

Tertiary Education Report: Use of Equity Funding underspends for equity initiatives

Date:	22 May 2020	TEC priority:	Medium
Security level:	In Confidence	Report no:	B-20-00112
		Minister's office No:	

ACTION SOUGHT		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Chris Hipkins Minister of Education	Note the report on how we have used Equity Funding underspends to support learner success.	As soon as practicable
Enclosure: No	Round Robin: No	

CONTACT FOR TELEPHONE DISCUSSION (IF REQUIRED)				
Name	Position	Telephone		1st contact
Paora Ammunson	Deputy Chief Executive, Ōritetanga Learner Success	§ 9(2)(a)	§ 9(2)(a)	
§ 9(2)(a)	§ 9(2)(a)	§ 9(2)(a)	§ 9(2)(a)	✓

THE FOLLOWING DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES HAVE SEEN THIS REPORT

- DPMC
 MPI
 ENZ
 ERO
 MBIE
 MoE
 MFAT
 MPP
 MSD
 NZQA
 NZTE
 TEC
 TPK
 Treasury

- Minister's Office to Complete:**
 Approved
 Declined
 Noted
 Needs change
 Seen
 Overtaken by Events
 See Minister's Notes
 Withdrawn

Comments:

Executive Summary

1. In April 2019 you agreed that we could use up to \$2m of underspends in Equity Funding (across the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years) to support initiatives by TEOs to improve equity outcomes.
2. We have used funding to support four learner success pilot projects, provide international expert advice and coaching supports, and develop a framework for the ethical use of data in learner analytics.
3. Initial evaluation of the pilot projects and feedback from international coaches has validated our learner success approach.
4. We have developed a dedicated Learner Success webpage and are building a significant library of resources and information to support best practice and develop TEO communities of practice.

Recommendations

Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education

It is recommended that you:

1. **note** that we have used Equity Funding underspends to support four learner success pilot projects, provide international expert advice and coaching supports, and develop a framework for the ethical use of data in learner analytics;
2. **note** that we have built a dedicated Learner Success webpage to publish information on these initiatives, and related resources; and
3. **note** that we are developing communities of practice to build sector capability and disseminate lessons from the initiatives.



Paora Ammunson

Deputy Chief Executive, Ōritetanga Learner
Success
Tertiary Education Commission

22 May 2020

Hon Chris Hipkins

Minister of Education

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Purpose

1. This report updates you on how we have utilised underspends in Equity Funding to support TEO efforts to improve outcomes for learners, particularly those that the tertiary system most underserves, including those with low prior educational attainment, or those from families without previous experiences of tertiary education study, where Māori and Pacific students are over-represented.

Background

2. In April 2019 you agreed that we could use up to \$2m of underspends in Equity Funding (across the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years) to support initiatives by TEOs to improve equity outcomes.¹
3. As part of that agreement, you asked us to:
 - › report back to you on what we had used the funding for
 - › publish information on the initiatives we had funded, and
 - › disseminate any lessons from the initiatives.

We have funded four learner success pilot projects

4. We have collated a Learner Success Framework (the Framework, see Appendix B) which we are trialling with TEOs. The Framework consists of a comprehensive continuous improvement approach to assessing, diagnosing and addressing learner needs across the whole of a TEO, supported by tools, guidelines and best practice examples.
5. The Framework is still a work in progress, but at its heart is the learner. And this means that in everything we do, across the whole system, we're continually asking the question: how will the learner experience this interaction? We need to change the narrative from: "How can we ensure learners are ready and prepared to enter tertiary education?", to "How do we ensure we're prepared for the learners who are entrusting their futures into our care?"
6. In order to do that TEO's need know who their learners are, and ask themselves these questions:
 - › where do our learners come from?
 - › what do they do outside of tertiary education (what else is happening in their lives)?
 - › what do they need to succeed?
 - › what do we do that works for them?
 - › what do we do that doesn't?
7. By using the Framework, TEOs can start thinking about how they design and implement everything they do to maximise learner success.

¹ Appendix A sets out current and potential future expenditure.

