

4 May 2016

New Zealand Productivity Commission
PO Box 8036
The Terrace
Wellington 6143

Re: 'New models of tertiary education' Submission

Submission prepared by	Tertiary Career Practitioners
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As experienced career practitioners in the Tertiary Education sector, we have provided answers to various questions in the issues paper to assist with the 'New models of tertiary education' inquiry. Please review questions answered from the issues paper and our insights we have provided from a careers perspective.

Q2

Do prospective students have good enough information to enable them to make informed choices about providers and courses? What additional information should be provided? Who should provide it?

Page 8

- Course and careers information needs to be objective and fact based
- Opportunities need to be explored to develop greater connections and stronger links between Tertiary provider and industry / professional sectors
- Encouraging students to clarify career goals before committing to a course of study will enable them to make more informed decisions about the best courses to achieve their goals.
- Numerous studies have shown the value of integrating Career education into school curriculum. This would include: articulating skills that can be developed and applied in subjects; linking to relevant work areas where skills sought/applied, and providing an opportunity to reflect on enjoyment/aptitude in knowledge area/skill application
- A broader more holistic view of careers delivered through comprehensive career education sessions as part of secondary and tertiary education curriculums will assist students in making informed career decisions and enable them to successfully navigate and adapt to current and future changes within the world of work. This would include ensuring more information on graduate destinations, skills shortages, growth industries, etc is made available in schools and tertiary institutions.
- Information providers could include: course providers (both secondary and tertiary education providers), industry, MBIE, Careers NZ and career practitioners.
- Assisting students in developing skills to critically reflect, disassemble, and gain a broader perspective of information currently provided is needed as some information such as 'Compare Study Options' limits students abilities to make informed choices.
- Appropriate funding **tagged specifically** for career education is needed in response to students needs and to ensure they are able to make informed choices and are aware of factors which will assist them in improving their employability.
- The role of any entity is to provide informative objective information, therefore it is concerning that on page seven of the report the words 'influencing students decisions' are used.

Q16

How do New Zealand tertiary providers use student evaluations? How does this influence provider behaviour?

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- Research such as Graduate Destination surveys run by the different Universities could be used much more to shape curriculum content. Do any NZ universities do this?
- The University of Canterbury's Graduate Destinations Survey is proving to be a valuable tool in skill development identification, and in identifying gaps / areas for progression. UC research papers are available if required.

Q17

In what ways and to what extent do employers interact with tertiary providers in New Zealand? Are there practical ways to encourage employers to have greater or more productive involvement in the tertiary education system? Page 21

Current interactions include:

- Guest lectures
- Site visits
- Employer information sessions (recruitment)
- Career Fairs
- Internships / community and work integrated learning opportunities
- Practical placements in professional courses
- Projects (summer work)
- Advisory board members

Ways to encourage employer interaction and involvement could include:

- Facilitating mentoring opportunities
- Guest speaking opportunities
- Providing projects
- Student supervision
- Employers to participate in curriculum review
- Part-time work opportunities
- Professional development opportunities for staff

Q30

What are the best measures to determine whether the tertiary education system is working well? Page 36

- Better utilisation of Graduate Destinations data, to fully understand reasons **behind** Graduate retention and placement data. Place more emphasis on retention and graduate employment outcomes than academic research.
- Actively seek regular feedback from employers.
- Need to re-think and clearly define the current and future purpose of our tertiary education system
- Correlation between student and graduate feedback and that of employers of students & graduates eg. knowledge and skill/attribute development;
- Students having the ability to demonstrate career competencies such as developing, planning and managing their careers while boosting their health and wellbeing and sustainable work practices would be one of the best measures in determining whether the tertiary education system is working. Career Education Benchmarks have been developed to raise the quality of career education in New Zealand however limited ability to incorporate these into secondary and tertiary education as a result of untagged funding and career education not being a compulsory part of all course curriculums means large numbers of students leave education without having developed their career competencies to a useful level.

Q32**To what extent are graduates meeting employers' expectations with respect to hard or technical skills? What about soft skills and capabilities? Page 47**

- Regular surveys of employers
- At the moment this data is collected on an isolated, ad hoc basis by individual tertiary providers. There is an opportunity to explore ways for the data collected by each provider or career centre to be combined, collated and analysed collectively. A national survey could be a very useful initiative.
- Often soft skills and capabilities are overlooked as part of course curriculum and better collaboration among teaching staff and employers could be coordinated. Incentives for academics (teachers and researchers) to connect with employers to participate in work place learning to gain an understanding of how to best support students in developing their employability is needed, rather than the current system of merely recognising or rewarding teaching and academic research.

Q33**What are the significant trends in employer demand for tertiary-educated employees, and in student demand for tertiary education? How is the system responding? Page 50**

- The key trends are an emphasis on employability skills for employers and on return on investment for students.
- The system currently could be responding better, where improved collaboration between employers and universities is needed.

Q35**What are the implications of new technologies that are predicted to make many currently valuable skills obsolete? Will this change the role of the tertiary education system? Page 53**

- Providers need to adapt to changing needs of employers as they adopt new technology in their workplace. However, there is a great risk in the education system overlooking current valuable skills that they deem as becoming obsolete and less important. For example teaching writing skills to children helps develop hand eye coordination and therefore plays a bigger role in the development of a child than what the education system is currently considering. Therefore it is important to view skills more holistically and to acknowledge how many current valuable skills can assist students in being able to cope and respond productively when technologies fail within the workplace. Technology isn't a replacement for valuable skills.

Q52**What can be learnt from the tertiary education systems of other countries? Are there models that could be usefully applied here? Page 77**

- There are much closer linkages with employers in many overseas tertiary models, along with significant funding from large employers for specific programmes, including various forms of internships and industry focussed research. There is also more emphasis on closer community

linkages. US, UK, Aust and Canadian systems are all directly relevant. The biggest problem facing NZ in terms of adopting some aspects of these models is our relative lack of economies of scale.

- Well resourced career centres – strong links to academic side of University
- Work Integrated Learning / Internship offices
- Being able to collaborate with all employers large and small is required to meet the needs of the labour market. Stronger relationships with employers are required and incentives for all employers to participate and form partnerships are needed.