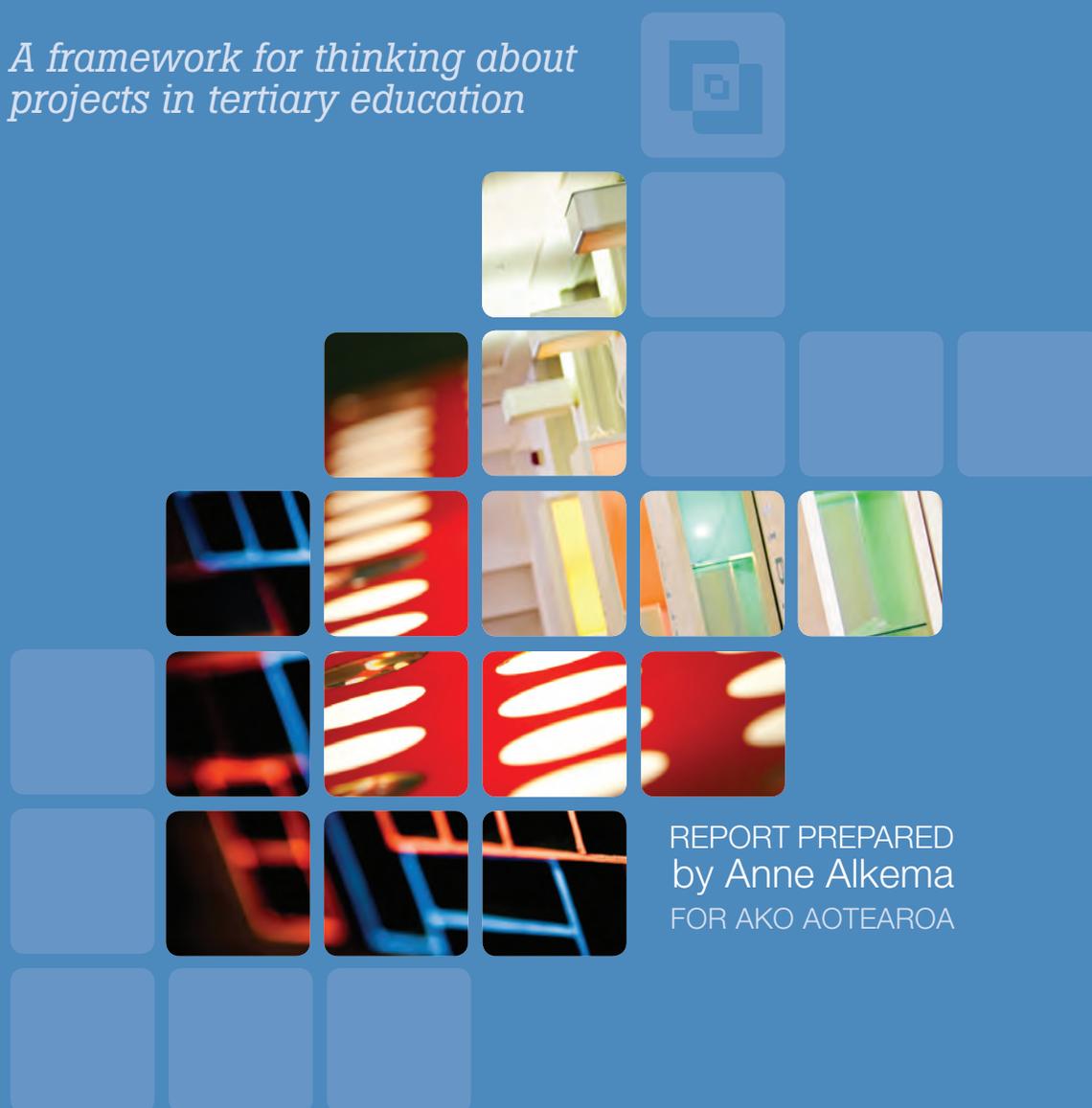


CREATING SUSTAINABLE CHANGE TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES FOR TERTIARY LEARNERS

*A framework for thinking about
projects in tertiary education*



REPORT PREPARED
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FOR AKO AOTEAROA



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Preface

The context and expectations for 21st Century tertiary education are constantly changing and are likely to continue to do so. We have recognised for several decades that learners participating in mass tertiary education are increasingly diverse, but have often lagged behind in catering for that diversity. At the same time, new technologies have created – and continue to create – very significant opportunities to enhance learning but also carry some significant risk.

The way we do things in tertiary education will not stay the same in the future. Nor is there one solution to these challenges: change will occur in diverse ways and we need to understand better how to manage change, innovate successfully and ensure that improvements for learners are sustainable.

This short publication is designed to help prospective project teams interested in improving teaching and learning scope out what this means in terms of project planning and implementation. Project teams may also find useful the Ako Aotearoa Rubrics, which describe the characteristics of what we consider to be high impact projects (see pages 22–24).

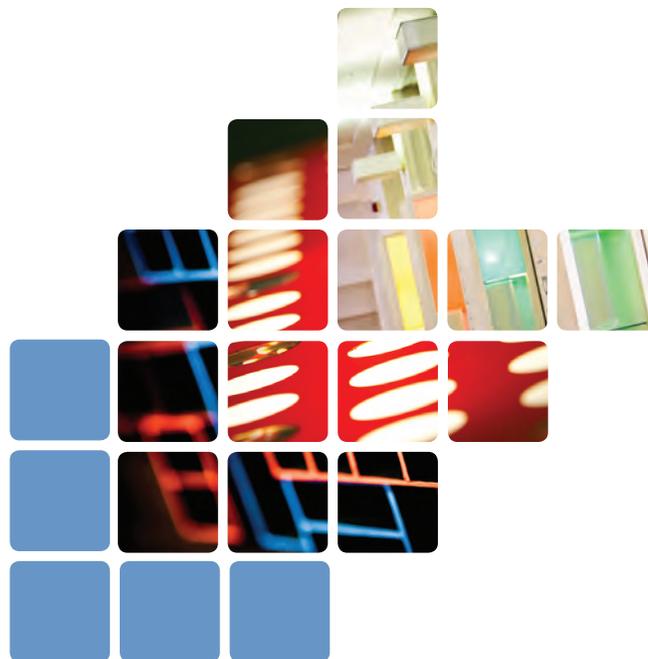
Such change projects may well, of necessity, include a research element (often as an evaluation component), but in this context any research is not the prime purpose in itself. The prime purpose needs to be the sustained enhancement of learning. This means that, while any research or evaluation must be use-inspired, the project as a whole must be established from the outset as a means of driving organisational change.

Our experience to date tells us that achieving sustainable change through projects requires careful planning and ongoing effort. The life of a project often extends beyond the funded timeframe of ‘doing the work’ and includes both socializing of ideas within organisations, as well as ongoing promotion and implementation of the work once completed. Successful project teams clearly communicate the relevance of the work to gain buy-in, and link well with existing networks to gather momentum and excitement for the work as it develops. Critically, the successful impact of a project depends on a clear demonstration of learner benefit.

