategy objectives relating to achievement by students with a disability).

Requirements

Requirements relate to the TEO's statutory obligations under legislation that governs their operation. This include NZQA Rules and relevant regulations promulgated by other agencies.

There are no requirements arising from the external evaluation and review.

Appendix 1

Table 1: UCIC Overall Pass and Progress Rates
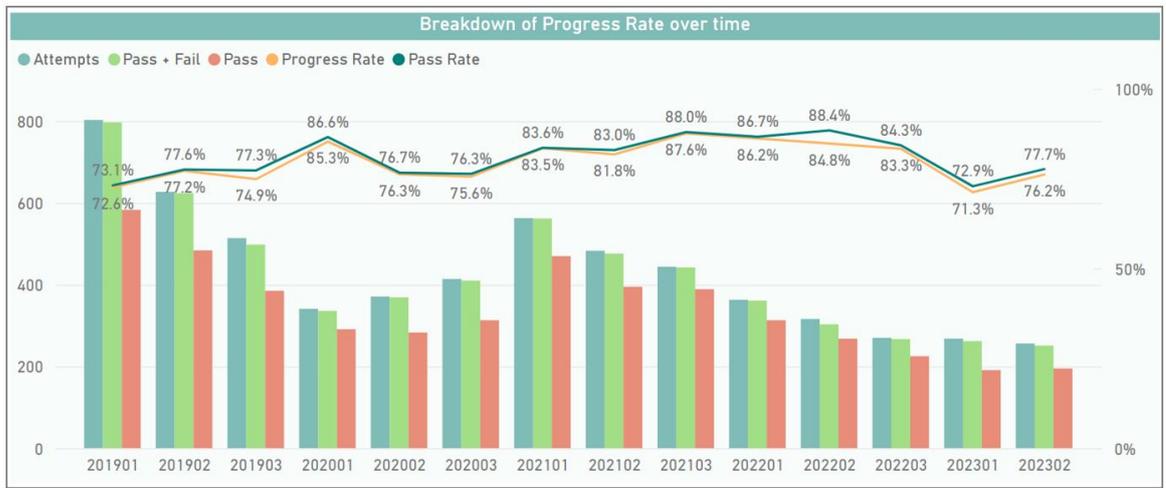
Note: the scale on the left shows number of assessment attempts which broadly correlates with the number of students enrolled each trimester. This number has declined because of the pandemic. The top trend line in green, and the percentage rates above it show the pass rate. Bottom scale shows each trimester since the last EER in 2019.

Table 2 Retention Rates
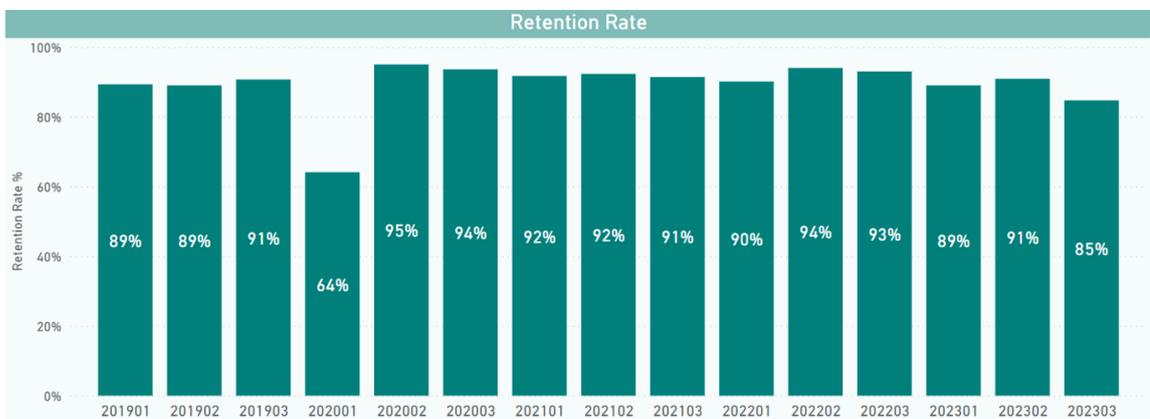
Note: the retention rate is measured against a target of 'at least 70% of students being retained in study by cohort, each trimester'. The low point in semester I, 2020 reflects the onset of the pandemic and borders being closed.

Final report

Appendix 2

Conduct of external evaluation and review

All external evaluation and reviews are conducted in accordance with NZQA's published rules. The methodology used is described in the web document https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/. The TEO has an opportunity to comment on the accuracy of this report, and any submissions received are fully considered by NZQA before finalising the report.

Disclaimer

The findings in this report have been reached by means of a standard evaluative process. They are based on a representative selection of focus areas, and a sample of supporting information provided by the TEO under review or independently accessed by NZQA. As such, the report's findings offer a guide to the relative quality of the TEO at the time of the EER, in the light of the known evidence, and the likelihood that this level of quality will continue.

For the same reason, these findings are always limited in scope. They are derived from selections and samples evaluated at a point in time. The supporting methodology is not designed to:

- *Identify organisational fraud[6]*

- *Provide comprehensive coverage of all programmes within a TEO, or of all relevant evidence sources*

- *Predict the outcome of other reviews of the same TEO which, by posing different questions or examining different information, could reasonably arrive at different conclusions.*

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[6] NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) comprehensively monitor risk in the tertiary education sector through a range of other mechanisms. When fraud, or any other serious risk factor, has been confirmed, corrective action is taken as a matter of urgency.

Final report

Regulatory basis for external evaluation and review

External evaluation and review is conducted under the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2022, which are made by NZQA under section 452(1)(t) of the Education and Training Act 2020 and approved by the NZQA Board and the Minister of Education.

Self-assessment and participation and cooperation in external evaluation and review are requirements for:

- *maintaining accreditation to provide an approved programme for all TEOs other than universities, and*

- *maintaining consent to assess against standards on the Directory of Assessment Standards for all TEOs excluding universities, and*

- *maintaining micro-credential approval for all TEOs other than universities.*

The requirements for participation and cooperation are set through the Programme Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022, the Consent to Assess Against Standards on the Directory of Assessment and Skill Standards Rules 2022 and the Micro-credential Approval and Accreditation Rules 2022 respectively.

In addition, the Private Training Establishment Registration Rules 2022 require registered private training establishments to undertake self-assessment and participate in external evaluation and review as a condition of maintaining registration.

NZQA is responsible for ensuring non-university TEOs continue to comply with the rules after the initial granting of approval and accreditation of programmes, micro-credentials and consents to assess and registration. The New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) has statutory responsibility for compliance by universities.

This report reflects the findings and conclusions of the external evaluation and review process, conducted according to the Quality Assurance (including External Evaluation and Review (EER)) Rules 2022. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement in terms of the organisation's educational performance and capability in self-assessment.

External evaluation and review reports are one contributing piece of information in determining future funding decisions where the organisation is a funded TEO subject to an investment plan agreed with the Tertiary Education Commission.

External evaluation and review reports are public information and are available from the NZQA website (www.nzqa.govt.nz). All rules cited above are available at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/about-us/our-role/legislation/nzqa-rules/, while information about the conduct and methodology for external evaluation and review can be found at https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/.

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