The logo for Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga is a stylized white tree with many branches and leaves, set against a light teal background. It is positioned on the right side of the page, partially overlapping the white text box.

Report of the 2024 Academic Audit of Auckland University of Technology Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau

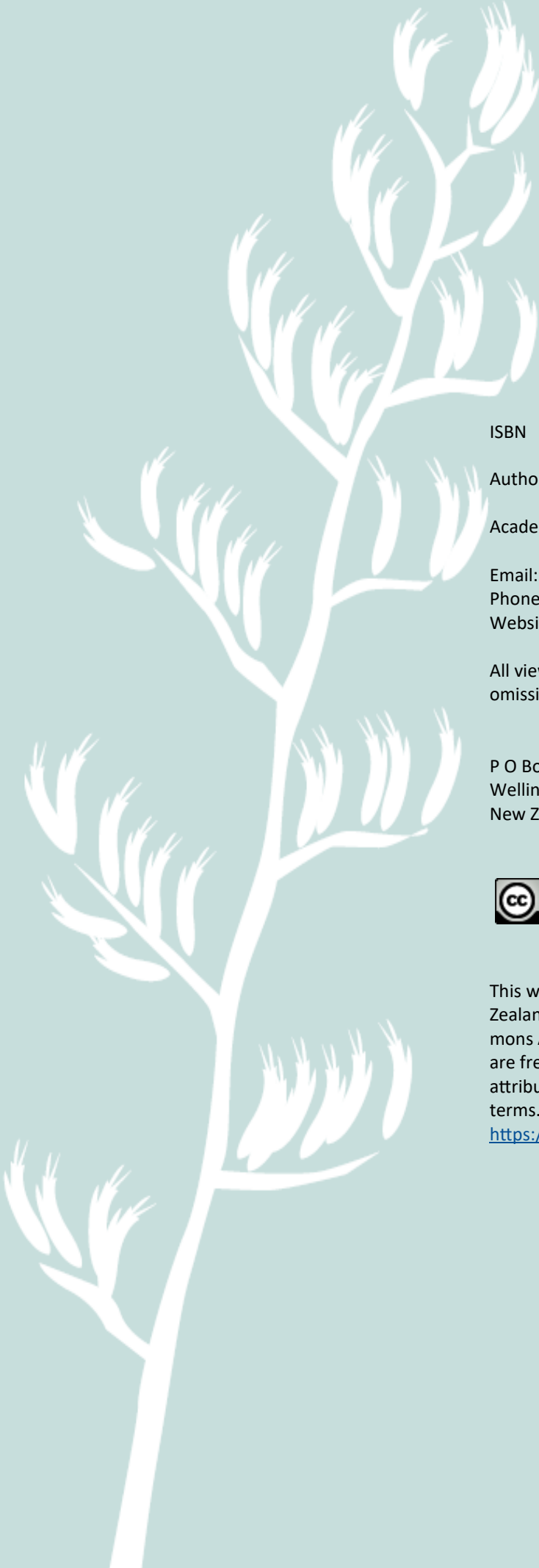
Cycle 6 academic audit undertaken by the Academic Quality
Agency for New Zealand Universities

December 2024

Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga

AQA

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Author:

Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

Email: comms@aga.ac.nz

Phone: 04-801 7924

Website: www.aga.ac.nz

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P O Box 5787
Wellington 6140
New Zealand



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**Report of the 2024 Academic Audit of
Auckland University of Technology
Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau**

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He Whakarāpopotanga

He wāhanga ngā arotake ā-kura wānanga o ngā whakaritenga whakaū i te kounga mō ngā whare wānanga i Aotearoa. Koinei anake te hātepe ā-waho hei whakaū i te kounga ka whai i tētahi tirohanga whārahi ki tā tētahi whare wānanga whakaako, ako, tautoko mā ngā tauira me ngā hua ki ngā tauira. He mea pīkau ngā arotaketanga e tētahi paewhiri aropā. Ka whai wāhi ko ngā pūkenga mātāmua, ngā pūkenga hautū rānei i Aotearoa, he mema paewhiri Māori, ā, mēnā e taea ana, he uri nō Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, tētahi mema paewhiri ā-ao me tētahi tauira, ihuputa rānei.

E whai wāhi ana ngā Whare Wānanga i Aotearoa ki te huringa tuaono o ngā arotake ā-kura wānanga. He arotake hiato te Huringa 6, e rua ngā wāhanga. I te wāhanga tuatahi, i 2017 ki 2020, i whai wāhi ngā whare wānanga ki tētahi kaupapa whakangako i aro nei ki te tomonga, ki ngā hua me ngā arawātea mō ngā tauira Māori me ērā nō Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. E wātea ana ētahi whakamārama atu anō ki te pae tukutuku kaupapa whakangako.

Ko te wāhanga tuarua o Huringa 6 he arotakenga e ai ki tētahi angamahi o ngā tauākī aratohu e 30 (GS) i ngā wāhanga e rima: (1) Te hautūtanga me te whakahaeretanga o te whakaako me te ako, me te kounga ā-kura wānanga; (2) Te huringa ora, te tautoko me te oranga o te tauira; (3) Te marautanga, ngā aromatawai me te ara tuku; (4) Te kounga ā-whakaako; me (5) Te hōmiromirotanga o ngā tauira rangahau paerunga. Ka whai wāhi ngā whare wānanga ki te arotake i a rātou anō e ai ki te angamahi arotake, ā, ka tāpae i tētahi pūrongo arotake i a ia anō me tētahi kāhua e kī ana i ngā taunakitanga. Me whakaatu hoki te arotakenga a te whare wānanga i ngā haepapa o te whare wānanga ki Te Tiriti o Waitangi, te taupuhipuhitanga o ngā rangahau me ngā whakaakoranga a te whare wānanga, me te wāhi hoki o te whare wānanga ki te arohae me te arotika i te porihanga. Me whai wāhi ki tāna aromatawai ngā tauira katoa, ngā ara tuku katoa, me ngā kaimahi katoa mēnā he kaiako, he kaihōmiromiro rānei.

I tuku e Auckland University of Technology Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau (AUT) tāna kōpaki arotake i a ia anō i te 17 o Mei 2024. I whakatau te Paewhiri, he pai te whakaaturanga o te arotakenga, ā, i ngāwari te whakamahi. E rua ngā hui ā-ipurangi a te Paewhiri i mua i tā rātou toronga ā-tinana atu ki te Whare Wānanga i te 9–11 o Hepetema 2024. I whakahaerehia e te Paewhiri e 25 ngā wānanga uiuinga, ā, i hui atu ki ngā kaimahi e 66 me ngā tauira e 25. Ko ngā kōrero i whāia i ngā uiuinga ka tautoko i ngā kōrero kei te kōpaki arotake, ā, ka whakawhirinaki te Paewhiri ki ngā puna e rua hei whakatau i āna kitenga.

I tū te Huringa 6 Arotake ā-Kura Wānanga o Auckland University of Technology Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau (AUT) i te horopaki o ngā pānga mauroa o te mate urutā KŌWHEORI-19, tae atu ki tētahi mahere whakaoranga ā-pūtea mā te Whare Wānanga me ngā pānga tonu ki te whakaritenga o ngā tauira mō ngā akoranga ā-whare wānanga. I whakahoungia hoki e te Whare Wānanga tōna kaiārahi ā-rautaki, i whakawhanake i tētahi mahere rautaki hou, tētahi anga hei whakatinana i ngā haepapa ki Te Tiriti o Waitangi, tētahi Mahere Angitu Tauira, me te whakatinana i tētahi pūnaha whakahaere ako hou i te wā i waenga i te KŌWHEORI-19 me tēnei arotake. E whakamīharo ana te Paewhiri ki te āhua o te whakahaere a te Whare Wānanga i ēnei panonitanga ā-waho me ngā huringa ā-roto. Ko ētahi atu mahi e rere ana i te wā o tēnei arotake ko tētahi Mahere Kura Wānanga me Rāngai Whakapaipai Tauroa, te whakawhanake i tētahi Mahere Ako me te

Whakaako hou, tētahi Anga Kounga Kura Wānanga, me te whakahou i te Kāhua Ihuputa o te Whare Wānanga.

E aro ana te wāhanga tuatahi (A) o te angamahi arotake ki te hautūtanga me te whakahaeretanga o ngā whakaako me ngā akoranga. He arorau tō te Whare Wānanga angamahi whakamahere rautaki, ā, ka whai i tētahi āhua pakari ki te whakahaere huringa mā te whakatūnga o ngā wāhanga whakahaere me ngā wāhanga kāwanatanga mō ngā panonitanga. He kaha tō te Whare Wānanga ki te whakarato me te whakamahi raraunga hei aromatawai, hei urupare hoki ki ngā matea o ngā kāhui tauira rerekē. Ka taea te whakapakari ake i ngā pūnaha raraunga kua whanake kē mā te whakaurunga o ngā mātāpono mō te rangatiratanga raraunga Māori me te rangatiratanga raraunga nō Te Moananui-a-Kiwa.

He kanorau te huinga tauira o te Whare Wānanga, ā, he wāhanga nui ake o ngā tauira nō ngā takiwā e whai ana i te taumata rawakore teitei, he nui ake hoki ngā tauira wāwāhi wā me ngā kāhui kāore i puta noa mai i te kura i ērā atu whare wānanga o Aotearoa. Heoi anō, kei te Whare Wānanga ētahi hātepe me ngā tikanga pai e taea ai ngā reo o ngā tauira te whāngai ki te kounga kura wānanga. Ka whakapakarihia ēnei e te whakawhanaketanga o tētahi angamahi reo tauira.

E whakahaere ana te Whare Wānanga puta noa i ngā puni e toru – City, North, me South. Ka ārahi te Mahere Tūroa ā-Kura Wānanga, ā-Rauemi hoki i ngā whakawhanaketanga me te whakamahinga ā-mua o ngā puni. Me mahi tahi te Whare Wānanga ki ngā rōpū mana whenua rerekē kia whakaatahia ai ngā tikanga e tika ana mō ia puni. Kei ngā puni katoa ngā wāhi e whakamana ana i te ahurea mō ngā tauira Māori me ngā tauira nō Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, e whakarato ana i ngā wāhi whakakaha mō ngā tauira Māori me ngā tauira nō Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, ā, ka toro atu ngā ratonga whare wānanga ki aua wāhi hei whakawhitihiti ki ngā tauira.

I mua i te KŌWHEORI-19, i tipu nui te Whare Wānanga. Nā te hiahia kia urupare ki tēnei tipu, i whanakehia ētahi tikanga rerekē. E whakaaro ana te Paewhiri, ināianei me aro ki te whakarite kia mārama, kia ū tonu ngā whakatau ā-kura wānanga puta noa i te Whare Wānanga. Me arotake hoki te tūranga a te Poari Kura Wānanga i te ārahi me te aroturuki i te kounga ā-kura wānanga. Ko ngā mahi e haere ana ki te whakawhanake i tētahi hōtaka o ngā tukunga kura wānanga ka whai hua ki te whakarite i te rite tonu o ngā whakatau ā-kura wānanga me te kāwanatanga ā-kura wānanga.

Kei te Wāhanga A anō hoki e rua ngā tauākī aratohu e arotake ana i te kokenga ki ngā whāinga kaupapa whakangako a tētahi whare wānanga nō te wāhanga tuatahi o te huringa arotake. Ahakoa kua panoni te horopaki me te aronga rautaki a te Whare Wānanga mai i te whakatipuranga o ngā whāinga kaupapa whakangako, kua whakaūhia tonutia (ā, kua whakawhānuihia anō) te ū ki te whakatika i ngā wāhi taketake o ngā whāinga kaupapa whakangako i roto i te Mahere Angitu Tauira a te Whare Wānanga – Ku Uta Ki Tai. He mea hira te whakahāngaitanga anō i te Tari Pacific Advancement ki te whakatūturu i te aro tonu ki te angitu mō ngā tauira nō Te Moananui-a-Kiwa.

Ko te Wāhanga B o te angamahi arotake—Te huringa ora, te tautoko me te oranga o te tauira—tētahi wāhanga kaha mō te Whare Wānanga. He pai te hoahoatanga o ngā tukunga tono me ngā tukunga whakamana, ā, e mātua aro ana te Whare Wānanga ki ngā whakawhitinga. He wāhanga wātea kei konei hei whakaaroaro me pēhea te whakamaurutanga o ngā wero ka pā ki ngā tauira i te whakatutukinga i ngā whakaritenga mō ngā wāhi whakangungu mahi. Me aro anō hoki kia noho wātea tonu, kia tika hoki ngā tohutohu kōhi mō ngā tauira i te wā e tika ana. I whakaarahia tēnei

take i te Huringa 5 o te arotake ā-kura wānanga o te Whare Wānanga. E koa ana te Paewhiri ki te kite i te arotake tata a te Whare Wānanga i tāna Kaupapahere Māharahara me ngā Amuamu a ngā Taura me ngā hātepe e pā ana. Ka tautokona paitia te oranga me te angitu o ngā taura e ngā Ratonga me ngā Whakahaerenga Taura, te Tari Māori Advancement me te Tari Pacific Advancement e mahi tahi ana. Ko te whakarite i ngā kaimahi whai tohu ngaio he mea whakapakari anō i ēnei ratonga.

Ko te Wāhanga tuatoru (C) o te angamahi arotake e aro ana ki te marautanga, ngā aromatawai me te tukunga. E ū ana te Whare Wānanga ki te whakawhanake i ngā marautanga e hāngai ana ki te ahurea. Heoi anō, e wātea ana ētahi ara hei whakapakari ake i te tāpaetanga o ngā reo nō Te Moananui-a-Kiwa ki ngā tukanga whakawhanake, whakaae me te arotake marautanga whaimana. E whakaaro ana te Paewhiri he whanaketanga pai te takune a te Whare Wānanga ki te whakauru i tētahi pūnaha whakahaere marautanga, me tana aro tonu ki ngā raraunga me te pūrongo mō te ako me te whakaako. Mā ēnei ka whai kiko ake ai ngā tukanga arotake hōtaka e hāngai ana ki ngā taunakitanga, ā, e whakahoki ana hoki ki ngā hiahia. E koa ana te Paewhiri ki te kite i ngā mātāpono, kaupapahere me ngā hātepe hou mō ngā aromatawai me te huarahi ka whāia e te Whare Wānanga ki te mārāma ki ngā pānga o te Mōhiohanga Whaihanga (Generative Artificial Intelligence) ki te ako me te whakaako. Me whakapiki anō te raukaha me te āheitanga hei tuku i te tokomaha ake o ngā taura ki te aromatawai, ki te hōmiromiro me te whakamātautau i te reo Māori.