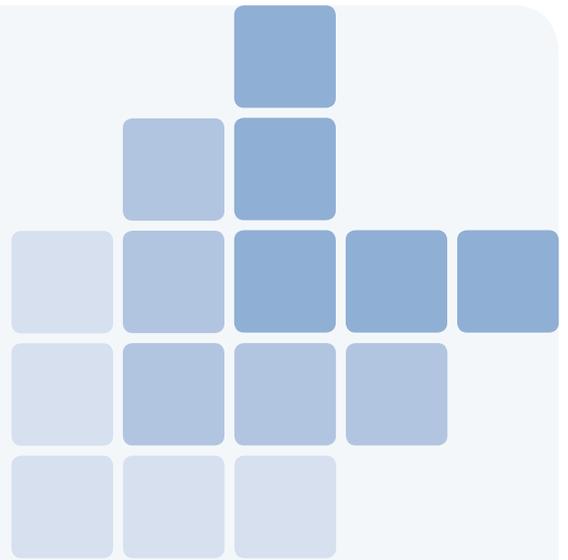
There are, of course, no one-size-fits-all approaches here. This guide is designed to assist in formulating questions and approaches in the particular context of the project. We trust it will be useful for those charged with leading organisational development in terms of teaching and learning. The publication is also designed to assist individuals and teams developing grant applications for project funding.

A critical incentive for us commissioning this publication is our concern to continue to strengthen the links between research and improvement in practice. In particular, Ako Aotearoa’s project funds are not, fundamentally, research funds. They are very much change funds. While we value use-inspired research and believe that both policy and organisational improvement needs to be driven from a robust evidence base, ultimately we seek to fund sustainable improvement in practice. This publication is designed to support project teams’ thinking towards achieving that aim.

Dr Peter Coolbear
Director, Ako Aotearoa



┌ This publication is not about researching tertiary teaching and learning: it is about using research to drive change for the benefit of learners. └



Contents

1	Preface
3	Introduction
4	Supporting Change – what to wrap around your project
4	Developing a professional learning community for your project
5	Practice Example One: The learning community
5	Communicating
6	A framework for thinking about achieving sustainable change
7	Initiation: defining the problem and looking for the solution
7	Time and resourcing
8	Framework for Thinking One – Initiation: Getting Started
9	Practice Example Two: Problem definition
10	Managing the Risks
11	Implementation: conducting the project
11	Attribution
11	Implementation Dip
11	Sustainability and Scalability
12	Framework for Thinking Two – Implementation: Conducting the project
13	Practice Example Three: Gathering Evidence
14	Project Outcomes
15	Examples of Outcomes
16	Practice Example Four: Gathering Evidence
17	Institutionalisation: adopting and embedding
18	Framework for Thinking Three – Institutionalisation: Keeping it going
19	Practice Example Five: Embedding practice
20	Conclusion
21	Ako Aotearoa Rubrics: Characteristics of a high impact project

Introduction

Effective projects in tertiary education are about changing the way you do things so that your learners continue to benefit in the long term. They are about adapting as you go along, about sharing with others, communicating your work and getting what you do embedded into your teaching and learning practice. Projects are about testing assumptions and developing confidence that what has been done is working. Above all they are about planning to create sustainable change.

This guide provides a framework for thinking about the before, during and after phases of action-focussed projects that are designed to improve teaching and learning. It steps you through a process that encourages reflection, evidence gathering, and using your project to support ongoing improvement. Essentially it will help you to work through a process in which you question:

What do we need to do throughout our project to ensure that it gains interest, traction, adoption, and improves outcomes for our learners?

The case descriptions in the document provide examples of practice and show how project teams have worked through the various elements required for successful projects.

In this process of improving practice through your project, the rubber hits the road when you can identify evidence to demonstrate that this changed practice is making a difference to students' learning.

Your project needs to be thought about in relation to undertaking change¹. Such change needs to be viewed as a process rather than an event, that new things will be learnt along the way. This process will have its challenges as practitioners begin to test their new assumptions, socialise their new ideas, and let go their old ideas and practices and implement new ones.

The conditions for assisting change can be built at multiple levels of a project and, when done in a systematic way, enable findings, learning and practice to live beyond the life of the project and to be disseminated more widely.

The type of change that projects can bring about can be viewed in two ways, as first or second order change. The latter is more difficult to do given that it means disturbing the way things have been done and getting practitioners to change the way they do things.

Conducting your project means thinking about it as more than a discrete inquiry that sits on its own. It incorporates thinking about the project within your organisational context or across organisations². Therefore you need to think how your organisation or the organisations you are working with support and deal with change, who you need to involve and collaborate with, and how and who you need to communicate with. It also means giving consideration to the levers or drivers for change that might exist within and across organisations and how you might work off these within your project. 

Fullan describes the change process as “non-linear, loaded with uncertainty, and sometimes perverse” (1993, pp. 24-25)

First order change takes place within accepted boundaries and leaves basic values unchanged. It is associated with aspects such as improving existing systems or procedures or learning materials.

Second order change goes beyond this to challenge the assumptions, beliefs and values that are generally held by practitioners about learners and learning. It gets them to change their practices in the light of this.

¹ Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces; Probing the depths of educational reform*. London. The Falmer Press.

² Organisational context can refer to a teaching unit, a department/faculty or the organisation has a whole.

Supporting Change – what to wrap around your project

Developing a professional learning community for your project

Individuals on their own cannot create change that can be maintained and promulgated. Action-focussed projects provide an opportunity for members of project teams to take into account what is already known and assess this against what is happening. They can share what they are doing and what is happening for learners as a result of what is being done. Developing a professional learning community around the work is a way of engaging with and interpreting the progress of the project and the new knowledge and learning that is occurring.

It starts with reflective and collaborative team members

who are prepared to ask themselves:

- What are we doing?
- Why do we do it this way?
- What is happening as a result of what we are doing?
- What data are we using that tell that this is happening³?

The professional learning community that you put around your project could be the project team or might be expanded to include others who could act as critical friends and/or organisational influencers. It is more than a community that just meets to plan. And it is a community that is dynamic and can change over the course of a project.



A learning community has:

- a shared interest, vision and culture
- a collaborative culture
- a focus on examining outcomes to improve student learning
- a supportive and shared leadership
- a shared personal practice

³ Clegg (n.d.) talks about these questions as aiding the “unpacking, understanding and constructing a response to a situation or problem ... it is a way of maximising deep learning and minimising surface approaches”. Race (2002) talks about reflection ‘digesting’ or ‘making sense’ of the learning that happens from practice, from getting things right and wrong, from the feedback that others give, and from the outcomes that occur as a result of the practice. Clegg, K. (n.d.). *Improving learning through reflection – part one*.