8. We have partnered with four TEOs (Wintec, MIT, University of Waikato and Te Wānanga o Raukawa) to test the Framework (see Appendix A), in order to develop and trial a series of high impact learner success prototypes which include learner success focused strategic planning, business models and capability road maps, and to build sector networks and learner success communities of practice to contribute to raising sector capability in learner success.
9. A summary of the benefits this project is expected to realise are as follows:
 - › Current state of partner TEOs is assessed in order to direct the scope of the specific prototype initiatives having a view of relative maturity and the wider strategic context of the TEO
 - › Partner TEOs to develop learner success strategies and implementation roadmaps which are prioritised based on agreed critical success factors
 - › TEOs develop and implement specific strategies with best practice approaches that close the parity gap for Māori and Pacific learners
 - › TEOs' use of predictive analytics provides more targeted and tailored approaches that improve Māori and Pacific outcomes which can be scaled to the rest of the sector
 - › Development of a sector "self-assessment toolkit" and learner success high-impact practices
 - › Better sharing and application of knowledge and expertise across the sector about effective practice models that work for Māori and Pacific learners
 - › A collaborative and connected system to support Māori and Pacific learner success
 - › An overall uplift in sector culture and capability
10. Lessons from these projects will be shared with all TEOs through our various channels, and is informing our wider work programme, including our Investment Toolkit.

Early evaluation has confirmed the value of the Learner Success Framework

11. We have undertaken early formative evaluations at Wintec, Waikato University and Raukawa. While trialling the Learner Success Framework in quite different contexts some common themes are already emerging, including:
 - › the Learner Success Framework has proven to be a powerful tool for awareness raising within and across TEOs
 - › TEO staff have found it a useful tool for engaging senior management and governance
 - › trialling the Framework has provided valuable insights into learner needs and challenges that were previously invisible to TEOs
 - › TEOs are already implementing changes to systems and process (for example, enrolment processes and orientation events) that respond to learner needs.
12. A full, formal evaluation of the four pilot projects will be undertaken at the conclusion of the projects by the end of the year.

We have also provided funding to coordinate expert support and coaching for the pilot projects

13. Acknowledging that we have limited capability and capacity to effect large scale learner success transformation across the sector, we have funded Wintec to engage the Achieving the Dream organisation to provide expert advice and coaching support to our TEO partners using a “train the trainer” model.
14. The package of coaching also included attendance at the annual DREAM Conference in February, with a half-day dedicated workshop on developing holistic student supports for the New Zealand delegation (representing six TEOs and the Ministry of Education).
15. The delegation also met with selected educational institutions in Tennessee and Georgia. Their focus was to hear from international experts about their approach to increase student success, increase capacity for data analysis, programme evaluation, and student-centred, data-informed decision-making.
16. The information gathered confirms that our work with the sector, to create a tertiary system that works for all learners, is on the right track.

We have developed a framework and guidance for the ethical use of data

17. Using large amounts of student data as the basis for predicting learner success has inherent risks. Predictive analytic models typically use millions of data points relating to the characteristics and behaviours of thousands of learners. Collating and using this data raises a number of significant issues and potential risks, including: privacy, informed consent, de-identification of data, and the appropriate collection and management of data. In addition there are real concerns about how the outputs of any predictive analytic models might be misused, for example, profiling to exclude “high-risk” learners.
18. We engaged Victoria University of Wellington to develop a governance and policy framework which will provide assurance that data, the results of analytics and supporting interventions are ethical. The deliverables from this project are a set of principles, a policy and guidelines about the ethical use of student data which will be available for application by all TEOs. The framework also gives guidance to TEOs to help them consider issues relating to Māori data sovereignty.
19. We are currently consulting on the ethics framework with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, and plan to publish it on our website in the next few months.

We have published information on the learner success pilots on our website

20. We have recently launched a new page on our website dedicated to Learner Success. It contains a number of relevant resources and information: (<https://www.tec.govt.nz/focus/our-focus/oritetanga-tertiary-success-for-everyone/>)
21. The webpage includes presentations and insights from the Ōritetanga Learner Success conference in August 2019 and an overview of our pilot projects.

22. Building on the Ōritetanga Learner Success conference we are also working with TEOs to build communities of practice. We are organising a whole of sector workshop on governance and leadership, hosted by the University of Canterbury. This was initially scheduled for the 26th of June but we are reassessing the timeline in light of the pandemic.
23. As noted above, we'll also be publishing the data ethics guidance once it's complete.
24. The work we are doing with the University of Otago to re-fresh Kia Ōrite will result in a best practice guide for the inclusion of learners with disabilities in tertiary education. Once this work is completed in late-2020, we will publish the material and any supporting guidance on our website.