E aro ana te Wāhanga tuawhā (D) o te angamahi arotake ki te kounga whakaako me te kimi, te whakawhanake, me te whakamana i ngā kaimahi. E harikoa ana te Paewhiri ki te kite i ngā kaupapa a te Whare Wānanga hei kimi i ngā kaimahi nō ngā rōpū kāore e tino kanohi kitea ana, me te whakatūnga o ngā tikanga hei whakapakari ake i ngā ara mō te pikinga ki ngā tūranga pūkenga matua mā ngā kaimahi Māori. E matapae ana te Paewhiri ka tautoko te Mahere Moana-nui-a-Kiwa i te whakatipu raukaha me te āheitanga mō te whakaako me te hōmiromiro mō ngā taura nō Te Moananui-a-Kiwa. E whakarārangihia ana ngā kawatau mō ngā kaimahi pūkenga i roto i te anga Kawatau Pūtaiao, ā, e tautoko ana te Paewhiri i te takune a te Whare Wānanga ki te whakahou i tēnei anga. E tautokona ana te whakawhanaketanga whakaako e te Tari Whakaako, Ako me te Hoahoa Mātauranga, ahakoa kei reira tonu ētahi ara hei akiaki i ngā kaimahi kia kaha ake te whai wāhi ki te whakawhanaketanga ngaio.

E aro ana te wāhanga whakamutunga (E) o te angamahi arotake ki ngā taura rangahau paerunga. E wātea ana he puka ā-ipurangi e whai ana i ngā kōrero whānui, hou hoki hei tautoko i ngā taura e pīkau ana i ngā rangahau, ā, he pai te whakangungu me ētahi atu tautoko mō ngā kaihōmiromiro. E kitea ana te tautoko a te Whare Wānanga i ngā tikanga hōmiromiro auaha, whai pānga hoki, i te tirohanga a te Paewhiri. Heoi anō, me aro atu anō ki te whakapiki i te mōhiotanga mō te Rēhita o Ngā Kaihōmiromiro me ngā whakaritenga hei pupuri i te rēhitatanga, ā, me te whakakaha anō i te hātepe mō te tautoko whai mana me te manaaki tika ki ngā taura rangahau paerunga puta noa i te Whare Wānanga.

Ka tono hoki te Angamahi Arotake Whare Ako Huringa 6 kia huritao ngā whare wānanga i ō rātou takohanga i raro i Te Tiriti o Waitangi, te taupuhipuhitanga o ngā rangahau me ngā whakaakoranga a te whare wānanga, me te tūranga o ngā whare wānanga hei ringa haehae, hei roro whakaaro o te pāpori. Me whai wāhi te aromatawai ki ngā taura katoa, ngā tukunga katoa, me ngā kaimahi katoa e pīkau ana, e tautoko ana rānei i ngā mahi whakaako, hōmiromiro rānei.

E mihi ana te Paewhiri ki te hautūtanga a te Tari Whakapakari Māori i whai wāhi nui ki te ū a te Whare Wānanga ki te whakatinana i te Tiriti o Waitangi hei whare wānanga. E whakamahia ana a Te Aronui hei arataki i ngā panonitanga puta noa i te Whare Wānanga, tae atu ki ngā tauira rangahau paerunga me ngā mahi hōmiromiro i a rātou, ā, e kitea ana te tino whai wāhitanga ki tētahi hōtaka whakapakari raukaha.

E kitea ana te whirinakitanga o te rangahau me te whakaako i roto i ngā whakawhiwhitinga kōrero e pā ana ki te tikanga o te tū hei whare wānanga hangarau. Kua aro tata nei te Whare Wānanga ki te hiranga o te herekore ā-kura wānanga, e whāngai ana ki tōna tūranga hei ringa haehae, hei arotika o te porihanga.

E mōhio ana te Whare Wānanga, ā, e urupare ana hoki ki ngā hiahia o ngā rōpū tauira rerekē i roto i ngā wāhanga hōkaitanga o te angamahi arotakenga. E aro ana hoki ki te matea ki te tautoko i ngā rōpū kaimahi kāore e tino whai wāhi ana, ā, kua whakawhanake i ētahi kaupapa me ngā tikanga hei whakatutuki i tēnei. E kaha ana te mahi ki te whakatutuki i tētahi kāhui kaimahi e whakaata ana i tōna huinga tauira. Kei te whanake haere ngā mahi e pā ana ki AUT Online, ā, ka whāngai atu te mahere ako me te whakaako i tēnei.

I runga i ngā taunakitanga i wātea mai i te wā o te arotakenga, e whakatau ana te Paewhiri kua tutuki i te Whare Wānanga, ā, i ētahi wā kua nui noa atu ngā putanga me ngā paerewa e tūmanakohia ana mō tētahi whare wānanga e whai tūnga pai ana i te ao, e hāngai ana ki ngā tauākī aratohu. Nō reira, kua tutuki i te Whare Wānanga ngā hiahia o te Angamahi Arotake ā-Kura Wānanga Huringa 6. I ngā wā e whakaaro ana te Paewhiri he mahi anō e tika ana, kua tuku atu i ngā tūtohutanga, kua whakatūturutia rānei ngā kaupapa whakangako kua tohua kētia e te Whare Wānanga. E rua tekau mā whā ngā whakamihi, tekau mā tahi ngā whakatūturutanga, ā, tekau mā rua ngā tūtohutanga a te Paewhiri hei tautoko, hei akiaki hoki i ngā mahi pai, ā, hei āwhina i te Whare Wānanga i a ia e anga whakamua ana i tōna ahunga ā-rautaki.

Me tuku e te whare wānanga tētahi pūrongo whai ake hei te kotahi tau nō te whakaputanga o tēnei pūrongo nei. Me kōrero te pūrongo whai ake mō ngā kokenga o ngā whakatūturutanga me ngā tūtohutanga. Kia whakaaetia e te Poari AQA, me whakawātea tūmatanui atu te pūrongo whai ake.

Executive summary

Academic audits are part of the external quality assurance arrangements for universities in Aotearoa New Zealand. They are the only external quality assurance process that takes a whole-of-institution view of a university's teaching, learning, student support and student outcomes. Audits are undertaken by a panel of peers comprising senior academics or academic managers in Aotearoa New Zealand, a Māori panel member, a Pacific panel member (where possible), an international panel member and a student or recent graduate.

Universities in Aotearoa New Zealand are currently engaged in their sixth cycle of academic audit. Cycle 6 is a composite audit with two main phases. In the first phase, from 2017-2020, universities engaged in an enhancement theme focusing on access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and for Pacific students.¹

The second phase of Cycle 6 is an audit against a framework of 30 guideline statements in five sections: (1) Leadership and management of teaching and learning, and academic quality; (2) Student life cycle, support and wellbeing; (3) Curriculum, assessment and delivery; (4) Teaching quality; and (5) Supervision of postgraduate research students. Universities undertake a self-assessment against the audit framework and present a self-review report and portfolio of supporting evidence. The university's self-review should also reflect the university's obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the interdependence of university research and teaching, and universities' role as critic and conscience of society. Its assessment should encompass all students, all delivery and all staff who undertake or support teaching or supervision.

Auckland University of Technology Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau (AUT) submitted its self-review portfolio on 17 May 2024. The Panel found the self-review to be well-presented and easy to use. The Panel met twice (online) before undertaking an in-person site visit to the University from 9-11 September 2024. The Panel held 25 interview sessions and met with 66 members of staff and 25 students. Information gained through the interviews supplements that contained in the self-review portfolio and the Panel draws on both sources to reach its findings.

The Cycle 6 Academic Audit of Auckland University of Technology Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau took place in the context of the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which included a financial recovery plan for the University and ongoing impacts on student preparation for university study. The University also renewed its strategic leadership, developed a new strategic plan, a framework for enacting Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities, a Learner Success Plan, and implemented a new learning management system in the period between COVID-19 and this audit. The Panel is impressed with how the University has managed through these external and internal changes. Other work underway at the time of this audit includes a Long-term Academic and Capital Plan and development of a new Learning and Teaching Plan, an Academic Quality Framework, and a refresh of the University's Graduate Profile.

The first section (A) of the audit framework is concerned with leadership and management of teaching and learning. The University has a coherent strategic planning framework and takes a

¹ <https://www.enhanceunz.com/>

mature approach to change management with the establishment of both management and governance functions for change. The University has strengths in provision and use of data that allow it to assess and respond to needs of different cohorts of students. The already well-developed data systems could be strengthened by inclusion of principles for Māori data sovereignty and Pacific data sovereignty.

The University's student body is diverse, with a relatively high proportion of students from areas with a high deprivation index, and higher proportions of part-time and non-school leaver cohorts compared to other universities in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, the University has a range of mechanisms and good practices that enable student voices to contribute to academic quality. These will be strengthened further by the development of a student voice framework.

The University operates across three main campuses: City, North and South. Future development and use of campuses will be guided by the Long-Term Academic and Capital Plan. The University needs to engage with different mana whenua groups to reflect appropriate tikanga for each campus. Culturally affirming spaces for Māori student and Pacific students are available on all campuses and provide 'bases' for Māori students and Pacific students, with other university services coming to those spaces to engage with students.

Before COVID-19, the University experienced significant growth. A need to be responsive to growth contributed to the development of differential practices. The Panel considers there is now a need for greater consistency of academic decision-making across the University. The role of the Academic Board in guiding and monitoring academic quality should be also reviewed. Work underway to develop a schedule of academic delegations will contribute to both consistency of academic decision making and academic governance.

Section A also contains two guideline statements that examine progress on a university's enhancement theme objectives from phase 1 of the audit cycle. While the context and the University's strategic approach have changed since the enhancement theme objectives were developed, the University's ongoing commitment to addressing the original areas of the enhancement theme objectives are now captured (and extended) in the University's Learner Success Plan – Ku Uta Ki Tai. Restructuring the Office of Pacific Advancement will be important in sustaining the focus on success for Pacific students.

Section B of the audit framework—Student life cycle, support and wellbeing—is an area of strength for the University. The University has well-designed applications and admissions processes and pays thoughtful attention to transitions. There are opportunities to consider how challenges faced by students in completing work placement requirements could be ameliorated. Further attention is also needed to ensure that students have access to accurate and timely course advice. This matter was also raised in the Cycle 5 academic audit of the University. The Panel is pleased to see the University's recent review of its Student Concerns and Complaints policy and associated procedures. Student wellbeing and success is effectively supported by Student Services and Administration, the Office of Māori Advancement and the Office of Pacific Advancement working together. The appointment of professionally qualified staff further strengthens these services.

The third section (C) of the audit framework examines curriculum, assessment and delivery. The University is committed to developing culturally responsive curricula. However, there are

opportunities to strengthen the contribution of Pacific voices to formal curriculum development, approval and review processes. The Panel considers the University's intention to implement a curriculum management system to be positive, together with its further attention to data and reporting for learning and teaching. These will contribute to programme review processes that are evidence-informed and responsive. The Panel is also pleased to see new principles, policy and procedures for assessment and the approach the University is taking to understand the impact of Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen-AI) on learning and teaching. Further capacity and capability will be needed to allow greater numbers of students to undertake assessment and be supervised and examined in te reo Māori.

Section D of the audit framework considers teaching quality and the recruitment, development and recognition of staff. The Panel is pleased to see the University's initiatives to recruit staff from under-represented groups, as well as its establishment of mechanisms to enhance opportunities for promotion to senior academic positions for Māori. It anticipates the development of a Pacific Plan will support capacity and capability building for teaching and research supervision for Pacific students. Expectations for academic staff are outlined in an Academic Expectations framework and the Panel endorses the University's intentions to redevelop this. Teaching development is well supported by the Office of Learning, Teaching and Educational Design, although there are opportunities to encourage further staff engagement in professional development.

The final section (E) of the audit framework focuses on postgraduate research students. Comprehensive up-to-date information to support students undertaking research is available in an online handbook, and good training and other supports are available for supervisors. The University's support for innovative and impactful supervision practices is evident to the Panel. However, further attention could be paid to raising awareness of the Register of Supervisors and requirements for maintaining registration, along with reinforcing the need for respectful support and duty of care for postgraduate research students across the University.

The Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework also asks universities to reflect on their obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the interdependence of university research and teaching, and universities' role as critic and conscience of society. Its assessment should encompass all students, all delivery and all staff who undertake or support teaching or supervision.

The Panel recognises the leadership from the Office of Māori Advancement that has contributed to the University's commitment to be a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-enacting university. Te Aronui is being used to guide change across the University, including for postgraduate research students and their supervision, and there is a high level of engagement with a capability-building programme.

The interdependence of research and teaching is reflected in discussion about what it means to be a university of technology. The University has paid recent attention to the importance of academic freedom, which contributes to its role as critic and conscience of society.

With respect to the scope components of the audit framework, the University is clearly aware of and is responsive to the needs of different groups of students. It also recognises the need to support underrepresented groups of staff and has developed programmes and mechanisms to do this. It is working to achieve a staffing complement that reflects its student body. Work is developing with respect to AUT Online, and the learning and teaching plan will contribute further to this.

Based on the evidence available to it at the time of the audit, the Panel considers the University does meet, and in several instances exceeds, the outcomes and standards a university of good international standing would be expected to demonstrate in respect of the guideline statements. The University therefore meets the expectations of the Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework. Where it considers further work is required, the Panel has made recommendations or affirmed enhancement initiatives already identified by the University. The Panel has made 24 commendations, 11 affirmations and 12 recommendations that support and encourage good practices and are intended to assist the University as it progresses its strategic direction.

AUT should provide a follow-up report one year after the release of this report. The follow-up report should address progress on both affirmations and recommendations. Once it has been accepted by the AQA Board, the follow-up report should be made publicly available.

