Work Integrated Learning

Report of Combined Outcomes from Two Pilots:

Digital Assessment Tool (Vehicle Competency)
&
Blended Delivery (Freshwater Farm Plans)
November 2022

Background

The Work Integrated Learning (WIL) project was established by the Food and Fibre Centre of Vocational Excellence (FFCoVE) late 2021 to build on the current learning models (in-work and provider), to inform the food and fibre sector with potential vocational education approaches that enable ākonga with greater flexibility and access for learning pathways, while collecting insights on real-time experience from those involved.

The change initiative sought to develop a work integrated model (Appendix A) developed by a working group involving representation from EIT, WITT, NMIT, NZ Young Farmers, Dairy Training Ltd and NZ Apples and Pears, to guide and align the education and food and fibre sectors to collaboratively advance ākonga and kaituku mahi flexible training needs, and ultimately contribute to an enhanced, skill-equipped and fulfilled food and fibre workforce.

To test the work integrated model, two pilots were delivered by eCampus NZ: *Digital Assessment Tool Pilot* completed on 14 July 2022 and *Blended Delivery of a Freshwater Farm Plan Pilot* completed on 12 August 2022.

Given eCampus was disestablished at the time the second pilot was finishing, the change initiative did lose some continuity in its delivery. With this in mind, this document was compiled by the FFCoVE for the Work Integrated Learning Working Group to consider, in conjunction with leveraging from the continuation of work integrated learning discovery of other FFCoVE projects.

Pilot Objectives

PILOT 1: Digital Assessment Tool Prototype

- **The primary objective** was to identify a pilot where work-based learning can be assessed using a digital competency assessment tool, with recognition through badging.
- **The enabling objective** was to create an employer managed digital tool prototype to enable wider update and consistency across the sector and run a six-week pilot comprising 12 or more new learners across 12 employers.
- **The overall deliverable** was to analyse outcomes, summarise findings and make recommendations.

PILOT 2: Freshwater Farm Plans

The objective was to answer the following questions:

- Does blended delivery (online theory and face-to-face practical) effectively and efficiently support flexible learning for people in-work?
- Do industry-designed learning blocks support upskilling of emergent knowledge?
- Does peer collaboration support more effective engagement in learning?
- Does industry coaching support more effective learning?

Pilot Outcomes

PILOT 1: Digital Assessment Tool Pilot (DAT)– Vehicle Competency	**PILOT 2: Freshwater Farm Plan (FFP)– Blended (Face-to-Face and Online) Delivery Short Courses to Rural Learners**
The pilot sought to ascertain whether the delivery of a prototype digital assessment tool via the eCampus Learning Engine, is fit-for-purpose within the Work Integrated Learning model. Twelve employers (farm managers) were recruited to apply the digital competency tool to employees who were learning farm vehicle operation (quad bike and tractor skills). The platform allowed both assessors and learners to view progress of the 3 modules (oral questions, pre-ride checklist and farm task observation checklist). Assessment criteria was refined in collaboration with Dairy Training NZ and eCampus, who provided the option to farm managers to record digitally or in hard copy.	In collaboration with the Whataroa Farm Plan Blended Delivery Project, 16 dairy farmers were recruited to participate in the pilot, which involved participants attending an initial face-to-face workshop with supporting online materials and discussion forums via the eCampus Learning Engine, to each develop a Freshwater Farm Plan. This was supplied by eCampus and Dairy Training Ltd, and managed by the Whataroa Farm Plan Delivery Project Team.

RESULTS PILOT 1 (DAT): Ten farms signed up with 34 potential candidates, who had the opportunity to have tractor and/or quad bike skills tested. 30 participated in a tractor assessment with 26% passing and 63% not attempting. Of the 23 taking part in the quad bike assessment 47% passed and 35% didn't attempt.	**RESULTS PILOT 2 (FFP):** Over the course of the learning, participation by the 16 farms in the 14 sessions ranged between 25-75%. On average, participants completed 7 of the activities on offer. The 16 participants were provided with a survey at the completion of the course, with a 38% response rate. All respondents agreed the application of their learnings would positively influence their farm practices.

