Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board

Registration Report Analysis
On
‘Atenisi Institute
1. Objectives

The aim of this registration report is to obtain reasonable assurance that ‘Atenisi Institute is a sound and stable provider that has an effective Quality Management Systems (QMS) in place, and is substantially achieving its goals and objectives as required by Quality Assurance (QA) Registration and Accreditation Standard One for Post Compulsory Education and Training (PCET) providers.

This report forms the basis for the decisions made by the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board (TNQAB) Board of Directors regarding the appeal for registration of this particular provider.

This report contains the analysis of the provider’s registration form, documents submitted to the Secretariat with valid supporting evidence, preliminary site-visits and interviews with coordinators and administrators of the institute.

2. Scope

The report covers all elements of QA Standard One.
3. Responsibilities

‘Atenisi Institute is responsible for meeting all requirements of Registration and Accreditation Standard One by ensuring the quality of its management systems and the achievement of its goals and objectives.

In accordance with the Tonga National Qualifications and Accreditation Board Act 2004, Part 2 Section 8(b), TNQAB is responsible for “registering and listing of providers of post compulsory education and training”.

4. Background

‘Atenisi Institute was founded by Professor ‘Ilaisa Futa Helu and developed gradually during the mid 1960s. The founder set up the first tertiary level education in Tonga because of his belief that all Tongans should have access to university study irrespective of their financial situation. Furthermore, he believed that Tongan families should not have to struggle financially in order to send their children overseas to study. Under his leadership, ‘Atenisi established a reputation for educating sections of the Tongan community with widely varying ages, skills and expectations as well as catered for the needs of highly talented young people who wanted to prepare for postgraduate study abroad.

Over the past five decades a series of distinguished scholars have come to 'Atenisi from other parts of the world, to share their ideas and to learn about Tonga. Over the same period, a wealth of graduates has emerged from the institute. Some of them have studied and taught at many different overseas universities, building up the reputation of the institute. In addition, books, journal articles and an acclaimed film titled ‘The Tongan Ark’ have brought 'Atenisi to the attention of the world.

Following the untimely demise of the founder of this incorporation in 2010, the stability of the organization began to derail culminating in new management being sought and found. Under the leadership of Dr Taliai, some new staffs were recruited and the Board of Directors was renewed to revive the institute.

‘Atenisi Institute is self-supporting with funding coming from various donor countries, fundraising activities, modest donations from alumni associations in Tonga and overseas and school fees.

The institute is divided into two components, the tertiary academic side and the performing arts. They are to operate autonomously as a means of guaranteeing academic and artistic freedom. Each has a head that is responsible for the co-ordination and management of programs of study. Each component comprises a group of related teaching areas.
‘Atenisi Institute offers Certificate in Tongan Language Studies and Associate of Arts programmes majoring in either English, History, Mathematics and Tongan culture which lead to degree and post graduate studies.

5. Summary of Findings

The summary is reported as follow:

i. Commendations – These are the criteria which the provider successfully met and did outstandingly well on.

‘Atenisi Institute is commended for self-sacrificing spirit and wholehearted support of the new Board members, management and its current staff. The Board is commended for the extra effort to uphold the vision and objectives of the institute.

The new management has contributed substantially to the institute in terms of fund, learning resources and human resources. The renovations and relocations of the library was a result of the institute’s strategic plan to enhance learning at the institute. The staffs are highly qualified and have brought to the institute the wealth of experience they have accumulated over the years they worked in the universities overseas.

ii. Recommendations – These are criteria which the provider met but the recommended actions would enhance the quality of the programme.

Teaching at ‘Atenisi Institute will open doors for further research into Tonga’s rich cultural heritage. It is therefore recommended that the research standards and procedures in the current handbook are revised to cover sufficient details for research.

The development of the Quality Management System for the institute is a stepping stone for improved performances and good practices. However, the Quality Management System should be made available to all staff to follow and to guide the overall operation of the institute. As part of its good practices, ‘Atenisi Institute is recommended to also keep records of all meetings conducted throughout the year.

iii. Requirements – These are criteria which the provider has not met and must work on before the institute is granted full registration. This may involve completing the TNQAB Action Plan Proforma if the requirement must be met in future plans.

As such, ‘Atenisi Institute is required to amend the QMS to include comprehensive policies and procedures of how pre-moderation and post-moderations are conducted internally.