Further information about academic audits, including previous audit reports, is available on the AQA website.²

² www.aqa.ac.nz

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List of key terms and acronyms

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| ATGG | Academic Transformation Governance Group |
| AR23 | Annual Report 2023 |
| AUTSA | Auckland University of Technology Student Association |
| CMS | Curriculum management system |
| the Code | Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 |
| CRM | Customer relationship management system |
| CUAP | Universities New Zealand Committee on University Academic Programmes |
| DAP | Disability Action Plan |
| DSS | Disability Support Services |
| DVCA | Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic |
| EFTS | Equivalent Full-Time Student(s) |
| FI, FID | Further information, Further information document |
| FTE | Full-time Equivalent (staff) |
| Gen-AI | Generative artificial intelligence |
| GRS | Graduate Research School |
| GYR | Graduating Year Review |
| KD, SD | Key (supporting) document (forms part of the University's Self-review Portfolio) |
| KPI | Key Performance Indicator |
| Ki Uta Ki Tai | The University's Learner Success Plan |
| LTACP | Long-term Academic and Capital Plan |
| LTED | Office of Learning, Teaching and Educational Design |
| OMA | Office of Māori Advancement |
| OPA | Office of Pacific Advancement |
| PARC | Programme Approval and Review Committee |
| PVC | Pro-Vice-Chancellor |
| SPEQs | Student Paper Experience Questionnaires |
| SR, SRR, SRP | Self-review, Self-review report, Self-review portfolio |
| SSA | Student Services and Administration |
| TMO | Transformation Management Office |
| URPB | University Postgraduate Research Board |
| VC | Vice-Chancellor |

Introduction

Academic audits for universities in Aotearoa New Zealand are undertaken by the *Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities – Te Pokapū Kounga Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa* (AQA). AQA is an operationally independent external quality assurance agency that is recognised as being fully aligned with the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP).³ Further information about AQA can be found in Appendix 1 and on the AQA website.⁴

The sixth cycle of academic audits for universities in Aotearoa New Zealand is a composite cycle with two main phases. In phase one, from 2017 to 2020, universities engaged collectively in an enhancement theme with the title “Access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and for Pacific students”.⁵ The start of phase two was deferred by 12 months in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Phase two is an academic audit utilising an audit framework of 30 guideline statements in five sections: (A) Leadership and management of teaching and learning and academic quality; (B) Student life cycle, support and wellbeing; (C) Curriculum, assessment and delivery; (D) Teaching quality; and (E) Supervision of postgraduate research students. The audit framework has three underpinning components—Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations, interdependence of university research and teaching, universities’ role as critic and conscience of society—that should be reflected in a self-review portfolio and audit report. The scope of the audit framework extends to all students, all delivery and all staff who undertake or support teaching or supervision.

The Cycle 6 audit framework was co-developed with universities and confirmed, following consultation, in 2018.⁶ The objectives of the audit framework are:

1. to provide a set of guideline statements that a university will gain value from evaluating itself against and from the assessment made by the audit panel, leading to enhancement; and
2. to provide assurance of the quality of New Zealand universities.

The guideline statements set out expectations of outcomes and standards that a university of good international standing would be expected to demonstrate. They are not fixed, minimum, standards but are relative and dynamic.

Auckland University of Technology Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau (AUT, the University) submitted its self-review on 17 May 2024. The self-review report (SRR) and key documents (KD) were both in hard copy and loaded onto an AQA OneDrive site. Supporting documents (SD) were provided electronically and the Panel was also given access to the University’s intranet. The Panel found the Self-review Report (SRR) and supporting portfolio to be comprehensive, well-presented and easy to use. The

³ <https://www.inqaahe.org/recognition-process/aligned-agencies-database/> (Accessed 1 October 2024).

⁴ www.aqa.ac.nz

⁵ <https://www.enhanceunz.com/> (Accessed 4 August 2022).

⁶ For a summary of the development of Cycle 6, see Matear, S.M. (2018), “Evolving Quality”, 10th Higher Education Conference on Innovation and developments in Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance; 20 – 22 November 2018; Macao Polytechnic Institute, Macao, China. Available at <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/node/340>. (Accessed 5 August 2022).

SRR was well-supported by evidence, including easy to access trend data and data disaggregated by key dimensions.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for its well-presented and easy to use self-review report and portfolio.*

Once the University had uploaded its self-review portfolio to AQA, University access to OneDrive was removed and the Panel was given access. A separate OneDrive site for shared planning between AQA and the University was created. The Panel held two online meetings before the site visit to the University from 9-11 September 2024.

During the site visit, the Panel (see p. 50) held 24 interview sessions and met with 66 members of staff and 22 students. An additional meeting with three students was held the week following the site visit. Most interviewees were able to attend face-to-face meetings with others attending via Zoom. All interviewees were prepared to engage constructively and candidly with the Panel and to provide helpful insights to the audit areas.

About the University

AUT became a university in 2000 and is the youngest of the eight universities in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, the university's history as an educational institute stretches back to its establishment as the Auckland Technical School in 1895. AUT is the only university of technology in Aotearoa New Zealand.⁷ This has implications for the University's programme portfolio and interactions with professions and communities. It is also something that is discussed throughout the University, including in the development of plans.⁸

Internationally, the University is ranked at 64 (equal) on the Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings and in the top 60 of the QS rankings for universities under 50 years old.⁹ It has a small number of agreements to offer joint programmes with offshore universities.¹⁰

In 2024 the University operates across three main campuses (City, North and South) and two specialist locations (AUT Millenium and AUT's Centre for Refugee Education).¹¹ In 2023, the University enrolled 26,083 students (18,724 EFTS) and employed 2,240 (FTE) staff.¹²

Seventy-five per cent of 2023 EFTS were enrolled in undergraduate programmes, 15% in postgraduate taught programmes, 5% in research postgraduate programmes and 5% in pre-degree programmes.¹³ This is a shift in the student profile of the University from the time of its Cycle 5 academic audit. Then, only 15% of EFTS were enrolled in postgraduate programmes and 7% in pre-degree programmes.¹⁴

⁷ SRR, p. 6.

⁸ AR23, p. 9.

⁹ AR23, p. 4.

¹⁰ SRR, p. 13.

¹¹ SRR, p. 12.

¹² SRR, p. 11.

¹³ SRR, p. 97.

¹⁴ <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/AUT%20Report%20Cycle%205.pdf>, p. 1. (Accesses 3 October 2024.)

Asian students were the largest ethnic cohort in 2023 (35.8%), followed by NZ European/Pākehā (31.9%) and Pacific students (13.8%). Māori students were 9.4% of enrolments in 2023.¹⁵ AUT has the highest proportion of EFTS that are Pacific and second highest proportion of EFTS that are Māori among universities in Aotearoa New Zealand.¹⁶ Thirteen per cent of EFTS are international students, with China being the home country for over half of international EFTS.¹⁷

The University's commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi is set out in Te Aronui. Te Aronui provides a framework for enacting Te Tiriti responsibilities through four strategic goals:

1. Whakaawe – enabling Māori influence
2. Whakaea – realising Māori aspirations
3. Whakamana – equitable outcomes for all
4. Whakanui – eliminating racism and discrimination.¹⁸

The Panel heard many references to how Te Aronui informed plans (for example, the Disability Action Plan and Rautaki Rangahau), initiatives and organisational development; and that the University was “on a journey” to become a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-enacting university.

The University's strategic plan—Te Kete—sets out the vision for the University as “enriching lives and creating a better world through technology, learnings and discovery”. Its mission as “Aotearoa New Zealand's university of technology and opportunity [is to] produce graduates the world needs, discover and apply knowledge with purpose, and work in partnership to accelerate ... impact”. Seven strategic areas of activity intersect with the components of the mission to articulate the contribution the University aspires to make.¹⁹ The seven areas of strategic activity are:

1. being distinguished as a university of technology
2. being a world-ranked university of opportunity
3. committing to the significance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in history and the future
4. making a unique and sustainable contribution to the world from [the University's] location in the Pacific
5. being student-centred
6. supporting [the University's] people
7. collectively building a values-based culture.

The University is governed by a Council of 12 members, including the Vice-Chancellor, two members elected by the staff of the University and a student appointed by the Auckland University of Technology Student Association (AUTSA).²⁰

The University's Academic Board is a subcommittee of Council.²¹ Subcommittees of the Academic Board include Faculty Boards, a Learning and Teaching Committee, Programme Approval and Review Committee and the University Postgraduate Research Board. Boards of Studies, Assessment Boards, Appeals

¹⁵ SRR, p. 97.

¹⁶ SRR, p. 99.

¹⁷ SRR, p. 100.

¹⁸ KD 2.

¹⁹ KD 1.

²⁰ <https://www.aut.ac.nz/about/auts-leadership/aut-council> (Accessed 1 October 2024.)

²¹ SRR, p. 90.

Committees and Discipline Committees are subcommittees to Faculty Boards.²² The Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic (DVCA) is a member of the Academic Board and an *ex officio* member of the Learning and Teaching Committee, but not an *ex officio* member of the Programme Approval and Review Committee.²³ The Panel comments further on academic delegations and decision-making in GS 4.

The Vice-Chancellor's Executive Team includes the two DVCs (Academic and Research), the PVC Pacific, Deans of faculties, two Assistant Vice-Chancellors (Corporate, and Finance and Infrastructure), two Group Directors, and the Head of the Vice-Chancellor's Office.²⁴ A Senior Leadership Team includes the members of the Executive Team plus other Group Directors, other PVCs, the Dean of the Graduate Research School, the Kaihautū Tiriti, the Chief Technology Officer and Chief Information Security Officer, the Chief Marketing Officer, and the University Librarian.²⁵

The Dean of the Faculty of Culture and Society is also the PVC Māori Advancement. At the time of the audit the PVC Māori Advancement was stepping down and the University was seeking to appoint a DVC Māori. Further Māori leadership is provided through a Kaihautū Tiriti, based in the Vice-Chancellor's Office, Associate Deans Māori in faculties, the Office of Māori Advancement and Māori professorial staff.²⁶

The current Vice-Chancellor is the first Pacific person to be appointed as a Vice-Chancellor of a university in Aotearoa New Zealand. A PVC Pacific provides leadership for the Pacific portfolio at the University, including leading the Office of Pacific Advancement (OPA).²⁷ This Office has recently been restructured to provide greater focus on supporting success for Pacific students, Pacific research and policy development, Pacific staff capability, university-wide Pacific cultural competency and Pacific community engagement and partnerships.²⁸

Teaching and research take place in five faculties:

1. Business, Economics and Law, Te Ara Pakihi, Te Ōranga Me te Ture
2. Culture and Society, Te Ara Kete Aronui
3. Design and Creative Technologies, Te Ara Auaha
4. Health and Environmental Sciences, Te Ara Hauora a Pūtaiao
5. Te Ara Poutama.²⁹

The Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences is the largest in terms of enrolled EFTS, followed by Design and Creative Technologies. Health and Environmental Sciences is headquartered on the North Campus, but also delivers programmes on the South Campus. Design and Creative Technologies operates mainly on the City Campus. Culture and Society operates across all three main campuses. Te Ara Poutama is the smallest faculty with 76 EFTS in 2023.^{30,31}

²² SRR, p. 91.

²³ <https://autuni.sharepoint.com/sites/Tuia/SitePages/AUT-boards-&-committees.aspx> (Accessed 1 October 2024.)

²⁴ SRR, p. 8.

²⁵ SRR, p. 7.

²⁶ SRR, p. 9.

²⁷ SRR, p. 9.

²⁸ FI: OPA – Summary of organisational change.

²⁹ SRR, p. 10.

³⁰ SRR, p. 10.

³¹ FI: Campus data and insights, p. 2.

Each faculty is led by a Dean. However, the internal structure of faculties varies with different numbers of schools and/or departments and different configurations of associate dean roles. Implications of these variations are discussed in several places in this report.

Context for this Audit

The period since the Cycle 5 academic audit has been one of change for the University. It has experienced the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated impacts, has undergone changes in the senior leadership of the University and moved from a period of growth to one of stable or declining student numbers in most areas.

While COVID-19 affected all universities in Aotearoa New Zealand, universities with Auckland campuses experienced longer lockdowns than those in other parts of the country. The composition of the AUT student profile also meant that students and their families experienced greater hardship and challenges than others. The University is conscious that disruption to preparation for university students may have ongoing effects.³² COVID-19 also had financial impacts, and the University undertook a Financial Recovery Programme in 2022/2023. This included reducing staff numbers (see Section D).³³

A new Vice-Chancellor was appointed in 2022, following the retirement of the previous Vice-Chancellor who had held the role for 18 years.³⁴ The University's first Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic was appointed in 2021 and a Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research in 2020. Other senior leadership changes include the appointment of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Pacific in 2022 and the Dean of the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences in 2024. All Deans of faculties have been appointed to their roles since the last academic audit of the university.³⁵

The changing external environment, the change in senior leadership and moving out of a phase of growth in student numbers all contributed to a decision to bring forward the redevelopment of the University's strategic plan. Te Kete was approved by the University Council in April 2024. The Panel recognises the work undertaken by the University to achieve the Financial Recovery Plan and develop Te Aronui, Te Kete and Ki Uta Ki Tai, while also managing through changes in leadership and a challenging external environment.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for achieving its financial recovery plan and developing Te Aronui and Te Kete, while managing through external and internal changes.*

Other initiatives underway or signaled at the time of this audit include:

- a Long-term Academic and Capital Plan (LTACP) – “Building our academic future” (GS 3)
- developing a new Learning and Teaching Plan and refreshing the University's Graduate Profile (GS 17)
- implementing Te Aronui and the Aronui Ora capability development programme
- developing a Pacific Plan
- implementing Ki Uta Ki Tai (Learner Success Plan), including a whole-of-university service model (GS 1, Section B)

³² AR23, p. 8.

³³ SRR, p. 6.

³⁴ SRR, p. 95; <https://www.aut.ac.nz/news/stories/auts-vice-chancellor-to-retire-in-2022> (Accessed 30 September 2024.)

³⁵ SRR, p. 95.

- an academic portfolio management programme (Section C)
- implementing a new assessment policy (GS 18)
- creating AUT Online (first programmes to launch in 2025)
- developing a student voice framework (GS 2)
- refreshing the academic expectations framework (GS 25).³⁶

This report comments on these initiatives as they are relevant to guideline statements.

This report

This report presents the Panel's findings based on the evidence it has considered.

