



Aide-Memoire: Report on TEI reviews of Accommodation Processes, Procedures and Systems

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
From:	Tim Fowler, Chief Executive, Tertiary Education Commission
Date:	13 February 2020
Reference:	AM-20-00048

Report on TEI accommodation

1. This aide-memoire reports on the reviews undertaken by Tertiary Education Institution's (TEIs) on their pastoral care processes, procedures and systems. This review was requested by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) in September 2019. This is the third of three Aide-Memoires from the TEC in regards to accommodation and is informed by information provided by TEIs.
2. On 7 November 2019 an aide-memoire (AM-19-01351) provided a high level overview and initial analysis of TEI accommodation facilities. A second aide-memoire on 13 November 2019 (AM-19-01357) included a high level overview of the standard operating procedures and/or Code of Practices for TEI accommodation services.
3. The majority of TEIs have recently conducted reviews into their accommodation processes, procedures and systems, and have provided summaries to the TEC. The key theme from the reviews is that overall, TEIs have confidence in the safety and wellbeing of their students. Nevertheless, many TEIs have stated they are committed to continuous improvement, and have reportedly actioned, or are planning to action, recommendations arising from their reviews.
4. We recommend this aide memoire is proactively released in full following consultation with TEIs.

Stocktake of accommodation services and current arrangements

5. On 30 September 2019, TEC's Chief Executive, Tim Fowler, wrote to all TEIs¹ to request information relating to their student accommodation services, systems and procedures. The request was split into two parts.

¹ All TEIs except for the Open Polytechnic were contacted as all of their provision is by distance.

6. The first request was for TEIs to provide a stocktake and overview of the accommodation services and current arrangements to the TEC by Friday 18 October 2019. This was specifically to include:
 - a stocktake of accommodation facilities
 - the number of students currently using the accommodation facilities and services
 - breakdown of which facilities are run and services provided by third party
 - the number, role and expectations of Residential Assistants or equivalents employed at those facilities; and
 - an overview of standard operating procedures and/or codes of practice for the accommodation facilities and services.
7. The second request was for each TEI's Council to conduct an independent review on the processes, systems and procedures utilised within their wider accommodation services. The TEC requested that these reviews be completed and submitted by Friday 29 November 2019; however, a number of TEIs asked for extensions to at least early 2020 due to the size of this task and the timing of the request. As a result, the collation of these responses has occurred later than was initially anticipated.

Most TEIs have conducted reviews into their accommodation processes, procedures and systems

8. While responses from TEIs were generally received later than initially requested, the majority did conduct reviews, either internally or externally. In most cases, high level summaries of these reviews were provided to the TEC. As the format, length, and detail of these summaries was generally variable, this aide-memoire provides an overview of the common themes identified from the reviews.
9. With regards to the ITP sub-sector, eight ITPs commissioned independent external reviews in direct response to the TEC's request, while three undertook internal reviews. The other five ITPs did not undertake any reviews in response to the TEC's second request.
10. In the university sub-sector, five universities provided the TEC with independent external reviews; three of these were conducted in response to the TEC's request, while the other two had already been conducted prior to the request. One university stated that they had conducted a review but did not provide the results to the TEC, while the final two have stated that they will review their accommodation processes, procedures and systems later in 2020.
11. As demonstrated through their earlier responses to the TEC's request for an accommodation stocktake, the three wānanga have very low exposure to student accommodation. As a result, no independent reviews were conducted; however, one internal review was undertaken and a very high level summary provided to the TEC.
12. An overview of each TEI's submission is included in Appendix 1.

Overarching themes from the reviews

TEIs have confidence in the safety and wellbeing of students

13. The most significant theme across the reviews provided to the TEC was that overall, TEI governance had a high level of confidence in their current accommodation processes, procedures and systems. This theme was supported by many reviews concluding that the TEIs had adequate processes in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students. Despite this

confidence, many TEIs did explicitly highlight to the TEC that they were committed to continuing to improve the quality of their pastoral care.

14. A notable exception to this theme was the independent assessment under-taken by the University of Canterbury.² Rather than providing assurance as to the suitability of their processes and procedures, this assessment instead focused on identifying weaknesses and proposing recommendations to address these.

ITPs state that they are compliant with current International Code of Practice commitments

15. The majority of reviews that the TEC received from the ITP sub-sector examined pastoral care against commitments (if applicable) under the Education (Pastoral Care of International Students) Code of Practice 2016 (the International Code). In every instance where the International Code was considered, the review concluded that the TEI was compliant with these commitments. Only one University made reference to the International Code of Practice, but did not examine compliance.