<https://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/researcher-development/students/resources/pgwt/reflectionpt1.pdf>;

Race, P. (2002). *Evidence reflection*. <http://escalate.ac.uk/resources/reflection/>



Practice Example One: The learning community

Key points: Establishing the professional learning community

Guiding and Supporting Learners in Western Bay of Plenty Private Training Establishments: Principles for Good Practice

A researcher from the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic worked with staff from 16 Private Training Establishments (PTEs). The researcher gathered data in focus groups of students in the 16 PTEs, analysed and summarised the data and gave it back to each PTE for further discussion and analysis. Staff from each of the PTEs were then invited to a one day hui to write up the case study for their organisation.

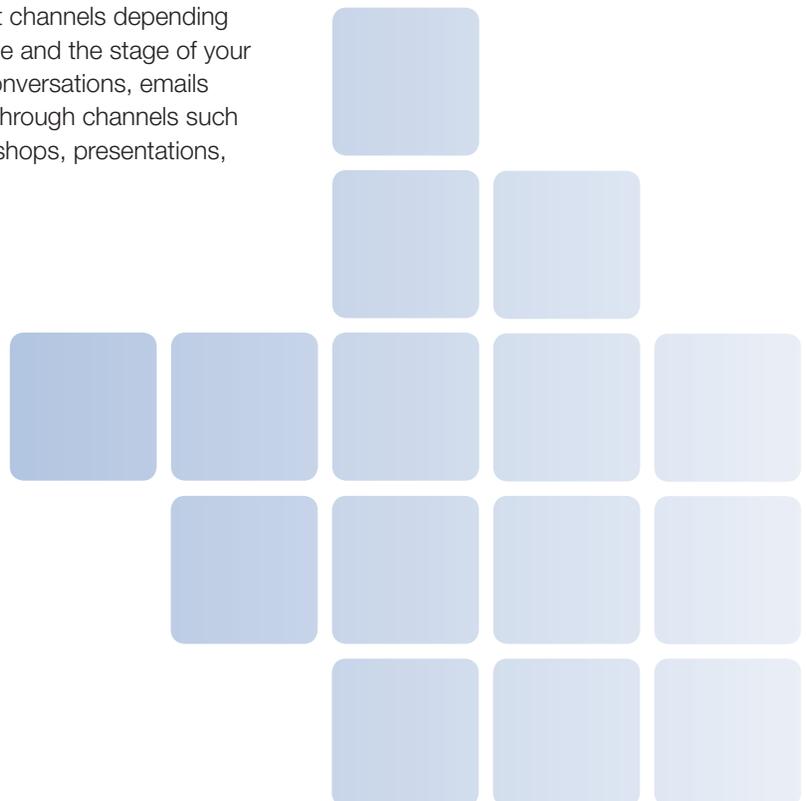
This collaborative project identified successful strategies for supporting and guiding students, based on a student perspective. The Western Bay of Plenty Providers Forum worked alongside the project team throughout the course of the project, providing support and guidance. Members of this group took responsibility for deciding on the topic, provided ongoing feedback on the work and also provided access to students for focus groups.

While the community's purpose was to investigate the principles for good practice and produce case studies, there were additional benefits in that the hui provided the opportunity for tutors to share practice about successful student support activities.

<http://akoatearora.ac.nz/download/ng/file/group-5/guiding-and-supporting-learners-in-western-bay-of-plenty-ptes-principles-for-good-practice.pdf>

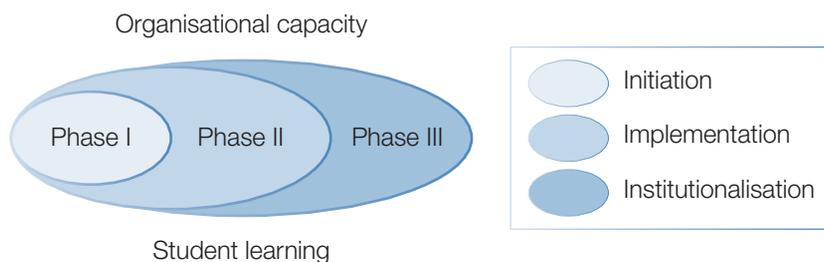
Communicating

And finally you need to think right from the start about how to communicate your work both within and beyond your organisation. You need to provide information throughout the project and use different channels depending on the type of information you want to communicate and the stage of your project. There are informal opportunities through conversations, emails and discussion forums. Formal opportunities exist through channels such as meetings, newsletters, discussion forums, workshops, presentations, conferences and websites. 



A framework for thinking about achieving sustainable change

There are a number of frameworks related to the stages of change and management of change. The thinking framework offered below considers project development across three overlapping phases: initiation, implementation and institutionalisation. This approach comes from Fullan's⁴ approach to educational change.



Phase 1: The initiation phase includes the thinking, discussions and decisions that establish the need for, and purpose of the project and what it will consist of (the scope).

Phase 2: The implementation phase includes the detailed design of the project, getting the activities underway, seeing them through and measuring what is happening as a result. It also involves ongoing thinking and discussions around what is happening, with a particular focus on the evidence that is being collected about the benefits for learners.

Phase 3: This institutionalisation phase involves continuing to assess the project's impact and outcomes, and working on embedding the new learning and new practices into business as usual.

The following tables are based on these three phases and provide questions that will get you thinking and reflecting about each stage of your project. These questions are not a checklist of "must dos." They aim to assist you in thinking about your project and the organisational system(s) in which your project sits and the activities that need to be undertaken so that traction, adoption and improvement of student outcomes can be realised.

Your organisational context

At all stages of your project you will need to consider organisational support and how your organisation manages change and new learning. For example does it drive change off an evidence base? Is it open to learning and open to change? A key question related to your organisation is: "Are we able to describe our organisation as a learning organisation⁵?" In a nutshell the literature says this requires answers to the following questions:

- Are we action oriented?
- Do we look for new solutions?
- Do we evaluate what we do?
- Are we collaborative?
- Do we value individual and collective learning?

If the answers to these questions are mainly "yes", and the project fits with the strategic direction of your organisation, then you are more likely to get support for your project. If the answer to any of questions is "no" then you will need to find ways of advocating for change per se as well as promoting your project. In either instance you will need to make the case that the project is a priority.

⁴ Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change, 4th ed.* New York: Teachers College Press cited in *Kit e Aotūroa: Improving Inservice Teacher Educator Learning and Practice*. Te Kete Ipurangi. <http://instep.net.nz/>

⁵ There are various definitions of learning organisations. In the last two decades one of the most well-known is Senge's that includes the five disciplines of systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning. Senge, P. (1992). *The fifth discipline*. Australia. Random House.

Initiation: defining the problem and looking for the solution

While the catalyst for most projects is an identified issue or problem, there will also be times when the catalyst comes in the form of an opportunity. The term “problem” is used in this document but project teams can amend this to “opportunity” where they need to.