The Panel has commended areas of effective or good practice, affirmed practice that should result in enhancements to the quality assurance system for New Zealand universities and made recommendations where it considers attention needs to be paid to enhancing practice.

A draft of this report was submitted to the Board of the Academic Quality Agency for a quality assurance check on 12 November 2024 and to the University to identify any matters of factual inaccuracy on 19 November 2024.

This report is released under the authorisation of the AQA Board. All enquiries regarding the report should be directed to comms@aqac.ac.nz.

Cycle 5 Academic Audit

The Cycle 5 academic audit of the University made 6 recommendations:

- R1: The Panel recommends that the University gives priority to the identification of risk events which might impede teaching, learning, research and associated academic activities over an extended period and ensures that plans are in place, and procedures in place or available, to expedite business continuity of all core activities.
- R2: The Panel recommends that the University reviews its systems for giving, recording and reviewing academic advice to students; and that the University considers formulating a policy and procedures for academic advising which addresses responsibilities for giving advice, recording advice and follow-up of advice where relevant.
- R3 The Panel recommends that the University reviews how it communicates its appeals and academic grievance processes to students, both via the website and through paper and/or programme guides, to ensure clear and consistent advice is available and accessible to students, both about the processes and about whom they should approach for assistance with lodging an appeal or grievance claim.
- R4 The Panel recommends that the University reviews its objectives and processes for inducting all new academic staff, whether permanent, fixed-term or casual, and develops a framework which will foster consistent practice across the University, which can be quality assured to ensure new staff all receive relevant advice about academic expectations at the Auckland University of Technology, and receive appropriate guidance to integrate into the University's community.

³⁶ SRR, pp. 6-7; FI, pp. 5-9.

- R5 The Panel recommends that the University continues its provision of Doctoral Study Awards and continues to explore all other means to support the research activity of its academic staff, to ensure that its degree-level programmes are taught by active researchers and that postgraduate students have a wide range of suitably qualified and experienced supervisors available to guide their research projects.
- R6 The Panel recommends the University take advantage of the introduction of the professional learning programme (PLP) initiative to also review the manner in which professional development for teaching is provided across the institution; and that the University develops a plan which will facilitate identification of common development needs, central coordination of appropriate development activities and also provide mechanisms for sharing good practice and innovation.³⁷

With the exception of R2, the Panel is satisfied that the University has responded well to its Cycle 5 recommendations. It comments further on R2 in GS 10.

³⁷ <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/AUT%20Report%20Cycle%205.pdf>, p. 19. (Accessed 10 October 2024.)

Section A: Leadership and management of teaching, learning and academic quality

This section of the audit framework examines the university-level systems and processes for ensuring academic quality, and how the University assures itself that the outcomes of these processes are adequate and appropriate. It also includes two guideline statements to assess progress on the University's enhancement theme plan from the first phase of Cycle 6.³⁸

GS 1 Planning and reporting

The university gathers and uses appropriate and valid data and information to establish objectives, plan, assess progress and make improvements in its teaching and learning activities.

The University has a well-developed and coherent strategic planning framework. Te Aronui underpins Te Kete and other plans. A Long Term Academic and Capital Plan, under development, is intended to coordinate and assist with resource allocation for core and enabling plans. The University's core plans are its Learning and Teaching Plan (being refreshed), Rautaki Rangahau (research plan) and Ki Uta Ki Tai. Ki Ita Ki Tai is the University's Learner Success Plan (as required by the Tertiary Education Commission). The University's Disability Action Plan is part of its student success planning. The core plans are supported by Sustainability, Digital Directions and International Plans. KPIs are established in the core and enabling plans.³⁹ In turn, the core and enabling plans inform three-year business plans for faculties and divisions.⁴⁰ The business planning process ensures plans and KPIs are formally approved and reported.⁴¹

Collectively, the above plans will guide an intended 'transformation' of the University. A Transformation Management Office (TMO) has been established to help manage strategic change.⁴² It will also support consistency of business case processes and add discipline to prioritisation and decision-making. The Panel considers this to be an example of mature and good practice in managing change. The University has also recognised that implementation and oversight of multiple projects is demanding and requires coordination. It has established an Academic Transformation Governance Group (ATGG) to provide this oversight and coordination and reduce the need for Faculty Deans to attend multiple meetings. The ATGG will have oversight of the implementation of Ki Uta Ki Tai, AUT Online, the academic portfolio management project, and work-integrated learning.

Commendation *The Panel commends the University for its mature approach to change management, including the establishment of the Transformation Management Office and the Academic Transformation Governance Group.*

³⁸ AQA (2020). Guide to Cycle 6 Academic Audit. p. 3.

³⁹ SRR, p. 16.

⁴⁰ SRR, p. 18.

⁴¹ SRR, p. 19.

⁴² SRR, p. 7.

While the Panel commends the University's good practice in establishing frameworks and mechanisms for managing change, it also heard a need for greater transparency in allocating resources for change and setting expectations for changes.

A Data and Information Governance Group oversees data and information governance.⁴³ This Group includes representation from the Office of Māori Advancement, but its terms of reference do not explicitly include issues of sovereignty for Māori data.⁴⁴ While the Panel heard that some work on the implications of Māori data sovereignty was underway, it considers providing guidance on Māori data sovereignty will help ensure the University's data management practices remain relevant and reflect Te Aronui. Similar guidance on Pacific data sovereignty would also be useful.

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends that the University consider how information and data governance include principles for Māori data sovereignty and Pacific data sovereignty.*

A University Data Warehouse combines data from more than 20 systems, including a customer relationship management system (CRM). The CRM provides insight and support for a range of student support services. The Panel heard many examples of the ways in which this was used to monitor engagement by groups of students and target interventions to support specific groups. It comments further on this use of good quality data and the ways in which it allows a case-management approach to be utilised across the University in GS 9 and GS 13, in particular.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University's use of good quality data to understand and respond to different student groups. This is particularly evident in the University's approach to managing student transitions and student wellbeing.*

The development and redevelopment of university plans involved consultation with staff and students and other communities.⁴⁵ This is likely to have contributed to have contributed to the high levels of awareness and understanding of plans that the Panel heard in its meetings with staff and students. In particular, there is an appreciation of how Te Aronui will inform change across a range of activities including curriculum development, teaching and supervision.

Commendation *The Panel commends the University for the development of Te Aronui and the ways in which this is being used to guide change across the University.*

The University is refreshing plans, including the Learning and Teaching plan, to align with its new strategic plan and Te Aronui. It has foreshadowed the need for an academic quality framework to link quality assurance with planning and reporting and risk management. The Panel endorses these initiatives.

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms the redevelopment of the Learning and Teaching Plan and development of an Academic Quality Framework.*

⁴³ SRR, p. 19.

⁴⁴ SD 6.

⁴⁵ SRR, p. 17.

GS 2 Student voice

Improved outcomes for students are enabled through engaging with the student voice in quality assurance processes at all levels, and this is communicated to students.

Students' voices contribute to academic quality through a range of mechanisms, including formal agreements, a Student Advisory Committee, student representation on committees, a reference group that provides student input on strategic matters, a class representative system, surveys and evaluations of teaching, and meetings between the AUTSA Executive and senior leaders in the University, including the Vice-Chancellor. Māori students are represented through Titahi Ki Tua, which works with the Office of Māori Advancement. Postgraduate research students are represented on a Student Advisory Group in the Graduate Research School.⁴⁶

The Panel is pleased to see that agenda for committee meetings, including Council, include standing items for students. Students are also represented on and contribute to committees and other groups that are not primarily academic in focus. Other good practice includes paying students for their contribution on the reference group. With respect to the survey portfolio, the Panel is particularly impressed with the Student Readiness survey and the ways in which the University utilises data from this survey.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for its range of mechanisms and good practices in enabling student voices to contribute to academic quality.*

Despite the range of mechanisms, the University recognises that it does not have an overall framework for its student voice and partnership activities. Making explicit the ways in which student voices are used to make changes and communicating changes (closing the loop) are further areas for development. The Panel notes, however, that these do exist and student dissatisfaction with facilities on the North Campus contributed to the recent development of a new building on that campus.⁴⁷

The University has identified an enhancement initiative to develop a student voice framework and review how it collects, shares and reports on changes made based on this feedback. The Panel affirms this initiative.⁴⁸

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms the University's enhancement initiative to develop an overall framework for student voice(s) and review how student feedback is sought, shared and changes based on this feedback are reported.*

⁴⁶ SRR, pp. 20-24.

⁴⁷ SRR, p. 25.

⁴⁸ SRR, p. 24.

GS 3 Teaching and learning environments

Teaching and learning activities are supported by appropriate learning environments (infrastructure, spaces, media, facilities and resources).

As noted above (p. 2), the University operates across three main campuses and two specialist sites. The City Campus is home to most student EFTS (60% in 2023), followed by the North Campus (21%), with the South Campus contributing 10% EFTS. Almost 5000 students (5% EFTS) studied online in 2023.⁴⁹

The University is developing a Long-Term Academic and Capital Plan (see p. 5) to guide the development and use of spaces across the University's campuses, including programmes to be delivered on each of the campuses. Further guidance is provided by a Capital Asset Management strategy, policy and plan. Attention has been paid to ensuring capital asset planning is informed by education, research and student needs. Estates, IT Services and the Office for Learning, Teaching and Education Design are represented on the Learning and Teaching Committee and the Student Advisory Committee.⁵⁰ However, the LTACP will strengthen the academic driver for capital developments.

The multi-campus nature of the University means it needs to build and sustain relationships with mana whenua for the different campuses. The Panel heard that priority was placed on teaching spaces being flexible and that culturally affirming spaces were provided elsewhere. It appreciates the challenges of working across multiple rohe but recommends that greater attention be paid to how Te Aronui can inform the development of teaching spaces.

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends that the University consider how reflecting appropriate tikanga for its different campuses in teaching spaces can support the implementation of Te Aronui and Te Kete.*

The University seeks feedback on its facilities and environment in a University Experience Survey. Overall, facilities and environment has one of the higher levels of overall satisfaction (along with Library collections). Sub-group analysis is available by faculty, qualification level, gender, disability status, residency, age group, for new or returning students, ethnicity and whether students are studying full-time or part-time for each of the campuses.⁵¹

The Panel heard that culturally affirming spaces (whānau spaces) for Māori students are valued. They allowed other university services to come to Māori students and provide access to those services in supportive spaces. The whānau spaces are recognised as being important in building community (whanaungatanga me kohtahitanga) among Māori students.⁵² They are also seen by (some) students as being more responsive than the Student Hub.

The University has recently opened three Vā Pasifika spaces, one on each of its campuses. These provide "student spaces for culturally sustaining pastoral care and academic mentoring delivered by

⁴⁹ FI, p. 4.

⁵⁰ SRR, p. 25.

⁵¹ SD 14.

⁵² SRR, p. 32.

Pacific student peer mentors”.⁵³ The Panel heard that students also felt ownership of these spaces and that they were very inclusive.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the provision of culturally affirming spaces for Māori students and Pacific students.*

The University’s digital infrastructure is governed by ICT Services with the intention that there should be continuity of services on and off campus. A Digital Directions Framework guides the prioritisation of digital initiatives. This applies a set of principles across 12 portfolios of services and provides visibility of all upcoming initiatives.⁵⁴

In 2021-2022, the University moved from Blackboard to Canvas as its learning management system. This was managed as a major project designed to “embed best practice in technology-enhanced learning for all students”⁵⁵ through the use of common principles and threshold standards for all courses.⁵⁶ Students were part of design and implementation teams.⁵⁷ Survey data indicate that Canvas is widely used, students are satisfied with their experience, and they have a mostly consistent experience between courses.⁵⁸

Commendation: *The Panel commends the approach taken by the University to move to Canvas as its learning management system.*

GS 4 Academic delegations

Academic delegations support consistent and effective decision making and accountability for teaching and learning quality and research supervision.

The University has a Council Delegations policy which delegates authority to the Vice-Chancellor or to Academic Board. Both the Vice-Chancellor and the Academic Board can delegate functions and powers further. Academic matters that may be delegated include affixing the common seal of the University to qualification certificates, student enrolment, determining maximum numbers of students that can be enrolled in courses, and refusing to admit or enrol students.⁵⁹

The terms of reference for the Academic Board include the “development of appropriate operating procedures relating to academic matters”. However, the Panel’s view is that the terms of reference focus more on establishing systems and less on monitoring and evaluating the outcomes (such as consistency) of those systems. The Panel heard that the Academic Board spent little time on matters of academic quality, relying on sub-committees to undertake such work.

⁵³ SRR, p. 34.

⁵⁴ FID 6.

⁵⁵ SRR, p. 39.

⁵⁶ SRR, p. 52.

⁵⁷ <https://www.instructure.com/en-au/resources/webinars/canvasaut-students-students> (Accessed 3 October 2024.)

⁵⁸ SRR, p. 39.

⁵⁹ SD 21.

Other delegations are made through the University's General Academic Statute and General Academic Regulations. These devolve much decision-making to Faculty Committees.⁶⁰ While these delegations are recorded at a faculty level, the University does not have an overall schedule of academic delegations and acknowledges that it cannot be confident in the consistency of academic decision-making between faculties. The Panel heard multiple comments on differential approaches between faculties, including the extent to which faculty processes aligned with specified University policies and procedures.

The argument was made to the Panel that the ability to respond locally (and quickly) was important during the previous growth phase of the University and that the University had processes to address outliers in practice. This point was acknowledged in the Cycle 5 academic audit of the University. However, that audit also identified risks with this approach, including in the treatment of academic appeals and grievances, providing academic advice, and in the induction of new staff.⁶¹

In 2024, a lack of consistency between faculties appears to result in variable treatment of students. This variability incurs costs to students (and the University) in trying to resolve matters including academic advice (GS 10), academic complaints and appeals (GS 11), and breaches of academic integrity or student discipline (GS 18). Differences in guidance on the use of Gen-AI (GS 18), support and resourcing of postgraduate research students (GS 28) and responding to student feedback (GS 2) do not help the University in making the best decisions for its students. The University is aware that inconsistency exists (or has existed) and is making efforts to address it, particularly in processes for programme approval and monitoring (GS 14, GS 15) and policies for student complaints (GS 11) and assessment (GS 18). However, the Panel considers that measures to monitor consistency of decision-making across the University should also be established.

