



**Te Pūkenga**

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6 June 2025



By email: [REDACTED]

Tēnā koe [REDACTED]

### **Request under the Official Information Act 1982**

Thank you for your email of 22 April 2025, requesting the following information from UCOL | Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (Te Pūkenga), we have numbered your questions for ease of reference:

*You say in 2024 UCOL worked with financial consultants to review finances and explore opportunities for sustainable viability.*

- 1. Under the Official Information Act can you provide me with any advice, recommendations or reports from these consultants.*
- 2. Can you tell me how much UCOL spent on the consultants last year.*
- 3. Can you provide me with a list of properties UCOL is considering for reduction or making changes to.*

On 19 May 2025 we wrote to you advising of an extension to the timeframe for making a decision on your request to 6 June 2025. This letter provides a formal decision on your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA).

### **Background**

In June 2024, Te Pūkenga was directed by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to obtain specialist support to review and improve the financial viability of our 16 institutes of technology and polytechnics (ITP) business divisions, to support their ability to become standalone entities in future. Calibre Partners, Volte, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and Deloitte undertook this work as part of the Regional ITP Viability (RIV) programme.

PricewaterhouseCoopers carried out this work for Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT), Western Institute of Technology at Taranaki (WITT), Universal College of Learning (UCOL), Whitireia and WelTec.

In mid-August 2024, these specialist consultants provided draft reports to confirm the financial position of each business division, understand the profitability of programmes and delivery sites, and assess the utilisation of assets.

Following this work, the consultants developed interim high-level reports to improve the financial viability and financial positions of the divisions. These reports provided initial views about the viability of each division, timeframes to achieve viability (if possible), and the scale and scope of change required in areas such as property, programmes, and people.

The final and more comprehensive plans provided an overview and recommendations of how each ITP division could become a viable, stand-alone entity, or how it might minimise financial losses and operate as part of a federation or merger, for example. These reports provided a range of initiatives and recommendations for divisions to consider and implement to support their viability on or before 1 January 2026.

On 16 January 2025, Te Pūkenga Council considered and approved the implementation of the financial improvement plans for each ITP business division. It is this report for UCOL to which we understand your question one relates.

## **The decision**

### Question One

As outlined above, we have interpreted this question to be in relation to the final approved RIV Programme report for UCOL.

We are withholding this report under the following sections of the OIA:

- 9(2)(b)(ii) to protect information where the making available of the information would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information
- 9(2)(f)(iv) to maintain the constitutional conventions for the time being which protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials
- 9(2)(g)(i) to maintain the effective conduct of public affairs through the free and frank expression of opinions by or between or to Ministers of the Crown or members of an organisation or officers and employees of any public service agency or organisation in the course of their duty.

We do not believe the need to withhold this information is outweighed by the public interest in its release at this time – June 2025. However, once Cabinet makes decisions about the position of ITPs within New Zealand’s Vocational Education and Training sector, including number and location, we expect more information will be made public. As such, with reference to section 18(d) of the OIA, we are undertaking a review of the reports with a view to making them publicly available through our website in the coming months.

### Question Two

Individual business divisions, including UCOL, did not spend any money on the consultants in question, so the answer to this question is nil.

However, we can advise that the total cost to Te Pūkenga national office for PricewaterhouseCoopers to carry out this work for the five business divisions was \$1,453,851.69 (excl. GST). This amount includes both fees and travel/disbursements. We do not hold the breakdown of this amount in

relation to each division they were assigned to work with, so are not able to provide you with UCOL-specific costs.

### Question Three

All UCOL campuses, Manawatu, Whanganui, Wairarapa, and Horowhenua are under analysis for utilisation and where there are opportunities buildings may be divested or leases not renewed.

With reference to section 18(d), a list of all properties, by way of a campus map for each of the four locations is publicly available online through: [www.ucol.ac.nz/about-ucol](http://www.ucol.ac.nz/about-ucol).

We can advise that the property at 51-61 King Street, Palmerston North – a car park – is for sale and has been publicly advertised. We are withholding specific information on all other individual properties under consideration for reduction and/or changes under the following sections of the OIA:

- 9(2)(b)(ii) to protect information where the making available of the information—would be likely unreasonably to prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied or who is the subject of the information
- 9(2)(j) to enable a Minister of the Crown or any public service agency or organisation holding the information to carry on, without prejudice or disadvantage, negotiations (including commercial and industrial negotiations).

We do not consider the need to withhold this information is outweighed by the public interest in its release at this time.

You have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman under section 28(3) of the OIA if you are not happy with this response. Information about how to do this is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or by calling 0800 802 602.

We may publish our OIA responses and the information contained in our reply to you on our website. Before publishing we will remove any personal or identifiable information.

Ngā mihi



Gus Gilmore  
**Tumuaki** | Chief Executive