Projects work well when there is active organisational sponsorship, good project management, good design and good project teams. Starting a change project requires careful thinking and planning. Essentially you are looking to plan a project that has a life, in time and space, that will go beyond the actual implementation of the project. Spending time at this stage and not rushing too quickly into actioning the project is important as it allows time to:

- reflect on, understand, clarify and agree on the problem that is to be addressed
- think about possible solutions or options
- consider what might already be known about the problem and the solutions
- determine what success will look like and the success indicators, in particular how to identify benefits for learners
- decide who needs to be involved in the project and how they will need to collaborate
- reflect on how the project will operate in the context of your organisation or in partnership with other organisations
- consider who should be actively encouraged to be part of the learning community around the project
- decide how the project will be communicated as it progresses.



Time and resourcing

Time spent at this stage is vital in terms of initiating the change process as it allows practitioners time to think about the problem in relation to their practice and leads them to start to question what they currently do and why, their assumptions and beliefs about their practice and the impact that this is having on their learners. It is also the stage at which individuals start to build trust with others as they examine their own practices and those of others.

In this phase, as in other phases of the project, there needs to be an acknowledgement of the timeframes and logistics and a realistic appraisal of how much time will be required to undertake the activities and what resources, including people, will be needed. All too often initial enthusiasm leads teams to leap forward into action without appreciating the time it takes to administer, build and undertake a project.

You need to be realistic about what can be done and what your project can achieve. You need to consider where effort is best spent and the capacity that exists to undertake the work. Take opportunities that come your way. And do what is doable!

Framework for Thinking One – Initiation: Getting Started

<i>People</i>	<i>Project Clarification and Scope</i>	<i>Organisational Approach to Change</i>	<i>Communication</i>
<p>Who will sponsor our project?</p> <p>Who do we need to get on board at the outset and how would we involve them?</p> <p>Are these people from within our organisation or do we need to partner with other organisations?</p> <p>How much interest is this likely to generate inside and outside our organisation?</p>	<p><i>Problem or opportunity identification</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is our problem / opportunity and why is it important or urgent to solve this problem or action this opportunity? • How do we know this is a problem – what evidence are we seeing that it is an issue? What are our assumptions and beliefs related to this problem? • What do we already know about this problem? • Do we know the answers to the problem or are the answers known elsewhere, in the literature, in our sector, our discipline, our organisation? • What improvements in student learning do we want to see? <p><i>Measures of success</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What benefits would we expect to see for learners if we solved the problem – in the short, medium and long term? • What would practitioners be doing differently? • What outcomes would be happening for diverse groups of learners? <p><i>The Project</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature of the project – implementation, resource development, strategic, research? • What design are we going to use e.g. experimental, exploratory, follow-up? • Is the project realistic given the expertise, time and other resources available? • What if how do we manage the risks or opportunities as they arise? 	<p>What is the approach to change around here and what are peoples’ reactions to it?</p> <p>Is change at the individual level supported at the organisational level?</p> <p>How do we challenge and support change or new thinking?</p> <p>Can we describe ourselves as reflective practitioners?</p> <p>What would it take to develop professional learning communities around this work?</p> <p>Can we describe our organisation as a “learning organisation”?</p> <p>What does the organisation expect in terms of return on investment from our work?</p>	<p>Who do we need to consult?</p> <p>Who do we need to communicate with (Within our organisation? Across organisations?)</p> <p>What do they want to know?</p> <p>What do we want them to know?</p> <p>What do we tell them, when and how?</p>



Practice Example Two: Problem definition

Enhancing Nursing Education through Dedicated Education Units

Key points: problem definition; finding out what is already known; communicating.

This collaborative project between the Manukau Institute of Technology and the Counties Manukau District Health Board looked at the critical issue in nursing education of how to improve the clinical learning of nursing students. The team were looking for a model that moved away from the one-to-one dynamics of the preceptor model.

Before implementing the pilot project the team explored models that support nursing students' clinical learning. This process included visits to Adelaide and Christchurch where DEUs were operating and also

a review of the literature related to the benefits of DEUs for the nursing staff in hospitals and the nursing students themselves.

On the basis of the information, a decision was made to pilot two DEUs at Middlemore Hospital in 2009. Once the decision was made, considerable consultation took place. The concept and rationale were presented at meetings to senior nurse managers at the hospital and to nursing education staff at the polytechnic. Nursing managers had the chance to reflect on whether or not they wanted to participate in the project.

<http://akoatearoa.ac.nz/download/ng/file/group-1658/enhancing-nursing-education-through-dedicated-education-units.pdf>



Managing the Risks

Managing the risks means thinking about the “what if?” questions before the project starts so that if things do not go according to plan you have some possible solutions. This is not just about identifying risks so they can be avoided, it is also about proactively identifying risks so that they can be managed down and even, on occasion, be turned into opportunity.

“What if?” questions include:

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Possible response</i>
We lose organisational buy-in.	Report to the project sponsor and maintain their interest.
The project leader or a key team member leaves.	At the outset ensure that all team members understand the key principles of the project. Keep good project records.
We miss the opportunity to collect baseline data.	Actively seek other appropriate data sources and collection tools.
We don't seem to be making any difference to student's learning.	Check that the data sources and collection tools are appropriate for measuring the success indicators you have set for the project.
We are struggling to communicate our work.	Look for target audiences. Use targeted communications mechanisms. Use language that is appropriate for various audiences. Use formal and informal networks. Use face-to-face opportunities. Look for a project champion (possibly the project sponsor).

You don't have to answer all these questions at the start of your project, but thinking about them can help you prepare for various scenarios.

SUMMARY

In summary, by the end of the initiation phase you should have clarified:

- the problem and what is causing this problem
- how your project will solve this problem
- what improvements in outcomes for learners you expect to see
- the type of project you are going to instigate
- who might assist in influencing others with results
- how you will communicate the work.

At the end of this phase your output will be a high level project scope outlining what you are intending to do and why. 

Implementation: conducting the project

So the problem is defined and you think you know where you are heading. You have the right people on board and you are ready to go. This phase involves the detailed project design, undertaking the work of the project and measuring progress as you go. As with the initiation phase it involves careful thinking, planning, discussion, reflection and communication.

Along with the actual activity of the project, this phase requires project teams to come to terms with some of the challenges related to change projects:

Attribution

Working out whether or not it is your particular project that has made the difference to students is key to measuring the success of your project and is a critical consideration in the design of the project and decisions about data collection. Assessing the extent of the impact relies on you collecting data from different sources in varying ways. To give confidence to your conclusions, data should ideally be collected from at least two sources and/or in two different ways (enabling triangulation). You also need to collect data that measures what is supposed to be measured (validity) and would produce the same result again or be consistent over time (reliability).

It is also important to consider any contextual influencers at play and include this in your consideration of attribution. Many projects develop from existing organisational strategic imperatives and your particular project may be one of many drivers. It is important that this wider context is taken into account when assessing the impact of a specific project.

Implementation Dip

The implementation dip⁶ happens as a normal part of a change process as people experience the “ups and downs” of trying out new things and feel a bit awkward or anxious about it. It can also occur when people aren't seeing the results they expected to see. The best way to get through the dip is to continually focus on the end purpose of your project.