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends the University urgently address a lack of consistency in academic decision-making that affects the equitable treatment of students with respect to academic advice, academic complaints and appeals, breaches of academic integrity or student discipline. Other areas of inconsistency, including guidance on the use of Gen-AI, support and resourcing for postgraduate research students, and responding to student feedback should also be addressed. The effectiveness of measures to ensure consistency should be monitored and reported regularly.*

From the Panel's perspective, inconsistency in academic decision-making is not helped by a lack of common management structures in faculties (see p. 5). The Panel appreciates that different faculties have different needs. However, there is likely to be more commonality in student needs and therefore a need to ensure that their experiences are equitable.

The University has identified an enhancement initiative to "develop and promulgate an online schedule of academic delegations and put mechanisms in place to ensure the register's currency is maintained". This initiative is part of a larger project on academic governance. The Panel affirms the enhancement initiative and, with respect to the wider project on academic governance, suggests the University consider whether common structures of Associate Deans across faculties would assist in managing delegations and consistency of academic decision-making. It also recommends that, as part of the

⁶⁰ SRR, p. 27.

⁶¹ <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/AUT%20Report%20Cycle%205.pdf>, p. 64. (Accessed 5 October 2024.)

academic governance project, the University review whether the terms of reference and operations of Academic Board are setting sufficient direction for and monitoring of academic quality.

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms the University’s enhancement initiative to develop a university-wide schedule of academic delegations as part of its wider project on academic governance.*

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends the University review the terms of reference for and activities of Academic Board to ensure they are providing adequate guidance and monitoring of academic quality.*

GS 5 Academic risk management

Potential disruption to the quality and continuity of learning and teaching at the university, including risks to infrastructure, is mitigated through effective risk management processes.

A Risk Management policy sets out the University’s approach to managing risk. It acknowledges that risks are part of normal processes and that the “primary goal in risk management is to create and safeguard value”.⁶² Risk management is explicitly linked to achieving strategic objectives in Te Kete. This linkage is also clear in the University’s risk register.⁶³ The University’s recent work on strategy development identified the need for risk to be integrated into planning and reporting.⁶⁴ The development of the academic quality framework (affirmed in GS 1) is also intended to help manage academic risk further. It acknowledges that many risks in a university inherently have an academic dimension. The Panel considers the University has a mature approach to risk management and is pleased to see ongoing attention being paid to enhancing this further.

Business interruption from significant events and incidents is included in the risk register with guidance in an Emergency Management plan. This plan was tested during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Auckland Anniversary Weekend flash floods in 2003 and also a cyber-attack in 2023. The Panel heard the University undertakes role plays of emergency scenarios and these include post-event reviews undertaken by an external body.

The University acts as a safe space for students during disruption events. This includes being able to provide study space as well as laptops and data packages for students who need them, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ongoing management of risk also includes consideration of students undertaking work-integrated learning placements.

GS 6 Progress on the Enhancement Theme (Māori students)

The university has achieved the objectives in its enhancement theme plan with respect to Māori students and successful practice has been embedded and is sustainable.

The University’s objectives for Māori students in its Enhancement Theme plan were set in the context of its previous strategic plan. The objectives were to:

⁶² SD 26.

⁶³ SD 27.

⁶⁴ SRR, p.18.

- increase recruitment of Māori students from low-decile Auckland schools and match the age-adjusted regional Māori population in second year EFTS
- grow the UniPrep summer transition programme at the South Campus
- review and remove barriers in admissions and enrolment processes
- improve retention and completion rates for Māori students
- use learning analytics to inform student- and learning-centred education practices
- improve the quality and quantity of Mātauranga Māori in programmes.⁶⁵

Both the context and the University’s strategic approach have changed since the enhancement theme objectives were developed and the intervening period has been severely disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which exacerbated inequities experienced by Māori students. The University’s ongoing commitment to addressing the original areas of the enhancement theme objectives are now captured (and extended) in the University’s Learner Success Plan – Ku Uta Ki Tai.⁶⁶

However, the University continues to monitor the school decile profile of students and student retention and completion rates. First-year retention rates for Māori students dropped during and following the COVID-19 pandemic. Undergraduate course completion rates for Māori students also dropped in 2022 but recovered in 2023 to almost pre-pandemic rates.⁶⁷

Ki Uta Ki Tai has a broader remit than the Enhancement Theme, with six areas for focus:

1. Executive leadership
2. Responding to Te Tiriti
3. Building cultural capability
4. Transition to university
5. Whole-of-university service model
6. Integrated targeted academic support.

Ki Uta Ki Tai aims to change the narrative around supporting student success, including for Māori students. The narrative emphasises a holistic and relational approach, recognising the University has “responsibility for caring for its students, from prospect to alumni”, rather than one of an “EFTS pipeline”. The holistic approach means that the University considers the whole student—and how any issues may have academic, pastoral and cultural aspects—rather than focusing, for example, on a need for academic literacy support in isolation of other aspects. Ki Uta Ki Tai also reflects the University’s commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and ōritetanga. It recognises that being effective in supporting student groups traditionally underserved by university education will improve the experience for all learners.⁶⁸ This is consistent with the objectives of the Enhancement Theme.⁶⁹

Other work to support Māori students and support their success is undertaken by the Office of Māori Advancement (OMA). The OMA takes a “wrap-around” approach to support academic, personal and cultural needs, as well as outreach into schools, transitions into university and connections to industry.

⁶⁵ SRR, p. 30.

⁶⁶ SRR, p. 30.

⁶⁷ SRR, p. 103.

⁶⁸ KD 4.

⁶⁹

https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/Guide%20to%20Cycle%206%20Academic%20Audit_June%2021%20reprint.pdf, p. 5. (Accessed 8 October 2024.)

The work of the OMA team was previously recognised by the Association for Tertiary Education Management.⁷⁰ The Panel was pleased to hear other parts of the University supported this work. It comments above (GS 3) on the importance and availability of spaces that support the development of whanaungatanga and kotahitanga.

GS 7 Progress on the Enhancement Theme (Pasifika students)

The university has achieved the objectives in its enhancement theme plan with respect to Pasifika students and successful practice has been embedded and is sustainable.

As noted above (GS 6), the University’s enhancement theme objectives have been overtaken by the development of its Learner Success Plan—Ki Uta Ki Tai. The course completion rate for undergraduate Pacific students dropped in 2022 (following the COVID-19 pandemic) but returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2023.⁷¹ However, gaps persist in the course completion rate and first-year retention rate for Pacific students, compared with overall university rates.⁷² The University is developing further success indicators as part of Ki Uta Ki Tai. These include more holistic and student-centric views of success.⁷³

A UniPrep programme, based at the South Campus, was one of the enhancement theme objectives that has been important for Pacific students.⁷⁴ UniPrep is a six-week course that provides an introduction to university life and course advice. It helps participants build academic literacy and numeracy skills, and make connections with support services.⁷⁵ On average, 77% of the participants in UniPrep have been Pacific students.⁷⁶ As part of the restructure of the OPA (p. 4), management responsibility for UniPrep has been transferred to another part of the University.

The OPA has reconfigured other support for Pacific students to include face-to-face services in the Vā spaces (GS 3). These services include mentoring from a ‘Navigators’ peer-mentoring programme. The ‘Navigators’ are part of a year-long Indigenous Leadership programme. The future development of support initiatives for Pacific students includes developing and refining the University’s case-management approach to provide proactive support. This will be part of Ki Uta Ki Tai.⁷⁷

Given the relatively high numbers of Pacific students at the University, the Panel is pleased to see the attention that has been paid to identifying critical stages in the journeys for these students and development of culturally affirming programmes and initiatives to support their journeys. The Panel considers the restructure of the OPA and the objectives in Ki Uta Ki Tai will allow this focus to be sustained.

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms the restructure of the Office of Pacific Advancement and the development of culturally affirming programmes and initiatives that support success for Pacific students.*

⁷⁰ SRR, p. 31.

⁷¹ SRR, p. 103.

⁷² SRR, p. 33.

⁷³ KD 5, pp. 6-7.

⁷⁴ SRR, p. 30.

⁷⁵ KD 5, p. 22.

⁷⁶ SRR, p. 33.

⁷⁷ SRR, p. 34.

Section B: Student life cycle, support and wellbeing

This section of the audit framework focuses on students, their entry to university, successful transitions through and beyond university, and advice and support to enable successful transitions.

The life cycle and relational approach adopted by the University in its Learners Success Plan—Ki Uta Ki Tai—was noted in GS 6. This informs the guideline statements in this Section of the audit framework. The kaupapa (purpose) set out in Ki Uta Ki Tai is to:

- “develop a transformational, highly effective, holistic approach to uplift student achievement and learning
- ensure the University is providing the equitable opportunities and support that current and future students need to successfully enter the University, to be prepared, to choose their academic programmes appropriately, navigate effectively, and thrive academically, culturally, and personally.
- integrate lessons from AUT’s prior and existing successful and unsuccessful activities, with best practice and research, and chart a sector-leading path that fits the needs of our communities through AUT’s unique and special contributions.”⁷⁸

GS 8 Access

Access to university, including through recognition of prior learning and credit transfer pathways, is consistent, equitable and transparent for students.

The University’s strategic emphasis on being a ‘university of opportunity,’ coupled with its student profile, means that access is important to the University. The Panel can see that the University pays careful attention to this and to transitions into university (GS 9). The University enrolls a relatively high proportion of students from areas with a high deprivation index and has an explicit KPI for course completion rates for these students.⁷⁹ Forty-five per cent of new students in 2023 were non-school leavers and 26% were studying part-time.⁸⁰ This report summarises the diversity of the University’s student profile on p. 3. However, the Panel heard how it is important to the University that its student profile reflects the population diversity of the Auckland region.

Requirements for admission, including through recognition of prior learning (both formal and informal)⁸¹ and credit transfer, are set out in the University’s Academic Calendar.⁸² Clear information about programmes and entry requirements is available on the University’s website. This includes advice on pathway programmes and an “Application support hub”. Prospective students can build programmes of study on the website. The University monitors interaction with the website and tracks the number of applications for credit transfer, and the success rate of these applications.⁸³

⁷⁸ KD 4, p. 1.

⁷⁹ SRR, p. 96, p. 99.

⁸⁰ SRR, p. 98, p. 100.

⁸¹ <https://www.aut.ac.nz/study> (Accessed 9 October 2024.)

⁸² KD 12, p. 92ff.

⁸³ SRR, p. 37.

Admissions processes for domestic undergraduate and pre-degree programmes were centralised in 2018. Centralisation was intended to improve processing times and communications, provide consistency and remove barriers.⁸⁴ The Panel heard that students found applications processes to be straightforward and were assisted by outreach activities in schools. A series of other tailored events ensures specific cohorts of students (including mature students, postgraduate students and international students) have access to advice and support to enrol at the University.⁸⁵ A Future Students Enquiry and Advisory team focuses on ensuring that prospective students have the information they need before deciding to study at the University.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University's well-designed application and admissions processes.*

Pathway programmes are also an important component of the University's mission to be a university of opportunity.⁸⁶ These programmes were reviewed in 2023 as part of the Ki Uta Ki Tai programme. Staff specialising in transitions teach on the pathway programmes. A Certificate in Foundation Studies, taught by the UP International College, provides a pathway for international students.⁸⁷

Further support for access is provided through scholarships for school-leavers. The numbers of scholarships available and accepted has increased steadily since 2019.⁸⁸ A searchable scholarships database provides information on other scholarships, including those provided by other organisations.⁸⁹

GS 9 Transitions

Transitions for students are supported at all levels of university study, including transitions beyond study and/or to employment, and students are well-equipped to contribute in their chosen fields, and more broadly to the economy and society.

Transitions for students are designed, supported and monitored at key steps in the student journey, particularly entering and completing qualifications. Ki Uta Ki Tai places emphasis on transitions into university. Again, tailored support is available for specific student cohorts.

The University seeks direct feedback from commencing students through a Student Readiness Survey sent to new undergraduate and postgraduate students a week before orientation in both semesters 1 and 2. Communications are then targeted to students who are assessed as needing additional support. While the survey helps to advise students about the range of support services available, survey responses are also used as a basis for support services making proactive contact with students.⁹⁰ This is a further example of the University's responsiveness to good quality data commended in GS 1.

Orientation events are supported by "Student Ambassadors" and attendance at and satisfaction with events is tracked through the AUT app. Tailored orientation events are held for Māori students and international students. The University undertakes a post-orientation survey, and this indicates that

⁸⁴ SRR, p. 36.

⁸⁵ SRR, p. 38.

⁸⁶ KD 1.

⁸⁷ SRR, p. 37.

⁸⁸ SRR, p. 38.

⁸⁹ <https://aut.communityforce.com/Funds/Search.aspx> (Accessed 9 October 2024.)

⁹⁰ SRR, p. 39.

students find the experience valuable. Eighty-three per cent of students in Semester 2 2023 felt ‘definitely’ or ‘mostly’ prepared for study and 93% of international students surveyed in 2023 were satisfied or very satisfied with their face-to-face orientation.⁹¹

An eight-week “Getting Started” transition programme follows orientation. This provides a fortnightly newsletter with information to help students become familiar with the University and make connections with support services. It also directs students to webpages for new students.⁹²

Other Ki Uta Ki Tai initiatives that will support transition into university further include:

- UniPrep (see GS 7)
- Uni101—a 15-point (for credit) course required for students in pathway programmes, but also available to other students. This is underpinned by Te Aronui and develops individual study skills, academic literacy skills, and a sense of belonging.⁹³
- development of existing peer mentoring programmes
- work to ensure that academic administration processes, such as course changes, are consistent across the University (see GS 4) and easy to navigate.⁹⁴

Transitions to employment are supported by a Careers and Employability Service.⁹⁵ Careers advice is available in person and online and includes CV writing, interview advice and workshops.⁹⁶

Work-integrated learning (or placement) is also an important component of preparation for employment and survey results indicate that students consider placements prepare them to work in their chosen industry. Over 90% of undergraduates undertake work-integrated learning as part of their degree and it is a specific KPI for the University. Almost half of survey respondents found full time employment with the organisation where they undertook a placement.⁹⁷

A Graduate Destination survey is administered in July-August to graduates who completed qualifications of 60 points or more in the preceding calendar year. This seeks feedback on graduates’ work and study status, their work status in their final year of study, perceptions of employability, perceptions of the usefulness of their placement and their job search strategies, and differentiates between domestic and international students. For the most recent survey (2023), 88% domestic students were in full-time work and 11% in full-time study; 66% international students were in full-time work and 20% in full-time study.⁹⁸

The Panel is impressed with the University’s attention to transitions and the emphasis placed on work-integrated learning (placements). However, it heard that work-integrated learning was not as well connected to Careers and Employability Services as it could be, that ‘placement poverty’ was an

⁹¹ SRR, pp. 39-40.