Financial ratio analysis of the institute’s financial health shows a very low quick ratio and working capital ratio. It is therefore required that ‘Atenisi Institute takes appropriate action to become financially sound in all aspects of its educational operations.
Summary of Recommendations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Recommendation No:</th>
<th>Response from ‘Atenisi Institute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 [xii] – Research</td>
<td>The research standards and procedures in the current handbook are revised to cover sufficient details for research</td>
<td>Current handbook to be revised to include a more comprehensive research policy, next review is scheduled for 2014 by the Academic Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 [a] – Ownership and governance clearly defined</td>
<td>Keep a record of minutes of every AGM, Board, Committee, Staff and Students Union Meetings.</td>
<td>Responded by acknowledging factual accuracy of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 [c] – Evidence of financial soundness</td>
<td>Make originals of all documents copied to TNQAB available for next review visit.</td>
<td>Show all original documents to support contention that ANZ monies paid off as per correspondence, Next review in 2014 by M Talai, as Financial Controller</td>
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Summary of Requirement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Requirement No:</th>
<th>Response from ‘Atenisi Institute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 [x] – Assessment and Moderation</td>
<td>1. ‘Atenisi Institute is required to amend QMS to include comprehensive policies and procedures of how pre-moderation and post-moderation are conducted internally.</td>
<td>Amend the QMS to include comprehensive policies and procedures of pre-moderation and post-moderation in the next review in 2014 by Academic Committee</td>
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</table>
## 6. Analysis Details

Below is a summary of the analysis of how ‘Atenisi Institute measures up to the criteria specified in the Registration and Accreditation Standard One.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 1.1:</th>
<th>The provider or its governing body is a legally established or recognized enduring body.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status:</strong></td>
<td>Met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comment:</strong></td>
<td>‘Atenisi Institute is an Incorporation registered under the Incorporated Societies Act 1984, Registration Number: 239</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 1.2:</th>
<th>The provider has measurable goals and objectives for education and training.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Status:</strong></td>
<td>Met</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comments:</strong></td>
<td>The institute promotes the philosophies of critical thinking and cross-cultural exchange. Regular seminars are organized to involve the wider Tongan community in this activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence:</strong></td>
<td>1. QMS pg 1-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Standard 1.3:** The provider has a coherent, documented Quality Management System (QMS) of policies and procedures.

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<tr>
<th>Status:</th>
<th>Met</th>
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**Comments:**

‘Atenisi Institute has a QMS document which contains the policies and procedures that sufficiently covers all the elements required by registration criteria 1.3.

**Evidence:**


(i) **Programme development, approval and review**

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<tr>
<th>Status:</th>
<th>Met</th>
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**Comment:**

The current programmes of studies were used from previous years hence ‘Atenisi Institute did not have to develop new programmes of studies. The Executive Committee / Academic Board are responsible for the approval and review of academic programmes.

**Evidence:**

Application for Registration: QMS – pg 15
(ii) **Reviews of QMS policies and procedures**

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<th>Status:</th>
<th>Met</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comment:</strong></td>
<td>There is sufficient information for the review of each policy in the QMS as well as the body responsible for the review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence:</strong></td>
<td>Application for Registration: QMS – last page</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iii) **Physical and learning resources**

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<th>Status:</th>
<th>Met</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment:</strong></td>
<td>A list of physical resources available at the premise that are used for the purposes of teaching and training are of sufficient size for the 15 number of learners enrolled in 2013. The campus contains mainly of old buildings and furniture that are still very functional for the purpose of tutorials and lectures. There are adequate classrooms for classes, administration building and a library. At the time of site visit, the library was being moved from its previous location to another building closer to the lecture hall where students can easily access. There are a lot of renovations and upgrading outlined in the institute’s strategic plan, which TNQAB officers have observed during the site visit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence:</strong></td>
<td>TNQAB Checklist of Resources and Equipment for ‘Atenisi Institute Inc.  18 February 2013.</td>
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(iv) **Staff appointment, appraisal and development**

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<th>Met</th>
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</table>

**Comment:**

There is adequate information/ policy on Staff Recruitment, Selection, Performance Development and Teaching Evaluations. There is a staff contract but staffs of ‘Atenisi Institute has been duly informed to expect that there will be times where funds will be low.

**Evidence:**

- QMS – HR 1 pg. 23
- Staff Contract Template

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(v) **Entry and selection of students**

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<th>Status:</th>
<th>Met</th>
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**Comment:**

There is adequate information on entry and selection policies as well as withdrawal and refund of fees.

**Evidence:**

1. QMS – pg. 21- 22: Student Entry, Selection and Withdrawals, Fees and Refunds
(vi) **Student guidance and services**

**Status:** Met

**Comment:**
There is sufficient information in QMS to address student concerns, misconduct, complaints, appeals to facilitate a speedy resolution to the satisfaction of all part of all involved parties. There is also sufficient information for students on the courses, grades, fees, rules and academic regulations.

The Student Union/ Committee organise and control fund raising events. Research skills is also encouraged and academic advice is available from staff to help with the study programme.

**Evidences:**
1. Application for Registration -QMS pg: 19 – Standard 1.3.6
2. Catalogue & Student’s handbook

(vii) **Teaching and learning practices**

**Status:** Met

**Comment:**
Teaching is conducted bilingually although the official medium of instruction is English. All courses are delivered face-to-face using variety of teaching and learning strategies.

**Evidence:**
(viii) **Programme delivery in partnership with or on behalf of another organization**

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<tr>
<th>Status:</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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**Comment:**
Currently, ‘Atenisi Institute does not deliver any programme in partnership or on behalf of another organization.