KEY RESULTS AND FINDINGS FROM BOTH PILOTS:

- A total of 26 farms, and 50 participants involved.
- The Learning Engine allowed ongoing tracking of learner progress and scheduling of meetings between the project team and coordination of regular communication to the participants.
- This core functionality proved to work well, and connecting participants and coaches at a local level enhanced participation.
- As with any online tools, technical challenges included time and know-how of getting started, login difficulties to access the programme and some materials going to spam folder.

Badging

There was low participant engagement of badge acceptance with only 14% credentials offered in the Digital Assessment Tool pilot. But it should still be considered for future roll-out.

Whilst recognition of badging was an initial project outcome, it may not be meaningful until a Farm Plan is fully implemented, therefore may be considered as the programme progresses.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOTH PILOTS FOR FUTURE IMPLEMENTATION:

Ahead of implementation:

- Recruitment process to be reviewed to attract greater engagement
- Consider marketing which would appeal to farmers with a need at that point in time

Start with end user experience in mind:

- Consider the wider change process required for the participants
- Potentially use a face-to-face introduction to get participants started and engaged in a new tool/technique
- Easy and simple to use with access to guidance available
- Clear and defined pathway and goals throughout the course so expectations could be managed
- Integrate online resources with the face-to-face workshops (including on-farm) – review the balance between presentations, resource delivery and practical sessions.
- Providing hard copy progress resources for participants at the workshops.
- Offline activity, out of hours, and use of phone is paramount for this sector and so the offline experience must be factored into a design, eg. a phone app which can be used offline and updates automatically when it is connected.

The eCampus project team (of the online delivery) suggested the following improvements from the FFP pilot to consider before a subsequent roll-out:

- For an improved experience, ensure the project purpose, design, delivery principles, decision-making points, and roles and responsibilities are well integrated and understood by all involved.
- Review of all materials and rework of the blended delivery design.
- Having a core programme of content that can be adapted as required for each region.
- Provide tangible examples learnt in future stakeholder discussions.
- Ensure balance in Steering Group composition to address differences between parties.
- Establish a facilitator to monitor and encourage engagement to both forms of the course delivery (online and face-to-face).

OPPORTUNITES

- Capturing more information from the coaches regarding the types of queries and behavior change over the course of the pilot(s), would help inform future direction to keep participants remaining engaged and motivated.
- Areas for improvement include content refinement, technical support, digital integration, consistency with who the supporting representative is, and the need for follow-up sessions, particularly as environmental regulations evolve.
- Potential for ongoing support post the modules, particularly for farm plans as regulations evolve.