⁹² SRR, p. 40; <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/new-students> (Accessed 10 October 2024.)

⁹³

<https://paperdescriptorreport.aut.ac.nz/PaperDescriptor/PaperDescriptor?courseCode=LSKL500&saveFormat=pdf&date=2025-04-02> (Accessed 10 October 2024.)

⁹⁴ SRR, p. 40.

⁹⁵ SRR, p. 40; <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/opportunities-and-careers/employability-and-career-support> (Accessed 10 October 2024.)

⁹⁶ SRR, p. 40.

⁹⁷ SD 15, p. 7.

⁹⁸ SD 15.

increasing issue for students, and that part-time students experienced more challenges in completing requirements. Placement poverty was particularly an issue for students with caring responsibilities and those who needed to undertake placements in other parts of the country. The University's Work-integrated Steering group has work underway, supported by the TMO, to implement a placement administration system. The Panel endorses this initiative and recommends that attention is also paid to ameliorating challenges faced by students in completing placements.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for the thoughtful attention it pays to student transitions, including the emphasis placed on work-integrated learning.*

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends that in progressing its planned work on administration of placements, the University also pay attention to ameliorating the challenges faced by students, particularly those with caring responsibilities or studying part-time, in completing their work placement requirements.*

The University's KPIs include increasing the numbers of Māori students and Pacific students in research programmes.⁹⁹ Transitions to postgraduate study are supported in a number of ways. The Panel heard examples of students being supported into postgraduate study across the University, including specific support for Māori students and Pacific students. It comments further in Section E.

GS 10 Academic advice

Student achievement is supported through consistent and clear academic advice, including course/paper information and programme planning, and guidance for students on completion of requirements.

Centralised academic advice on programme requirements is available on "Study" webpages and the Panel has commented on the usefulness of the information (GS 8). Other centralised advice is available through the Student Hub.¹⁰⁰ However, programme queries or more specialist advice is referred to faculties. It seemed to the Panel that academic advising is predominantly a faculty activity and not an activity for which the University seeks student feedback on in surveys.

The Cycle 5 academic audit of the University had recommended that "the University reviews its systems for giving, recording and reviewing academic advice to students; and that the University considers formulating a policy and procedures for academic advising which addresses responsibilities for giving advice, recording advice and follow-up of advice where relevant".¹⁰¹ However, the University did not progress this recommendation, with lack of appropriate systems cited as a contributing factor.

The University's self-review activities for this academic audit identified issues with currency of programme information and co-ordination of information about updates to programmes and courses.¹⁰² Having access to current information is a pre-requisite for good quality course advice, whether this is provided in person or online. Other issues the Panel heard with respect to course advice were a difficulty for students in finding the right person to provide advice and the responsiveness of

⁹⁹ SRR, p. 78.

¹⁰⁰ SRR, p. 42.

¹⁰¹ <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/AUT%20Report%20Cycle%205.pdf>, p. 19. (Accessed 10 October 2024.)

¹⁰² SRR, p. 42.

individual members of academic staff to providing advice. These issues lead to advice being sought through informal channels and the University having little oversight over its provision. The University recognises the cost to students of sub-optimal advice that may mean they need to study for longer than the minimum period to complete qualifications or take more courses (and incur more time and cost) than necessary.

Enabling systems that would enable a whole-of university approach to course advice are now in place or planned. These include the CRM, a Curriculum Management System and work on delegations (GS 4). Provision of academic advice is part of the “Whole-of-university service model” goal of Ki Uta Ki Tai.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, the Panel recommends the University pay greater attention to course advice and revisit recommendation 2 from its Cycle 5 academic audit.

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends the University revisit recommendation 2 from its Cycle 5 academic audit and ensure that students are able to access accurate and timely course advice that supports the completion of their qualifications in the least time possible.*

GS 11 Academic complaints appeals and grievances

Academic complaints, appeals and grievances are addressed consistently and equitably. Where appropriate, outcomes of these processes inform improvements.

The Cycle 5 academic audit recommended that the University review “how it communicates its appeals and academic grievance processes to students ...”.¹⁰⁴ The University responded to this recommendation by improving the information available on the University website and in the Learning Management System. Advice on complaints is accessible in the bottom banner of the University’s webpages.¹⁰⁵ A review of the Student Complaints Procedure was initiated in 2023. This resulted in the development of a Student Concerns and Complaints policy, which is being implemented in 2024.¹⁰⁶ The draft policy and procedure were available to the Panel.¹⁰⁷ The (draft) policy includes principles that parties to the complaint will uphold the University’s values of tika, pono and aroha, and act in a way that upholds the principles of Te Aronui, particularly whanaungatanga and manaakitanga.¹⁰⁸

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms the University’s revision of policies and procedures that support student complaints, appeals and grievances in culturally respectful ways.*

The University does report on complaints.¹⁰⁹ Reports include the broad area of the complaint, whether it was investigated, resolved and upheld. Summary information about complainants is also included. These annual reports do not include trends. However, the number of complaints reported at this level is low.

¹⁰³ KD 4, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/AUT%20Report%20Cycle%205.pdf>, p. 39. (Accessed 11 October 2024.)

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-feedback-compliments,-concerns-and-complaints> (Accessed 11 October 2024.)

¹⁰⁶ SRR, pp. 43-44.

¹⁰⁷ SD 47; SD 48.

¹⁰⁸ SD 47.

¹⁰⁹ SD 49; FID 10.

The Panel is satisfied that information on complaints is accessible, and that this includes advice on the support available. It is also satisfied the University reports on complaints at the University level. It heard, however, of inconsistency in approaches between faculties but recognises the University is also alert to this.¹¹⁰ The Panel includes management of academic complaints and appeals in the recommendation it has made on ensuring consistency in GS 4.

GS 12 Learning support

Students have timely and equitable access to appropriate learning support services.

Learning support is available centrally, in faculties and other units including OMA and OPA. Te Mātāpuna Library and Learning Services offers services on all campuses and online including:

- workshops on assignments, writing and presenting, academic integrity and referencing, plus research support and thesis-writing advice for postgraduate students
- individual appointments
- advice on using software including Studiosity and Turnitin.

Other learning support and advice is available on Canvas (LMS) and in faculties. A digital equity project, initiated during COVID-19 and now embedded as standard practice, provides laptops and internet connections for students without these resources.¹¹¹ Faculty-based learning support includes peer mentoring programmes and again the University is considering how peer mentoring might be more consistent as part of Ki Uta Ki Tai.¹¹²

The University has a relatively high proportion of students who are Deaf and disabled people, and this proportion has increased steadily since 2018 to 10.5% undergraduate EFTS in 2023 and 6.5% postgraduate EFTS.¹¹³ The University's Disability Action Plan (DAP) provides further detail, including recognition that the three most common disabilities amongst the University's student are invisible disabilities.¹¹⁴

Disability Support Services (DSS) supports students who are Deaf and disabled people. Students are encouraged to register or contact DSS as early as possible. DSS will make proactive contact with students who have indicated they are Deaf and disabled people in their enrolment materials. The University paid attention to terminology for these students in developing the DAP. Nonetheless, the Panel heard that some students felt that 'Deaf and disabled' was not how they saw themselves and this presented a barrier to engaging with the services and support available.

DSS develops academic accommodation plans for students who are Deaf and disabled people. These include access to adaptive and assistive technologies, personal support in both classroom and work-integrated learning settings and advice (to faculties and publishers) on producing study materials in accessible formats.¹¹⁵ The Panel did hear of some variability in terms of individual experiences, and recognises the University is providing professional development resources for staff across the University

¹¹⁰ SRR, p. 44.

¹¹¹ SRR, p. 45.

¹¹² SRR, p. 46.

¹¹³ SRR, p. 98.

¹¹⁴ KD 5, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ SRR, p. 46.

to help them support students who are Deaf and disabled people. The Panel is pleased to see that course completion rates for students who are Deaf and disabled people are comparable (or slightly better) than for students who are not.¹¹⁶

The University takes a holistic approach to support, meaning that learning support and other services that support health and wellbeing are available through the Student Hub.¹¹⁷ The University is working towards an “an integrated, culturally capable whole-of-University service model” as part of Ki Uta Ki Tai. This will involve use of the CRM so that students only need to “tell their story once”, can be referred to the most appropriate service, and staff can have a complete view of a student’s interactions with support services. The OPA and DSS are already using the CRM in this way.¹¹⁸ While the Panel is impressed with the effective use of the CRM, it is also pleased to hear that students know individual members of staff who will assist them with a range of issues.

Further comment on the University’s holistic approach to student support is made in GS 13.

GS 13 Safety and wellbeing

Student wellbeing is supported through the provision of appropriate pastoral and social support services in safe and inclusive environments.

Te Whare Tapa Whā¹¹⁹ provides guidance for the University’s approach to pastoral care. The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 [the Code] and the DAP provide further direction.¹²⁰ As commented above, the University takes a holistic approach to support for students. However, pastoral care services are predominantly provided through the Student Services and Administration (SSA) division.

Information about resources and services to support wellbeing is available on student health and wellbeing webpages. Following Te Whare Tapa Whā, information is available about resources for physical social, mental and spiritual wellbeing.¹²¹ Domestic students enrolled at the AUT Student Medical Centre have access to free health care and the University can utilise a financial assistance fund to pay for external psychologist and psychiatrist appointments, if necessary.¹²² Clinics are located on each campus. Counselling services are also free for students. Medical and counselling services also provide information on after hours and emergency support.

SSA utilise a “Support to Study” code, together with a UniCare model. These enable University staff to intervene when there are concerns about how a student is (not) managing their health or wellbeing. Together with the CRM, the UniCare model enables a case management approach in which UniCare staff can guide students and coordinate specialist resources and services, as needed. The University employs professional qualified staff with the expertise to be able to undertake these roles.¹²³

¹¹⁶ SRR, p. 46.

¹¹⁷ <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/support-services/student-hub> (Accessed 11 October 2024.)

¹¹⁸ SRR, p. 45.

¹¹⁹ Durie, M. (1994). Whaiora: Maori health development. Oxford University Press.

¹²⁰ SRR, p48.

¹²¹ <https://www.aut.ac.nz/student-life/student-health-and-wellbeing/my-wellbeing> (Accessed 12 October 2024.)

¹²² SRR, p. 49.

¹²³ SRR, p. 49.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for the richness and effectiveness of engagement by Student Services, the Office of Māori Advancement and the Office of Pacific Advancement, in supporting undergraduate student success; and the interconnectedness of and relational approaches used by these services.*

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University's commitment to having professionally qualified staff able to support students' safety and wellbeing.*

Specialist wellbeing resources and services are available for Rainbow students, offshore students and international students. Specially trained staff are also available to respond to allegations and experiences of sexual and physical harm, harassment, bullying and domestic violence.¹²⁴

Physical safety on campuses is supported by the University's Security and Emergency Management Team. This includes CCTV, security guards and a walk to car/bus services. Critical incidents where students are affected align with the requirements of the Code and all incidents are recorded on the CRM.¹²⁵

SSA reports monthly to the Academic Board on provision of services for pastoral care. It also publishes an Annual Impact Report that provides comprehensive information on support available and provided to the University's students. This a further demonstration of the effective use of data and reporting.

¹²⁴ SRR, pp. 49-50.

¹²⁵ SRR, p. 50.

Section C: Curriculum, assessment and delivery

The guideline statements in this section of the audit framework consider the life cycle and key components of curricula and academic delivery, including assessment and academic integrity.

The University offers qualifications from doctoral level to preparation certificates. It is a significant provider of health qualifications, with the Bachelor of Health Science (Nursing) being one of the University's largest enrolment programmes.¹²⁶ A common curriculum architecture (CCA), intended to simplify pathways for students in general undergraduate degrees, was introduced in 2020. Although the CCA was operationalised differently in different faculties, it does still facilitate online information and programme planning for students.

Again, the University has a substantial programme of work underway that is relevant to the guideline statements in this section of the audit framework. As indicated earlier (p. 5), this work includes:

- implementing Te Aronui and Te Kete
- a Long-term Academic and Capital Plan (LTACP) (GS 3)
- developing a new Learning and Teaching Plan and refreshing the University's Graduate Profile (GS 17)
- adopting an academic portfolio management approach, including implementing a curriculum management system (CMS)
- implementing a new assessment policy (GS 18).¹²⁷

GS 14 Programme approval

Programme standards and relevance are maintained through internal course and programme approval processes that meet national (CUAP/NZQF) expectations and, where appropriate, expectations for other jurisdictions.

Programme approval has strategic and academic dimensions. The first step in the programme approval process is the development of a concept proposal. The concept proposal is submitted to the Academic Quality Office for review by an Academic Planning Sub-group.¹²⁸ This is a senior group with strategic oversight over the University's academic portfolio. The University is moving from an approval process centred on individual programmes to one that takes a portfolio approach. The portfolio approach is intended to enact Te Kete and the LTACP and will be supported by the implementation of a CMS.

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms the University's intention to implement a curriculum management system.*

Academic programme approval processes are set out in policies and procedures. These were due for review in 2021 and indicated as being under review in the SRR.¹²⁹ In the interim, the University has added capacity (a Senior Curriculum Advisor role) to help address issues of consistency with proposals

¹²⁶ SRR, p. 13.

¹²⁷ SRR, p. 53.

¹²⁸ SD 68, p. 2.