Sustainability and Scalability

These aspects are more relevant in the next stage of your project, but it is useful to start to think about them in this phase.

In the broadest sense, sustainability means embedding the new learning and practice into business as usual. However in the longer term it needs to be more than just maintaining the new practice. Sustainability is about continuing to investigate the new practice and making changes, where necessary, in order to continue to improve outcomes for learners.

Scalability is about how to grow the new learning or practice beyond the boundaries of the project. Project teams need to start thinking about who else might be interested in the new learning and new practice and whether there is anything that might be done in the implementation phase that could support this to happen.

6 Herold and Fedor (2008) cited in Fullan, M. (2010) Motion leadership: The skinny on becoming change savvy. http://www.ccs.k12.nc.us/LeadershipCompass/10_MotionLeadership_Handout_A4.pdf

Framework for Thinking Two – Implementation: Conducting the project

<i>People</i>	<i>Detailed Project Design, Implementation and Measurement</i>	<i>Organisational Approach to Change</i>	<i>Communication</i>
<p>Who do we need to involve and how would we involve them?</p>	<p><i>Looking for the answer – confirming the detailed design</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is our specific and measurable goal? • What outcomes are we seeking for our learners? • What specific activities are we going to undertake to achieve the goal? • What inputs will we need e.g. time, people, resources, funding? • What outputs will we produce e.g. a research report, a new resource; a new process; a new teaching practice? <p><i>Doing the work and showing the benefits</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the activities progressing? Are we reaching our milestones? • How are we evaluating as we go along?⁷ • What evidence tells us that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – we are making a difference to teaching practice? – we are making a difference to learners? – it is the project that is making the difference (attribution)? – the project team/learning community are benefitting? <p><i>Beginning to take it further</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we need to start to do to ensure that the new practice / new learning gets embedded into business as usual (achieving sustainability)? • What do we need to think about to ensure that the new practice / new learning grows in breadth or depth (gaining scalability)? 	<p>How are we engaging leaders in our organisation?</p> <p>How are we encouraging reflective thinking about what we are doing and why?</p> <p>How are we challenging and supporting change or new thinking?</p> <p>How are we building, refreshing and maintaining our professional learning community around the project?</p> <p>How are we adapting as we go along?</p> <p>How are we managing pressure points e.g. project milestones with busy teaching and assessment loads?</p> <p>How might we cope with an implementation dip?</p>	<p>What opportunities are there for us to share our learning and results?</p> <p>Who do we need to communicate with and when? What do we tell them and how?</p>

⁷ See Ako Aotearoa's Impact Evaluation Framework: <http://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/project-evaluation>



Practice Example Three: Gathering Evidence

Transforming tertiary science education

Key points: gathering data; measuring the impact of the intervention

This is a joint project working across six courses, two in biology at Massey University and four in Geology at the University of Canterbury. It is implementing the Carl Wieman Science Education Initiative within the New Zealand tertiary environment. The project aims to improve student engagement in learning by implementing interventions that encourage active learning in science and then measuring the effects on engagement and learning.

The project uses data in an ongoing way to show that the new teaching interventions are making a difference to teachers' practices and learners' engagement.

Data were collected through classroom observations, a perception survey, focus groups with students, and measurement of student learning through a pre-post knowledge survey (for biology) and a pre-post concept test for geology.

This mix of qualitative and quantitative data has informed the project team about the increases in student engagement during lectures and has identified which activities help students the most with their learning.

<http://akoatearoa.ac.nz/projects/transforming-tertiary-science-education>

SUMMARY

In summary, over the course of the implementation phase you should have:

- completed the detailed design
- conducted the project
- gathered data to measure the impact of the project on practitioners and students
- thought about how you might go beyond the activities of the project to achieve sustainability and / or scalability

At the end of this phase your output will be your project report and any associated presentations. 

Examples of Outcomes

<i>Project type</i>	<i>Immediate</i>	<i>Medium term</i>	<i>Longer term</i>
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of teaching / support strategies by practitioners • Increased student engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved retention, and success outcomes amongst participants • Adoption of approach outside immediate environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued learner benefit over time • Application of initiative showing positive effects elsewhere • Commitment from organisations to maintain effective approach
Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest and discussion at wider departmental meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioners and learners use the resource and find it helpful • Improved retention and success • Groups outside the project starting to use resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource is actively shared and used within and/or across organisations • Adaption, modification of the resource within and /or across organisations • Demonstrated learner benefits as a result of using the resource within and beyond the project team
Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased interest and awareness of strategic issues beyond the project team • Demonstrated consideration of issues by key decision makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural/organisational changes as a result of the issues identified • Changes in practice • Awareness of implications beyond participating groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated learner benefits as a result of changes • Demonstrated impact on strategic thinking beyond project • Implementation of changes outside the project
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes new knowledge to the existing knowledge base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research report is read and shared by others • Research is cited by others • Changes derived from new knowledge / understandings are implemented within own organisation • Changes are planned in other organisations • Project team invited to share their work broadly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings inform policies • Research is used to inform further research • Changes are implemented elsewhere • Demonstrated changes for learners seen as a result of organisational change



Practice Example Four: Gathering Evidence About Outcomes

Culturally relevant peer support for Māori and Pasifika student engagement, retention and success

Key points: immediate outcomes of an implementation project

This project, undertaken by the Open Polytechnic, aimed to increase Māori and Pacific students' engagement and success. The project involved proactive peer support contact with students, via telephone during weekday evenings. This contact took place at times that were identified as being critical to course progress.

The outcomes from the project as measured by peer supporters' records, students' academic records and the student survey showed that first year Māori and Pacific students, studying at a distance:

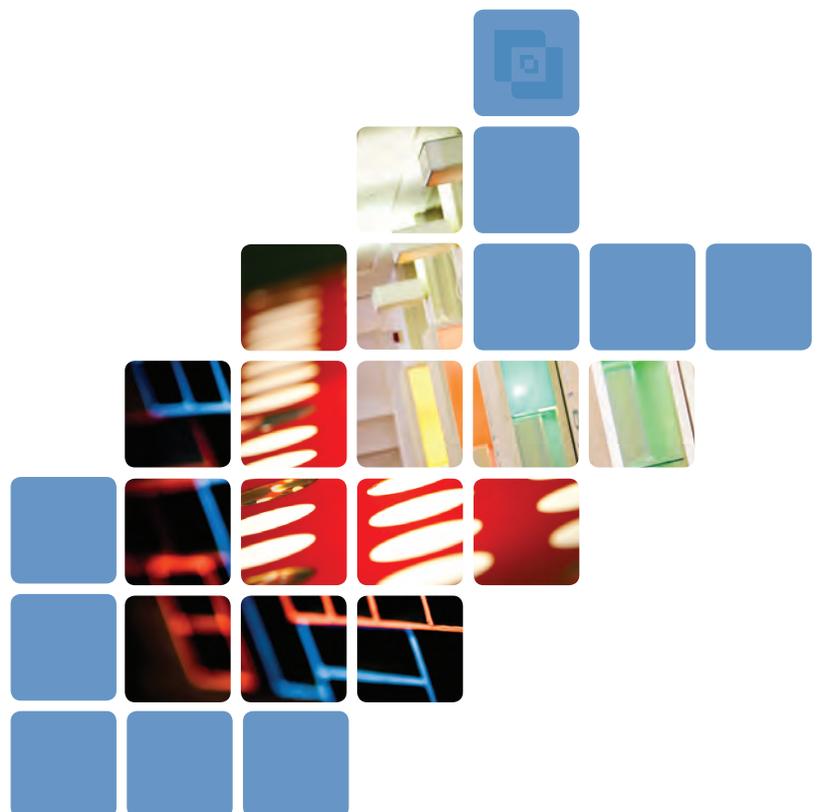
- valued the opportunity to have regular contact with knowledgeable peers in addition to their tutors
- found the contact encouraging and motivational