Considerations

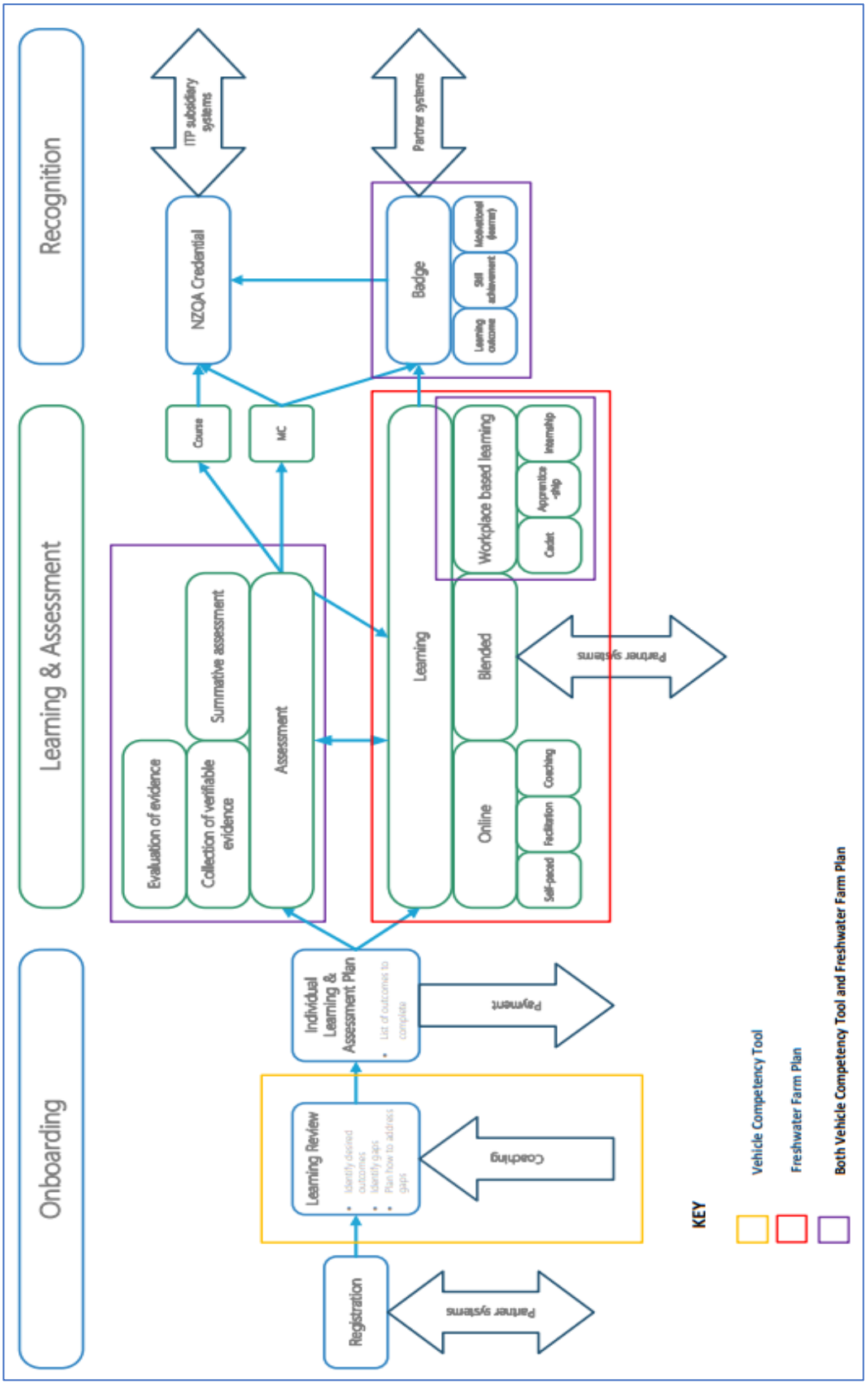
It was only after the pilots had been completed, that FFCoVE became aware of Work Integrated Learning New Zealand, a not-for-profit incorporated society that hosts a network of people involved with work integrated learning. It is part of a global network and provides a platform for new research and discussion of best practice.

A scan of their website suggests there would be mutual benefit in an exchange of knowledge between this change initiative and WILNZ.

Next steps

The next step is for the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) working group to review the findings and recommendations from both the Freshwater Farm Plan and Vehicle Competency Tool, whilst considering the role Work Integrated Learning New Zealand Inc (WILNZ) has to play in progressing the learnings from these pilots, including identifying alignment of positives with WILNZ experience, and alternative remedies for the negatives.

