

Understanding and Responding to Student Needs in Tertiary and Vocational Education: Insights from NorthTec

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Abstract

Living in a low socioeconomic region, students in Northland, Aotearoa New Zealand have complex and diverse needs that interfere with their study efforts. This paper aims to understand student needs and how they are met in the case of NorthTec, the key onsite provider of tertiary education and vocational training, to tease out lessons and develop suggestions for improvement. Drawing on NorthTec's First Impression Survey (FIS) and Student Hardship Study (SHS) in 2021, the paper shows students' high satisfaction is linked to staff support, easy access to good-quality utilities and resources, and quality education and training at NorthTec. There remain unmet needs and tensions that require improvements by the institution, on which the authors will elaborate, for better educational outcomes for social justice and equity.

Keywords: Northland, NorthTec, student needs and satisfaction, tertiary education, vocational training

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