- felt it enabled them to deal more effectively with the demands of study and to feel part of a learning community
- assisted in the identification of issues that might be a barrier to progress and provided opportunities to resolve these in a timely manner.

Students, particularly Māori students, placed great importance on belonging – the notion of tatau tatau. They considered that the regular contact with the peer supporters had contributed positively to their sense of belonging.

When 2008 and 2009 completion rates were compared to those in 2007 it was found that across the two years Māori completion had increased by 12% and Pacific Peoples by 6%.

<http://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/ako-aotearoa/ako-aotearoa/resources/pages/culturally-relevant-peer-support-m%C4%81ori-and-pasifika-studen>



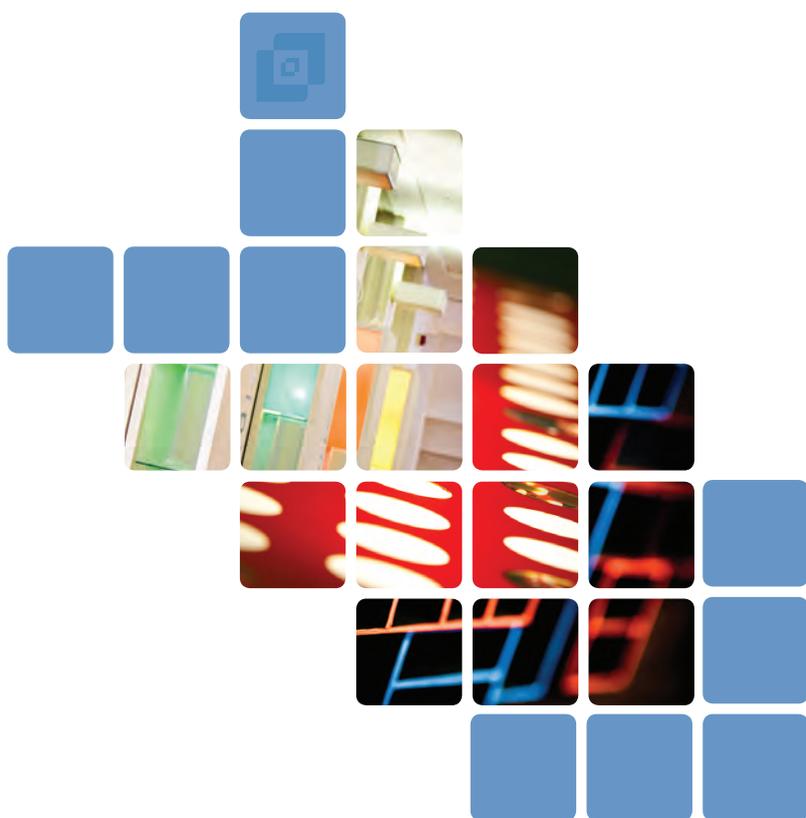
Institutionalisation: adopting and embedding

During the initiation and implementation phases you have been working towards what is required to institutionalise the new learning and practice from your project. Creating sustainable change means adopting the learning or practice so that it becomes embedded into business as usual.

At this stage you might also like to work on scalability, for example, if you have developed a resource and started to implement it, how can it be promoted to other departments or disciplines within and beyond your organisation? To do this you will need to think about how you can promote the learning from your project and the benefits it has had for learners.

While sharing and embedding your work is something you have been planning for in the previous two phases it can be a challenging phase of the project as project teams often think, “our work here is done – what next?” As with the other phases it requires commitment from the project team, the learning community that has been built around the project and the organisation.

This is often referred to as the dissemination phase of a project. Dissemination should occur both within the organisation and beyond it. It is not just about sharing what has been done, ideally it’s about actively promoting change based on the achieved outcomes from the project.



Framework for Thinking Three – Institutionalisation: Keeping it going

<i>People</i>	<i>Reviewing and Continuing the New Learning</i>	<i>Organisational Approach to Change</i>	<i>Communication</i>
<p>Who do we need to involve and how would we involve them?</p>	<p>Reviewing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is what we did worth continuing? Have we seen benefit of learner gain that would convince us to continue? Is what we did cost-effective in practice? • What is continuing to happen to our learners as a result of our work? • How can we embed the new learning into our business as usual? • Would this work in other contexts? Across our wider organisation? In other organisations? • What has happened to us as a project team? Do we want to continue to work together? How can we make this happen? • How can we showcase the learning from the project and the benefits to learners to decision makers in our organisation? <p>Beyond the project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we continue to promote the new learning across our organisation and to other organisations? • What opportunities/ are there locally and nationally for us to present our findings? • How do we continue to adapt the new learning? 	<p>How do we continue to engage leaders in our organisation?</p> <p>How do we continue to challenge and support change or new thinking?</p> <p>What does it take to keep new ideas working around here to maintain and create further change?</p> <p>How do we enhance dissemination?</p>	<p>What opportunities are there for us to share our practice and results?</p> <p>Who do we need to communicate with, what do we tell them and how?</p>



Practice Example Five: Embedding practice

The Success and Impact of Early Career Academics in New Zealand Tertiary Institutions

Key points: embedding learning into business as usual (sustainability);

This joint project through the Victoria University of Wellington and the Queensland University of Technology aimed to find out about the factors and processes that result in Early Career Academics being well prepared and capable of enhancing educational outcomes and their own careers.

The findings from the research showed that success in academia depends on a trio of inter-related factors: institutional support, prior experience, and the personal characteristics of the academics themselves.

These findings have been included in a flyer that is used in the orientation of new teaching staff at the Victoria University of Wellington and in three other universities as part of their staff development programmes.

The findings have been incorporated into 3-day retreats at the University of Victoria called “Developing Scholarly Habits.” The retreats were first run in 2010 and as a result of the evaluation senior management have agreed to roll the retreat programme out across faculties.