¹²⁹ SRR, p. 107.

being submitted to the Programme Approval and Review Committee (PARC) of Academic Board.¹³⁰ Membership of PARC includes Associate Deans (Academic), representatives from OMA, OPA, the Office of Learning, Teaching and Educational Design (LTED), and strategy and planning.¹³¹

The Panel sees good practice in the University's programme approval processes. Proposals that involve collaboration with other institutions must include information on due diligence and risk mitigation. Approval panels, including external industry/employer and academic representatives, are established for new qualifications (and significant modifications to existing qualifications). These provide feedback on the draft proposal before it is submitted to PARC.¹³² The number of proposals (excluding deletions) the University has submitted to the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) since its last academic audit ranges from a high of 27 in 2018 to a low of 6 in 2022.¹³³

The development of a community of practice and a SharePoint site with exemplar materials are further initiatives to improve consistency and share good practice across the University. The redevelopment of policies and procedures is also expected to assist.¹³⁴ However, this is a further area for attention with respect to the recommendation made in GS 4 (p. 13).

One of the goals of the common curriculum architecture was to strengthen mātauranga Māori in curricula. Te Aronui provides an enabling framework for further development and Aronui Ora will support capability building, at least to some extent. The Panel read and heard of examples where te ao Māori and kaupapa Māori had been instrumental in curriculum development, for example the Mahi Tahi course and examples in postgraduate courses.¹³⁵ It also heard of the need for caution to ensure that these developments were respectful and authentic (tika), but overall support and optimism for this direction. Further, the Panel heard of the need for more Māori staff to build capacity and capability (see GS 23).

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University's commitment to developing culturally responsive curricula.*

The Panel heard less about how Pacific knowledges and methodologies were reflected in curricula. Capacity is also a challenge here, but the proportion of students who are Pacific people and the recognition of the University's location in the Pacific leads the Panel to recommend that the contribution of Pacific voices to formal curriculum development, approval and review (see GS 16) processes be better supported.

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends the University strengthen the contributions of Pacific voices to formal curriculum development, approval and review processes.*

¹³⁰ SRR, p. 54.

¹³¹ <https://autuni.sharepoint.com/sites/Tuia/SitePages/Programme-Approval-Review-Committee.aspx> (Internal document) (accessed 12 October 2024.)

¹³² SRR, p. 54.

¹³³ SRR, pp. 110-115.

¹³⁴ SRR, p. 54.

¹³⁵ SRR, p. 55.

GS 15 Course/paper and programme monitoring

The quality of academic programmes and courses/papers is assured and enhanced through ongoing monitoring and academic management.

Requirements for monitoring academic programmes are set out in a Monitoring and Review of Programmes policy.¹³⁶ This was reviewed in October 2023. Annual programme reports are submitted to faculty Boards of Studies.¹³⁷ Monitoring is the responsibility of faculty Boards of Studies and Assessment Boards. The University has recently reviewed the responsibilities of these Boards and made recommendations to improve consistency of practice.¹³⁸

Data to inform monitoring comes from Annual Programme Surveys and course and teaching evaluations. The University has threshold indicators to identify when attention needs to be paid to a course or programme. Student achievement is also monitored (as part of Ki Uta Ki Tai), and a dashboard has been developed to allow longitudinal monitoring and monitoring of priority learner groups.¹³⁹ Other data are available from professional accreditation processes, advisory committees and a Graduate Destination Survey.

The University is developing a new annual reporting framework and has identified an enhancement initiative to “review its learning and teaching reporting to ensure that data related to student achievement, course and programme performance and curricula are accessible and centrally reported and that monitoring processes identify actionable information for academic leaders to support decision-making and continuous improvement”.¹⁴⁰ The Panel affirms this initiative.

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms the University’s enhancement initiative to review its learning and teaching reporting to ensure that data related to student achievement, course and programme performance, and curricula are accessible and centrally reported and that monitoring processes identify actionable information for academic leaders to support decision-making and continuous improvement.*

The Panel has already affirmed a university enhancement initiative that includes responding to student feedback and ‘closing the loop’. This is also relevant here.

The Panel heard that the new reporting framework is also intended to improve practice and academic engagement with programme and course monitoring. It will also contribute to the planned academic quality framework (p. 9).

¹³⁶ SRR, p. 56; SD 77.

¹³⁷ SD 77.

¹³⁸ SRR, p. 56.

¹³⁹ SRR, pp. 56-57.

¹⁴⁰ SRR, p. 57.

GS 16 Review

Curriculum relevance and quality is assured and enhanced through regular reviews of programmes and courses/papers, which include input from students, staff and other stakeholders.

The Monitoring and Review of Programmes policy also sets out requirements for programme review.¹⁴¹ These are supported by Programme Review procedures.¹⁴² Faculty Boards of Studies are responsible for ensuring programme review policies and procedures are followed, although the Academic Quality Office has oversight over review schedules and PARC receives programme review reports and monitors implementation plans.¹⁴³

The first review of a new programme is its Graduating Year Review (GYR). Programmes are reviewed against their original proposal to ensure they are meeting intended objectives and outcomes for graduates. The review panel includes a student member and an external member.¹⁴⁴

Following a successful GYR, programmes are subsequently subject to periodic review. A template guides the requirements for a self-review and includes links to the data dashboards to be used. The process and requirements are updated regularly to ensure they remain consistent with other University priorities, for example Te Aronui and Te Kete, and good practice. Good practice includes steps to improve consistency (See GS 4), efforts to ensure review panels include members who can bring Māori perspectives and Pacific perspectives (recognising the challenges of imposing a further load on these individuals), monitoring implementation plans, and development of thematic summaries of programme reviews. Together with the procedures and scope (terms of reference) for periodic reviews, these practices contribute to an evidence-informed, comprehensive and responsive programme review process.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for its evidence-informed, comprehensive and responsive programme review process.*

GS 17 Graduate profile

Students are aware of and have the opportunity to achieve the intended attributes in graduate profiles and course/paper learning outcomes.

The University's current graduate profile—'Care, Question and Act'—was approved in 2018.¹⁴⁵ Each qualification also has a graduate profile and programme proposals need to include a 'map' showing how learning outcomes for core and compulsory courses contribute to the graduate profile.¹⁴⁶ Programme-

¹⁴¹ SRR, p. 58; SD 77.

¹⁴² SD 83.

¹⁴³ SD 77.

¹⁴⁴ SRR, p. 58.

¹⁴⁵ SRR, p. 52.

¹⁴⁶ SRR, p. 54.

level graduate profiles are published on the University website, as part of course information for students.¹⁴⁷

The University considers that awareness of both the University Graduate Profile and programme-level graduate profiles is low, particularly among students. The Panel did hear references to the role of the qualification/graduate profile as an organising tool for curriculum design. This no doubt reflects the work the University has undertaken to implement the CCA and the inclusion of course learning outcomes on Canvas sites.¹⁴⁸

The University has identified an enhancement initiative to review and update its University Graduate Profile to align it with Te Aronui and Te Kete. The Panel explored how the issue of low awareness would be addressed in the development of a new graduate profile. It is reassured to hear that a strongly engagement-based process is anticipated. The high level of awareness and commitment to Te Aronui will also be helpful in this process.

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms the University's intention to redevelop its graduate profile to align with Te Aronui and Te Kete.*

GS 18 Assessment

Assessment is appropriate and effective.

New assessment principles, policy and procedures were approved in June 2024.¹⁴⁹ The principles, policy and procedures are comprehensive and reflect University and international contexts with both Te Aronui and international literature guiding their development.¹⁵⁰ They also address current issues including the potential use and misuse of Gen-AI. An assessment policy implementation project, supported by LTED and the TMO, is underway.¹⁵¹

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University's development of assessment principles, policy and procedures and the assessment policy implementation project.*

As with other academic matters, faculty Boards of Studies are responsible for the quality of assessment and faculty Assessment Boards are responsible for determining final grades. However, the University has a range of mechanisms that provide oversight over the appropriateness and effectiveness of assessment. They include:

- course development and course change approval processes
- reports to Assessment Boards
- Assessment Board reviews of results
- periodic programme review and accreditation processes
- student feedback through course evaluations and student membership of academic committees

¹⁴⁷ SRR, p. 59.

¹⁴⁸ SRR, p. 59.

¹⁴⁹ FID 2.

¹⁵⁰ SRR, p. 61.

¹⁵¹ FID 3.

- Annual programme surveys.¹⁵²

Although the Panel heard of some issues of consistency of practice, it considers these can be addressed through the academic policy implementation project and that the University is adopting a realistic timeline to achieve this.

The University is seeking to reduce the volume of assessment and make greater use of programme-level assessment. A reduction in the use of final examinations over the COVID-19 period does not appear to have been sustained, although it is lower than before COVID-19. However, the Panel understands that the University is focusing on ‘authentic’ assessment, rather than the form of assessment, *per se*.

The assessment policy provides for both special consideration and academic accommodation plans. The number of requests for special consideration more than doubled over the 2020-2022 COVID-19 period.¹⁵³ The University also analyses patterns of requests for special consideration at the individual level and SSA may intervene where a pattern of requests emerges. This is a further example of the effective use of good quality data commended in GS 1. The Panel heard that academic accommodation plans developed with DSS (GS 12) mostly worked well, although again there were some differences in support across the University. Assessment matters that may not be covered by accommodation plans, such as changing timeframes or timely availability of feedback, also have an impact on disabled students’ ability to undertake assessment equitably. The impact of changes to assessment on disabled students should be considered by academic staff and accommodation plans revised if necessary.

The University seeks student feedback on the fairness and appropriateness of assessment in its Annual Programme Survey. Although the response rate for this survey has declined, satisfaction with fairness and appropriateness of assessment has remained fairly consistent, including over the COVID-19 period.¹⁵⁴ The Panel is pleased to see that the University does undertake further analysis of students who are not satisfied with the fairness or appropriateness of assessment.¹⁵⁵ This should help prioritise any required enhancements to assessment practice.

GS 19 Assessment standards

Assessment and outcome standards are appropriately set and moderated.

Requirements for moderation of assessment are set out in the Assessment Policy and Procedures. Pre-moderation and post-moderation are both defined in the Assessment Policy. Marks must be moderated before assessments are returned to students.¹⁵⁶

Faculty Boards of Studies are responsible for ensuring moderation occurs and is reported and that assessment standards are applied consistently, both over time and in line with national and

¹⁵² SRR, p. 62.

¹⁵³ SRR, p. 47.

¹⁵⁴ SRR, p. 62.

¹⁵⁵ FI, pp. 13-14.

¹⁵⁶ FID 2.

international equivalent programmes.¹⁵⁷ The Panel saw evidence that Boards of Studies did consider moderation of results.¹⁵⁸

Most moderation is internal. However, professionally accredited programmes are subject to external moderation processes and taught postgraduate courses must be moderated on a three-year cycle.¹⁵⁹

The Panel considers that the University's moderation of assessment standards is consistent with good practice.

GS 20 Academic integrity

Universities promote and ensure academic integrity and demonstrate fairness, equity and consistency in addressing concerns.

The University has a comprehensive approach to academic integrity that includes education, prevention, detection, response and reporting. It also remains abreast of current practices and developments in technology.

Education for students about academic integrity includes information being made available on websites, at orientation and incorporating academic integrity modules into first-year courses. The University has also run awareness campaigns across social media, the AUT app, posters and digital screens.¹⁶⁰ Additional resources are available for postgraduate research students.¹⁶¹

An Academic Integrity Community of Practice meets several times a year and has contributed to the development and consolidation of information for staff. This includes information on Gen-AI, the University's position on Gen-AI, and Gen-AI and assessment. While the Panel is impressed with the resources that have been developed, it did hear of differences across the University in the advice provided to students on the use of Gen-AI. Addressing these inconsistencies is included in the recommendation made in GS 4.

The Assessment Policy includes a provision that assessment design will support academic integrity.¹⁶² It also acknowledges the realities of the impact that Gen-AI is having on and will continue to have on assessment practices. The Panel is pleased to see the attention the University is paying to Gen-AI.

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms the University's approach to understanding the impact Generative Artificial Intelligence is having on learning and teaching.*

Processes to investigate and respond to suspected breaches of academic integrity are set out in the Academic Integrity Procedures and Guidelines (which are being updated to align with the Assessment Policy).¹⁶³ Suspected breaches of academic integrity are referred to Academic Integrity Officer. Academic Integrity Officers in each faculty have delegated authority for investigating, assessing and

¹⁵⁷ FID 2.

¹⁵⁸ FI, p. 14.

¹⁵⁹ SRR, p. 63.

¹⁶⁰ SRR, p. 64.

¹⁶¹ SRR, p. 65.

¹⁶² FID 2.

¹⁶³ SRR, p. 66.

imposing a response in minor cases. Subsequent or major breaches are referred to a Faculty Disciplinary Committee.¹⁶⁴ In practice, the Panel heard of a lack of consistency in treatment of academic integrity matters across the University. While it has already commented on variability (GS 4), this is an aspect of inconsistency that should be addressed as a priority.

All cases where a breach is determined to have occurred are recorded on a University-wide Academic Integrity Database, along with the outcome of the case.¹⁶⁵ The University's Learning and Teaching Committee receives reports on breaches of academic integrity.

GS 21 Assessment in te reo Māori

Assessment in te reo Māori, where appropriate, is facilitated by the university.

The University's General Academic Regulations and the Assessment Policy both provide for students to be able to undertake assessment in te reo Māori. Postgraduate research theses and doctoral oral examinations may also be submitted and undertaken in te reo Māori. The detailed guidance documents for assessment and examination in te reo Māori are under review following the adoption of Te Aronui and work on a Te Reo Māori policy for the University.¹⁶⁶

The Assessment policy requires students to be able to demonstrate a standard of academic literacy in te reo Māori and for an appropriate assessor to be available.¹⁶⁷ The Panel did hear of examples where students were able to complete their assessments in te reo Māori. However, it also heard that capacity and capability to assess in te reo Māori were 'stretched'.

Increasing numbers of school leavers from kura kaupapaa are entering University with greater competency in te reo Māori. Other initiatives the Panel heard of, including the development of programmes designed to be taught (and assessed) in te reo Māori and the ongoing and wider enactment of Te Aronui in curricula, will increase demand for assessment in te reo Māori further.

The University does have initiatives underway to build capacity, but the Panel heard of an increasing gap between demand and the University's capacity to match that demand. Further work is required to monitor demand and build capacity and capability for assessment in te reo Māori. This capacity and capability building is also needed to support Māori postgraduate research students, including those who wish to complete their theses in te reo Māori.