Appendix A: Work Integrated Model



Provider of life changing experiences

Draft only – for discussion

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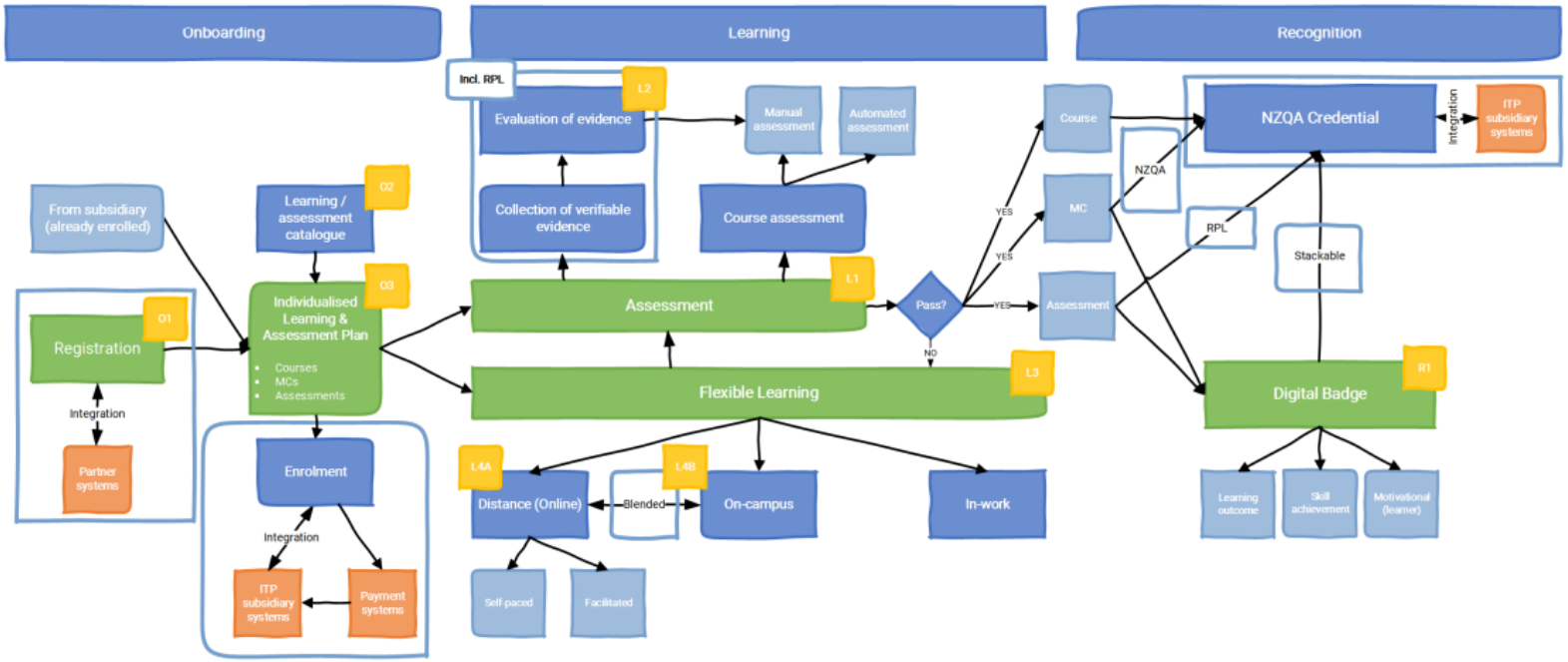
WIL & Flexible learning working model



WIL & Flexible learning services

Ref	Service	Description
O1	Learner registration and enrolment	Learners can choose MCs and assessments, register/enrol, create an account, and pay for services which gives them access to tools, information, learning and assessment
O2	Learning packages and assessments catalogue	Learners can explore 3 POS learning packages (e.g., courses and MCs), and assessments to create their ILAP
O3	Individualised learning and assessment plan (ILAP)	Learners can plan, learn, demonstrate and be recognised for achievement of competencies stacking to one of the 3 POS
L1	Learning and assessment access	Allow staged access to learning and assessment: on registration, on enrolment, on payment, on submission
L2	Evidence capture and evaluation tools (RPL)	Learners can capture and present evidence for evaluation for assessment or RPL
L3	Flexible learning	Learners have access to learning and assessment in-work, on-campus, distance (online)
L4A	Learning and assessment delivery ***(wholly online only)***	Delivery of wholly online courses
L4B	Learning and assessment delivery	Delivery of educational services
	Assessment management	Subsidiaries have access to tools and processes to access, assign, mark, share results with learners, and manage assessment workflows
R1	Badge issuing	Learners are issued digital badges for successfully completing award requirements