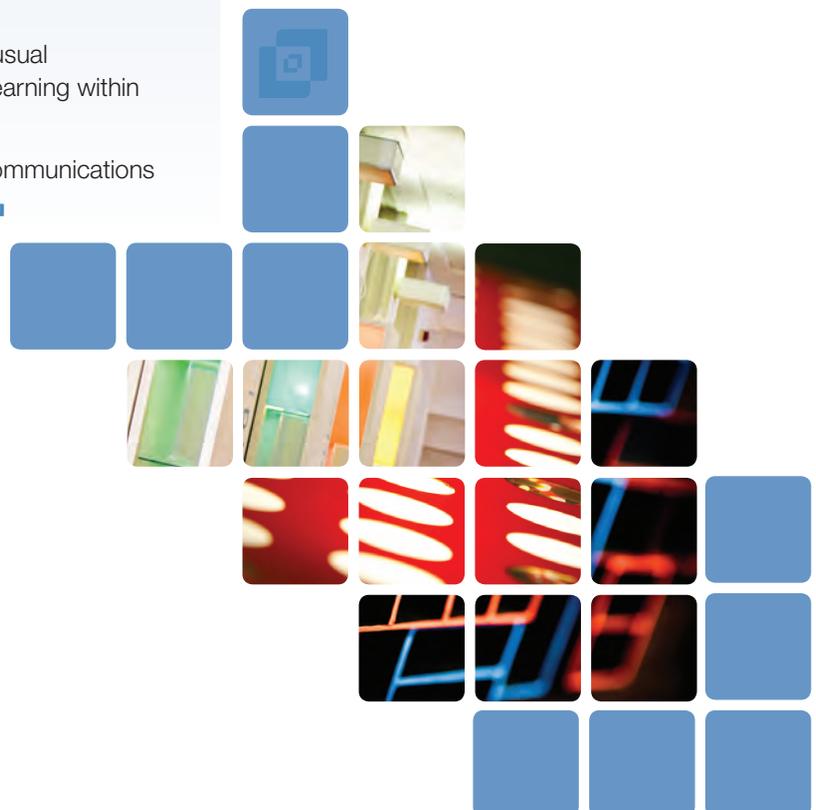
<http://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/ako-hub/ako-aotearoa-central-hub/resources/pages/success-and-impact-early-career-academics-two-new-zealand>

SUMMARY

In summary over the course of the institutionalisation phase you should:

- continue to review the impact of your project on learners
- continue to use the new practice /learning
- embed the new practice into business as usual
- develop communications to promote the learning within and across organisations.

The output from this stage of the project is communications about the project for a variety of audiences.





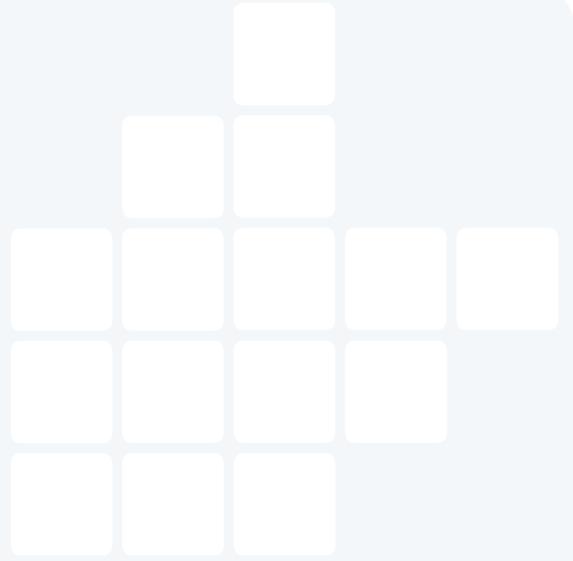
Conclusion

Conducting a project that results in sustainable change can be exciting and rewarding for organisations, project teams and learners. It is exciting in that change projects – when successful – can take on a life of their own. We are often delighted by the effects of successful projects creeping into new and unpredictable areas of tertiary education. Often the process enables project teams to build their own capability and become leaders in their own right. What has become clear to us is that although there is no ‘one-size-fits-all approach,’ there certainly are some key ingredients (see pages 22–24):

- a) a committed and engaged project team, who are both well positioned to make changes themselves and influence other key groups,
- b) a well planned and executed project, that is kept on track with the benefits for learners at the forefront
- c) a willingness to work with others in a meaningful partnership for the benefit of learners.
- d) a plan in place to share the work strategically.

Making an impact can be hard work but careful planning, effective project oversight and working in partnership can make the difference in the success of a project. Ako Aotearoa is committed to working with you as you undertake these projects. We hope that this guide has stimulated you to conduct change projects, and also provided you with a framework for thinking about your work. 





AKO AOTEAROA RUBRICS



Ako Aotearoa Rubrics: Characteristics of a high impact project

The rubrics below have been developed to illustrate what Ako Aotearoa considers to be a high impact project. Two rubrics have been developed, one for open projects and one for projects that focus on Māori learners. The rubrics have two dimensions along which projects can be evaluated: *Project Integrity/Te Kounga o te Rangahau* and *Achieving Sustainable Change/Te ū Roa ki te Whakapiki Putanga Pai Ake*. For each dimension there are a cluster of key characteristics that describe projects as either excellent/kua eke panuku or good/kua eke. The rubrics also illustrate key characteristics that would prompt a project to be considered poor/kāore i te eke.

Ako Aotearoa will use these rubrics to assist in evaluation of projects across the full funding cycle.

Key times where the rubrics are relevant

- During project initiation
 - For the project team⁸ to frame their work and self-assess their application
 - For Ako Aotearoa to guide project team thinking about our expectations
 - For selection panels to use as a guide to assessing applications and understand potential for change
- During project implementation
 - For Ako Aotearoa staff and the project team as a framework in which to evaluate progress against project aims. In particular to identify risks and opportunities for the project as the work progresses
 - For Ako Aotearoa staff and the project team to plan the collection of evidence of demonstrated learner outcomes over time
- During project institutionalisation
 - For Ako Aotearoa and the project team to understand how change has been achieved as a result of the work
 - For Ako Aotearoa to assess change that has occurred collectively across funds
 - For Ako Aotearoa as a framework to guide continuous improvement in our processes for project funding and management 