TEIs are actively preparing to meet obligations under the Interim Code

16. In their responses to the TEC, nearly every university indicated that they would be conducting further reviews once the Education (Pastoral Care of Domestic Tertiary Students) Interim Code of Practice 2019 (the Interim Code) came into effect.³ The University of Auckland and Massey University (who did not provide reviews to the TEC) both stated that they would be undertaking reviews at a later date so that the Interim Code could be considered. Victoria University, who provided the TEC with historical reviews of their pastoral care,⁴ indicated that they would also be undertaking a new review following the release of the Interim Code.
17. Out of the five reviews received from universities, the University of Canterbury explicitly considered whether its current practices would be compliant with Interim Code. This concluded that updated contractual arrangements with its three independent halls of residence would be required to comply with the Interim Code, along with better aligning the policies and procedures across its accommodation services.

TEIs have been pro-active in improving their pastoral care

18. Despite finding that TEIs generally had sufficient processes to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, many of the reviews identified areas for improvement and made recommendations to address these. The majority of these recommendations related to updating policies and manuals, improving contractual agreements with accommodation providers, and developing stronger formal links across accommodation support teams.
19. In nearly every instance, by the time a TEI had submitted its review to the TEC, recommendations from their reviews had either been actioned and implemented, or planned for implementation in early 2020. This pro-active approach was reflected in several of the independent reviews which observed that the TEIs had demonstrated a commitment to continuously improving their standards of pastoral care.

² Note: This report was provided to the TEC as a draft and as such had not been approved by the University of Canterbury's Council.

³ The Interim Code came into effect on 1 January 2020.

⁴ Victoria University's reviews were undertaken in June 2017, July 2017, and January 2019, and arose following an incident involving wide-spread disorder at their Joan Stevens Hall in 2017.

There would be value for the sector to work closer together

20. While the majority of TEIs responded to the TEC's request in isolation, five ITPs collectively commissioned an independent external party to review their pastoral care processes. The clear benefit of this approach was a consistent methodology across the reviews, and a common set of findings. Of particular note, a key observation from this wider review was that there would be considerable value in the sector working closer together to share and improve practices, which would ultimately be of benefit to their students.

Limitations

21. As with the previous requests to the TEIs for information on their accommodation facilities, the format and quality of information provided to the TEC was highly variable, with responses ranging from a few pages to a few sentences. As a result, this limited the ability to make comparative observations across TEIs.
22. There were also some common limitations identified by the reviews. Given the relatively short timeframe for TEIs to complete this request there was not always a comprehensive breadth of material considered or personnel interviewed. Due to the fact that work was largely undertaken over the exam and holiday period, there was also a noticeable lack of learner feedback in the reviews.



Tim Fowler

Chief Executive,
Tertiary Education Commission

13 February 2020



Hon Chris Hipkins

Minister of Education

18, 02, 20

Appendix 1: Reviews by sub-sector

ITP sub-sector

23. Five ITPs commissioned the same external party to review their accommodation processes, procedures and systems; Ara Institute of Canterbury (Ara), Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT), Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology (NMIT), Otago Polytechnic and Southern Institute of Technology (SIT). Toi Ohomai, Unitec and Wintec also commissioned external independent reviews of their student accommodation. Summaries of all eight reviews were provided to the TEC.
24. Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT), NorthTec, and Western Institute of Training at Taranaki (WITT) conducted internal reviews.
25. TPP and UCOL responded that their findings had already been reported to the TEC as part of their early responses to the first request in October 2019.
26. Reviews were not received from the Wellington Institute of Technology (Weltec) or Whitirea New Zealand (Whitirea). As these ITPs are managed by Victoria University of Wellington (Victoria), Victoria has indicated that they will be reviewed as part of a larger scheduled audit in early 2020.
27. As the Open Polytechnic only provides distance learning, no review was required.

University sub-sector

28. The University of Canterbury (UoC), University of Otago (Otago), and Lincoln University (Lincoln) conducted external independent reviews into their accommodation services. High level findings from all three reviews were submitted to the TEC.⁵
29. Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) and the University of Waikato (Waikato) provided the TEC with previous external reviews of their accommodation. VUW also provided a recent internal review of their accommodation risk register and controls.
30. The University of Auckland (UoA) and Massey University (Massey) did not provide the TEC with any reviews; both indicated that they will instead be undertaking audits in 2020 which will specifically include adherence to the 2020 Interim Code. Victoria also stated that they will be undertaking another review in 2020.
31. Auckland University of Technology (AUT) reported to the TEC that they had recently completed an internal review of their processes and policies, and that a number of recommendations arising from this review were currently being implemented. No further details on the findings or recommendations were provided to the TEC.

Wānanga sub-sector

32. In their response to the TEC, Te Wānanga o Raukawa stated that, even though they did not provide or contract hostel accommodation for students, it had still reviewed its Accommodation Guidelines and Operating Procedures. While no further summary was provided, Te Wānanga o Raukawa stated that they were confident that their systems provide a safe environment for their students.

⁵ Note: As the review provided by the University of Canterbury was still a draft, it had not yet been formally approved by the University's Council.

33. Te Wānanga o Aotearoa noted that they had low exposure to student accommodation, and as they were comfortable with their current Health and Safety policies and procedures, did not see that it was necessary to conduct an independent audit. Likewise, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi only provided the TEC with a stocktake of their accommodation services, but did not conduct an independent review.