We have tested the Framework, now is the time for implementation

25. The learner success pilots are only the first step of our approach to achieving equity at a system level. Now that we have tested the Framework and are satisfied it can be used effectively within an Aotearoa New Zealand context, we are looking to progress this work to the implementation and scaling phase. This includes working closely with both individual TEOs that are eager to use the Framework and sub-sectors, while also using our investment and career functions to incentivise learner-centric approaches.
26. We are already working with Universities New Zealand, including the University of Canterbury as project sponsor, to progress the learner success approach across all eight universities and to create a community of practice for the sector. This is in addition to our individual engagement with several universities (AUT, Lincoln, Massey and Canterbury) on the use of the Framework.
27. We are also engaging the new NZIST and the wānanga sector. To date, we have supported the work done by the NZIST establishment workstream on learner pathway mapping, and see Wintec and MIT as leaders in building learner-centred design into the fabric of the institute. Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (TWOA) has expressed interest in using the Framework and sent two representatives to the DREAM conference this year. We are following up on next steps with TWOA and working with the sector as a whole as part of Te Hono Wānanga (the review of the sector), which we're leading with the Ministry of Education.
28. To enable us to build on the success of the pilots and to drive sector-wide implementation of learner success approaches, the Ministry of Education will shortly provide you with advice on extending the use of Equity Funding underspends for the next financial year.
29. In light of the pandemic and the impact it is projected to have on our most vulnerable, our drive toward equity and learner success has never felt more urgent. We know that prior to Covid-19, our education system was not working well for all learners. The inequities, particularly for Māori and Pacific learners and learners with disabilities, will be perpetuated and possibly accelerated if we do not address these as part of our response and recovery.
30. Our commitment to this work is enabled by having a Framework and approach that allows all TEOs to understand the needs of their learners; to intentionally design their organisation so that it meets their learners where they are at and takes them on a journey of success. We believe this is fundamental to New Zealand's recovery and ensuring are most vulnerable are cared for in these unprecedented times.

Appendix A: Use of Equity Funding underspends 2018/19 – 2019/20

Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec)

31. Wintec was the first and longest running of our partner projects. It has tested the first four phases of the Learner Success Framework, from diagnostic to strategy development. Using human-centred design methodologies, Wintec has undertaken a deep and comprehensive student journey mapping exercise. Their approach has given Wintec rich insights into learner needs, and formed the basis of a new operating model for the whole of the organisation. The operating model will involve wholesale organisational change, including staff recruitment and professional development, student support models as well as programme design and delivery.
32. Wintec has also used the outcomes of their learner success pilot to drive the NZIST workstream on learner pathway mapping. We see them as an integral partner in baking learner-centric design into the foundation of the NZIST.

University of Waikato (Waikato)

33. We have partnered with Waikato, whose project focus is to create a robust system of learner insights and building analytical capability. This will allow them to identify teaching and learning gaps, trends, and patterns. Near-time learner insights will allow for greater access to near-time data. This includes building responsive systems that allow pro-active approaches to strengthen student success. They will also undertake student journey mapping and collect qualitative student voice data to gain a holistic and robust view of students and key attrition points.

Te Wānanga o Raukawa (Raukawa)

34. Changing learner demographics and demand has resulted in Raukawa undertaking a radical shift in the way it designed and delivered its education offerings, moving most of its content to a blended delivery model.
35. We have partnered with Raukawa to support them undertake this business transformation project using a model which closely aligns with the Learner Success Framework. This provides us with an unprecedented opportunity to test the framework in a mātauranga Māori context. The project has enabled Raukawa to make improvements in learner enrolment and engagement, and has seen it emerge as one of the leaders in online delivery during the COVID-19 crisis.

Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT)

36. MIT is the last of our pilot projects, with the project commencing only in January 2020. We are partnering with MIT to test the first four phases of the Learner Success Framework, from diagnostic to strategy development. The project builds on MIT's successful Hōkūle'a Project which increased retention of Māori and Pacific learners through the early assessment of needs and provision of holistic support (academic, pastoral and cultural). MIT will research specific approaches and interventions utilised at Georgia State University. This includes: design and application of 'meta-majors' to reduce confusion in learner subject choice, and technology options to support early alerts.

Equity Funding underspends		Current expenditure	
Spending cap (as per delegation letter)	\$2,000,000	<i>Learner Success pilot projects</i>	
		Te Wānanga o Raukawa	\$375,000
		Waikato Institute of Technology	\$430,000
		University of Waikato	\$297,500
		Manukau Institute of Technology	\$331,200
		Total	\$1,433,700
		Waikato Institute of Technology (Achieving the Dream)	\$100,000
		University of Otago: Kia Ōrite refresh	\$87,500
Total	\$2,000,000	Grand total	\$1,621,200
		Balance	\$378,800

Appendix B: Learner Success Framework