**Evidence:**
Information obtained from Board members, at site visit interview 15/4/13

(ix) **Off-site practical and workplace components**

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<th>Status:</th>
<th>N/A</th>
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**Comment:**
‘Atenisi Institute does not have a workplace component in its programme of study.

**Evidence:**
Information obtained from Board members, at site visit interview 15/4/13
(x) **Assessment and Moderation**

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<th>Status:</th>
<th>Not Met</th>
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**Comment:**

Assessment will be by course work plus exam or exam only depending on the nature of the course. There is provision for reassessment and appeals available and the consequence of students’ impaired performances.

There is a policy for internal moderation but does not contain sufficient information on the procedures for staff to follow to implement the policy. There is also information about a team of External Moderators from New Zealand institutions to monitor and give constructive comments to improve its performance. Evidence of the internal and external moderation process being practiced should be made available in the institute’s office for the next review visit.

**Requirement:**

1. ‘Atenisi Institute is required to amend QMS to include comprehensive policies and procedures of how pre-moderation and post-moderation are conducted internally.

(xi) **Notification and reporting student achievement**

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<tr>
<th>Status:</th>
<th>Met</th>
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**Comment:**

Students can access their results online on the Institute’s website.

**Evidence:**

QMS – A11, A12 pg. 13, 14
### Research

**Status:** Met

**Comment:**

‘Atenisi Institute has clear research guidelines on admissions, application, course of study, candidacy, eligibility, responsibilities of Dean and Senate, completion, extension and suspension of research as well as credits transfer.

There is a Research culture exists within the institute. The public lectures operating after hours are results of staff research. Some of ‘Atenisi Institute’s staff members utilize teaching opportunities undertaken as a potential gateway to conduct research into Tonga's rich intellectual heritage.

**Recommendation:**

1. It is recommended that the research standards and procedures in the current handbook are revised to cover sufficient details for research.
Standard 1.4: The provider has adequate and appropriate governance and management to achieve its goals and objective

a. Ownership and governance clearly defined

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<th>Met</th>
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**Comment:**
Board of Directors is the governing body of the legally established ‘Atenisi Institute Inc. It is responsible for all appointments of staff and other committees.

**Evidence:**
1. MOU dated 16th July, 2006 between founder of ‘Atenisi Institute, ‘Ilaisa Futa Helu and ‘Atenisi Board of Directors.

**Recommendation:**
1. Keep a record of minutes of every AGM, Board meetings, committee meetings, staff meetings and Students Union/Committee meetings.
b. Responsibilities, authorities and lines of reporting clearly defined, and understood by those concerned.

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<th>Status:</th>
<th>Met</th>
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**Comment:**
The Constitution contains responsibilities of Board members and officers of ‘Atenisi Institute and details of the business of the board. QMS outlines the lines of reporting for the institute.

**Evidences:**
1. ‘Atenisi Institute - Constitution
2. Application - QMS pg.17-21

c. *Evidence of financial soundness, such as a statement of financial position signed off by a chartered accountant.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status:</th>
<th>Met</th>
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**Comment:**
Quick ratio and working capital ration analysis of the institute’s financial health shows a very low ratio. However, it is the strategic plan of the new management to revive ‘Atenisi Institute in all aspects of its operations.

A copy of confidential letter from ANZ bank in Sept 2012 offered a settlement of outstanding loan for TOP40, 000.00. TNQAB would like to verify evidence that payment has been made. Hence it is requested that originals of these documents are to be made available for the next scheduled review visit.
Despite these obstacles, ‘Atenisi Institute has survived over the years and has continued to offer education despite the hardships of low cash flow. The new management team is keen and willing to put the past behind and move forward to revive the education goals of the institute and put back the finance into good shape.

**Evidence:**


**Recommendation:**

1. Make originals of all documents copied to TNQAB available for next review visit.

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**d. Trust account or similar to protect student fees.**

**Status:** Met

**Comment:**

Information from Dean at site visit informed that Trust Account has been opened for students’ fees protection.

**Evidence:**

1. Informed by Mr ‘Opeti Taliai during site visit, 15/4/13.

**Recommendation:**

1. ‘Atenisi Institute needs to supply the name of independent Trustees of the Trust Account.
**Standard 1.5:**  The provider’s name is appropriate and does not mislead learners about the nature of the organization.

**Status:** Met

**Comment:**
Meeting with ‘Atenisi Board of Directors confirmed the name as ‘Atenisi Institute.

**Evidence:**
1. A letter from former President Ms Sisi’uno Helu, dated 7th December, 2010.

**TNQAB Board Decision:**

The Board of Directors’ decision on 20th June 2013 is to approve provisional registration as a PCET Provider, specifying one or more minor operational issues that must be addressed by ‘Atenisi Institute within three months, as follow:

- That the one requirement stated in the report is completed within 3 months
- That the three recommendations in the report analysis above are completed within 3 months
- TNQAB will confirm that the requirement and recommendations have been addressed to meet the criteria satisfactorily at the end of the 3 months before full registration is granted.

Signed by: [Signature]

Ms Pauline Moa
(TNQAB Officer)

Date: 24th June, 2013