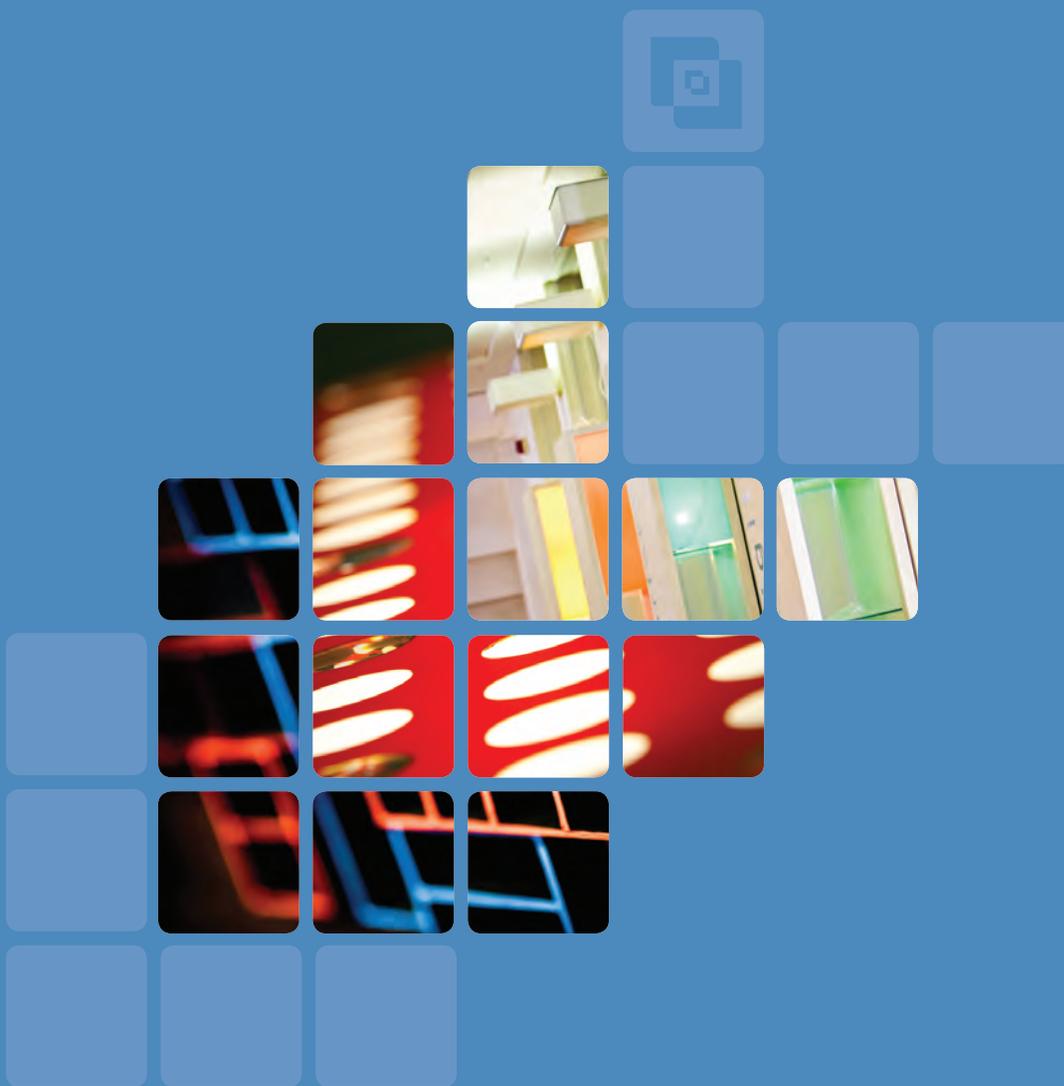
8 Used in the broadest sense to include the organisation(s) co-funding projects.

Rubric for the evaluation of open projects

Rating	Project Integrity	Achieving Sustainable Change
Excellent	<p><i>For a project to be considered 'excellent', all aspects must be met</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project design and method has no significant gaps or areas of weakness • How learner outcomes will be achieved is well reasoned • The project team has mana relevant to the proposed work • Capability building is embedded in the project • The focus of the project is highly valued in New Zealand and internationally 	<p><i>For a project to be considered 'excellent', all aspects must be met</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation demonstrates a clear commitment to act on the outcomes of the work • Relationships are established with key stakeholders • The dissemination plan is well developed • The project team is actively engaged in achieving sustained change for learners beyond the scope of the project and participating organisations
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any minor gaps or weaknesses in the project design and method can be easily rectified • How learner outcomes will be achieved is well reasoned • The project team has the capability to complete the work, and demonstrates expertise in the area of interest • There is a plan to build capability as part of the project • The project focus is of importance to teaching and learning in New Zealand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation is committed to the work and outcomes • Important stakeholder relationships are identified and relationship building is underway • The dissemination plan is in development • There is potential to achieve sustainable change for learners as a result of the work
Poor	<p><i>A project will be considered 'poor', if there is any one or more of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project design and method has significant gaps in scope, logic, or detail • The capability of the project team is inconsistent with the proposed work • There is no evidence of capability building as part of the project • The work should already be business as usual 	<p><i>A project will be considered 'poor', if there is any one or more of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisational commitment to act on the outcomes of the work is negligible • There is insufficient evidence of relationship building with important stakeholders • There is a low likelihood the project will achieve sustainable change for learners • The benefit of the project is captured by the participating team members or organisation

Rubric for the evaluation of Māori focused projects: Tā te Māori Titiro

<i>Te Taumata</i>	<i>Te Kounga o te Rangahau</i>	<i>Te ū Roa ki te Whakapiki Putanga Pai Ake</i>
<p>Kua eke panuku</p>	<p><i>For a project to be considered 'excellent,' all aspects must be met</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project design and method has no significant gaps or areas of weakness • Kaupapa Māori methodology is embedded in the project design • How outcomes for learners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities will be achieved is clearly demonstrated • The desired outcomes are determined in collaboration with learners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities • The project has been initiated by and is led by Māori • The Project team has mana relevant to the proposed work • Capability building is embedded in the project • The focus of the project is highly valued in Māori tertiary education, wider New Zealand and internationally 	<p><i>For a project to be considered 'excellent,' all aspects must be met</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation demonstrates a clear commitment to act on the outcomes of the work • Relationships are established with learners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities • The dissemination plan is well developed • The project team is actively engaged in achieving sustained change for learners beyond the scope of the project and participating organisations
<p>Kua eke</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any minor gaps or weaknesses in the project design and method can be easily rectified • Kaupapa Māori methodology is part of the project design • How outcomes for learners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities will be achieved is well reasoned • The project has a Māori leader and team with the capability to complete the work, and demonstrates expertise in the area of interest • There is evidence of collaboration and partnership with Māori • There is a plan to build capability as part of the project • The project focus is of importance to Māori tertiary education in New Zealand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisation is committed to the work and outcomes • Important stakeholder relationships are identified and relationship building is underway with learners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities • The dissemination plan is in development • There is potential to achieve sustainable change for learners as a result of the work
<p>Kāore i te eke</p>	<p><i>A project will be considered 'poor', if there is any one or more of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project design and method has significant gaps in scope, logic, or detail • The project lacks Māori leadership and partnerships • The capability of the project team is inconsistent with the proposed work • There is no evidence of capability building as part of the project • The work should already be business as usual 	<p><i>A project will be considered 'poor', if there is any one or more of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The organisational commitment to act on the outcomes of the work is negligible • There is insufficient evidence of relationship building with learners, whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities • There is a low likelihood the project will achieve sustainable change for learners • The benefit of the project is captured by the participating team members or organisation



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