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends the University increase capacity and capability to undertake assessment and supervision in te reo Māori.*

¹⁶⁴ SRR, p. 66.

¹⁶⁵ SRR, p. 66.

¹⁶⁶ SRR, p. 67.

¹⁶⁷ FID 2.

Section D: Teaching quality

This section of the audit framework focuses on teachers and teaching. The enacting of Te Aronui has implications for how staff are recruited, inducted and developed, and how the quality of their teaching is assessed and recognised.

The University's staffing complement had remained relatively stable from 2018 to 2022 but dropped by 7% in 2023, because of the Financial Recovery Programme.¹⁶⁸ In 2023, 8% of academic staff were Māori (3% of senior academic staff). The comparable proportions for Pacific staff were 5% of academic staff and 2% of senior academic staff. The percentage of academic staff who are permanent staff has dropped slightly (from 79% to 77%). However, the numbers and percentage of casual academic staff have increased from 99 (8%) in 2018 to 131 (12%) in 2023.¹⁶⁹

GS 22 Staff recruitment

All staff who teach or supervise, or support teaching or supervision, are appropriately qualified and experienced (including in research as appropriate to role) upon appointment.

Staff recruitment is governed by a Recruitment policy, supported by Recruitment procedures.¹⁷⁰ The policy includes the University's intent to "proactively seek out diverse talent from underrepresented target diversity groups".¹⁷¹ These are defined as Māori, Pacific, people with disabilities/deafness, women in areas/roles where they are underrepresented and LGBTIQ+ people.¹⁷² The Group Director of People and Culture has overall responsibility for compliance with appointment procedures. The policy and procedures refer to 'authorising' and 'hiring' managers as having responsibilities for operational recruitment and selection decisions, but does not define these roles. However, Heads of School or Department are mainly responsible for recruiting academic staff.¹⁷³

Percentages of staff who are Māori and/or who are Pacific people lag the respective proportions of the student body. The University has established the Eke Tangaroa programme with the aim of increasing these proportions. Eke Tangaroa provides additional funding to faculties to support the recruitment of early career Māori and Pacific academic staff and support for these staff to establish their academic, particularly research, careers.¹⁷⁴

Eke Tangaroa is a valuable initiative, However, the University's requirements for Māori capability extend beyond early career staff. Giving effect to Te Aronui in curriculum, assessment, supervision and student support will also require the leadership of more senior staff. Shortfalls in capacity are uneven across the University and the Panel did hear of instances where Māori staff were the only or first Māori in their departments or schools. The recommendation made with respect to GS 21 should also contribute to these requirements.

¹⁶⁸ SRR, p. 11, p. 104.

¹⁶⁹ SRR, p. 105.

¹⁷⁰ SRR, p. 68.

¹⁷¹ SD 100.

¹⁷² SD 101.

¹⁷³ SRR, p. 69.

¹⁷⁴ SRR, p. 11.

The Panel heard the commitment to recruit Māori and Pacific staff reflected in the discussions it held and that the University was prepared to be innovative, beyond Eke Tangaroa, to recruit these staff. They also heard that high demand for Māori and Pacific staff made both recruitment and retention challenging. Nonetheless, the Panel is impressed with the University's commitment to recruiting more Māori staff and Pacific staff and the development of the Eke Tangaroa programme to support this.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University's initiatives to recruit staff from under-represented groups and in particular the development of the Eke Tangaroa programme.*

The Panel also heard the University was developing other initiatives, in response to Te Kete, to increase the recruitment and retention of Pacific staff. The Pacific Plan is expected to support this further. The Panel affirms the development of the Pacific Plan that will support capacity and capability building for teaching and research supervision for Pacific students.

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms development of a Pacific Plan that will support capacity and capability building for teaching and research supervision for Pacific students.*

GS 23 Induction and ongoing expectations

New staff who teach or supervise, or support teaching or supervision, become familiar with academic policies and expectations of the university through effective induction processes, and the university has processes to enable all staff to maintain currency with academic policies and expectations.

The Cycle 5 academic audit of the University recommended the "University reviews its objectives and processes for inducting all new academic staff, whether permanent, fixed-term or casual, and develops a framework which will foster consistent practice ...". The University indicated this recommendation was addressed through its Academic Expectations and professional learning frameworks.¹⁷⁵ As noted below, these are both now due for review again.

Induction processes include all of University and local components. The University orientation is a one-and-a-half day 'Brilliant Beginnings' event for all new staff (irrespective of the campus they are based on), including fixed-term and part-time staff. It includes a pōwhiri held on the Ngā Wai o Horotiu marae, a welcome and University overview from the Vice-Chancellor, and sessions on Te Kete, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, diversity, the Code, research strategy and support, and learning and teaching strategy and support.¹⁷⁶

Two sets of modules that contextualise teaching at the University are offered by LTED for new teaching staff as part of induction. These modules have been redeveloped recently and are offered multiple times a year as synchronous online courses.¹⁷⁷ Participant feedback indicates they find these sessions useful.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ SRR, p. 116.

¹⁷⁶ SRR, p. 69.

¹⁷⁷ SRR, p. 70.

¹⁷⁸ FI, p. 16.

Ongoing expectations for academic staff are outlined in the Academic Expectations framework¹⁷⁹ and the University has identified an enhancement initiative to review this framework again to ensure it aligns Te Kete, Rautaki Rangahau and the (to be revised) Learning and Teaching Plan.¹⁸⁰ While the Panel endorses this enhancement initiative, it notes that it is contingent on the revision of the Learning and Teaching Plan, which is a significant piece of work.

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms the University's intention to redevelop its Academic Expectations framework.*

Local induction processes are guided by University resources.¹⁸¹ The Panel heard of mixed experiences, reflecting the different pathways through which staff joined the University. Those with prior experience of the University found processes to be less formal. Staff who are part of the Eke Tangaroa initiative have access to additional resources and support. The Panel also heard of variability in induction experiences among those taking on Head of School/Department roles.

GS 24 Teaching development

Staff who teach or supervise, or support teaching or supervision, are supported to take up opportunities to develop their practice, including the use of innovative pedagogy and new technologies.

The Cycle 5 academic audit recommended that the University “review and centrally coordinate” its teaching development activities. The University did this through the development of a Professional Learning framework, which supported the expectation in the Academic Expectations framework that all academic staff undertake professional learning to support their teaching practice.¹⁸²

Teaching development is mainly provided through LTED. A new service model for LTED was developed following the implementation of Canvas (see GS 3). The enables LTED’s work to be strategically aligned with University priorities—for example, the implementation of the assessment policy—and also respond to emerging needs such as Gen-AI. Other emerging needs are identified through the analysis of service tickets.

In addition to the programmes for new academic staff, LTED also:

- delivers sessions on technology-enhanced educational practice, academic practice sessions and a Global Perspective series
- supports course development and review
- holds a three-day Learning and Teaching Symposium
- provides in-person consultations on all campuses
- provides online resources.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ SD 107.

¹⁸⁰ SRR, p. 74.

¹⁸¹ SRR, p. 69.

¹⁸² SRR, p. 140.

¹⁸³ SRR, pp. 72-73.

LTED tracks the numbers of sessions it holds and attendees. It also endeavours to assess impact but acknowledges that this is a difficult task. The Panel is impressed with the range of activities, strategic orientation and responsiveness of LTED to support teaching development.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the work of the Office of Learning, Teaching and Educational Design in supporting teaching development across the University.*

While LTED (and some faculties) offer professional development for teaching, line managers (Heads of School/Department) are responsible for supporting staff to engage in these opportunities. Support can include encouragement and making time available. As part of their annual plan, staff are expected to identify at least three professional development activities to undertake in the upcoming year. A total figure of fewer than 700 attendances at LTED sessions for the first nine months of 2023 suggests that academic FTE are not engaging at the expected rate. The Panel encourages the University to reinforce the expectation to engage in professional development of teaching practice and monitor this engagement. The redevelopment of the professional learning framework should support this.

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends the University encourage and monitor engagement in professional development for teaching and update its Professional Learning framework.*

The Panel heard frequent mention of Aronui Ora as professional development that will inform culturally responsive teaching, curriculum development and assessment. Aronui Ora is the University's cultural capability development programme that supports implementation of Te Aronui and builds understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.¹⁸⁴ It seems to the Panel that this work is gaining significant traction across the University. However, it also cautions that, while Aronui Ora builds cultural competency, there is also a potential issue that it contributes to increased load on Māori and Pacific staff as other staff wish to engage in culturally responsive teaching.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the development and roll-out of Aronui Ora.*

GS 25 Teaching quality

The quality of all teaching is appropriate and is enhanced by feedback and other processes. Quality shortfalls are addressed proactively, constructively and consistently.

Expectations of teaching quality are set out in employment agreements, the Academic Expectations framework (review planned, see GS 23), and promotions, progression and professional development processes. The Promotions policy and procedures were reviewed in 2022.¹⁸⁵

Teaching quality is assessed through a range of processes.¹⁸⁶ The more direct processes include student evaluations of teaching through Student Paper Experience Questionnaires (SPEQS) and Annual Programme surveys, and annual planning, promotions and progression processes for individual staff. Less direct processes include student achievement, moderation, review and accreditation processes.

¹⁸⁴ SRR, p. 74.

¹⁸⁵ SRR, p. 25.

¹⁸⁶ SRR, p. 75.

Teaching SPEQS are confidential to the individual teacher but may be requested by the Head of School/Department and are required in promotions applications. The University uses its Annual Programme survey to report overall levels of students who are satisfied with teaching quality. These have remained fairly stable over the last four years. Again, the University undertakes further analyses of students who are less satisfied with teaching quality.

Faculty-level reports and SPEQs can be used to identify where any issues of teaching quality may require attention. Teaching quality issues can also be signalled through student members on academic committee and the concerns and complaints process. Responses to any shortfalls in teaching quality are addressed by the Head of School/Department. This would involve a discussion of the issues, followed, if necessary, by a plan for improvement.¹⁸⁷ Plans for addressing shortfalls in teaching quality are monitored by faculty Boards of Studies.

The availability of integrated data for teaching quality is not as well developed as student-focused data.¹⁸⁸ However, the Panel is satisfied that the University's processes for monitoring and responding to any shortfalls in teaching quality are in line with commonly accepted practices. The connection to university-level promotions processes helps give confidence of consistent treatment across the University.

GS 26 Teaching recognition

High-quality teaching is recognised and rewarded.

As this report notes above (GS 25), teaching is recognised through progression and promotions processes. SPEQs are a required element of an application for promotion. The Panel notes that supervision is included in the teaching criteria for promotions and in the research expectations in the Academic Expectations framework.

Workshops are available to provide information to those applying for promotion. The Panel heard that Māori and Pacific applicants also had advice from both informal networks and as part of Eke Tangaroa.

The Panel is also pleased to see that the University has established an option for Māori staff applying for promotion to Professor and Associate Professor to have their applications considered by Te Kāhui.¹⁸⁹ Te Kāhui includes members of the Māori Professoriate at the University, an external Māori Professor and a mana whenua representative. The Panel considers this option will enhance opportunities for promotion to senior academic positions for Māori, who are under-represented at these levels.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the establishment of Te Kāhui and the availability of other advice to support promotion opportunities for Māori, particularly to senior academic appointments.*

The PVC Pacific holds career progression workshops for Pacific staff. However, the Panel heard comment that Pacific research and methodologies were not perceived to be valued, particularly in

¹⁸⁷ SRR, p. 76.

¹⁸⁸ SRR, p. 76.

¹⁸⁹ SRR, p. 76.

faculties with low numbers of Pacific staff. Again, the development of a Pacific Plan is expected to help address these issues (GS 22).

Teaching quality is also recognised through excellence awards. Awards for teaching are made at faculty or division and University levels. The University awards were reviewed in 2023 and align recognition of teaching excellence with Te Aronui.¹⁹⁰ The University has not recently had much engagement with the national Te Whatu Kairangi awards for teaching excellence but expects this to change in the future.

¹⁹⁰ SRR, p. 77.

Section E: Supervision of postgraduate research students

Undertaking research is a defining characteristic of New Zealand universities. Postgraduate research students are, therefore, specifically considered in this section of the academic audit framework.

The University's Research Plan—Rautaki Rangahau—sets the strategic context for postgraduate research students at the University. Its objectives are to:

- recognise and support PGR students as important members of [the University's] research community and build capabilities for postgraduate research supervision
- establish a dedicated Researcher Education and Development Unit (Te Kura Hāpai Rangahau)
- simplify and improve the research support environment, including ethics processes, [and] postgraduate research support
- support Māori and Pacific students to undertake postgraduate research studies.¹⁹¹

The Panel is pleased to see the ways in which Rautaki Rangahau reflects Te Aronui and addresses postgraduate research students and supervision.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for the ways Rautaki Rangahau reflects Te Aronui and addresses postgraduate research students and supervision.*

As noted in the Introduction to this report (p. 2), the student profile of the University has shifted towards increasing numbers of postgraduate students since the Cycle 5 academic audit of the University. The University provided detailed data on its doctoral students but did not separate out research Master's students. It is likely, however, that doctoral enrolments were affected by COVID-19 as their numbers dropped in 2020, although overall have risen from 743 EFTS in 2018 to 769 EFTS in 2023.¹⁹² The distribution of doctoral students is uneven across the university with the faculties of Design and Creative Technologies and Health and Environmental Sciences together accounting for over 75% of enrolments. Most (78%) of PhD students are aged over 30.¹⁹³ Forty-three per cent of 2023 doctoral EFTS are international students.¹⁹⁴

Responsibilities for postgraduate research students are split between faculties and the Graduate Research School (GRS) with oversight from the University Postgraduate Research Board (UPRB). The UPRB has responsibilities for:

- policies for enhancing quality and standards in postgraduate research programmes
- oversight of the University's strategy for promoting and providing postgraduate research programmes
- monitoring resources, facilities and systems for postgraduate research students and supervisors
- acting as an Assessment Board and monitoring and reporting on the MPhil and doctoral programmes.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹¹ SRR, p. 78.

¹⁹² SRR, p. 102.

¹⁹³ FID 22, p. 19.

¹⁹⁴ SRR, p. 102.

¹⁹⁵ SRR, p. 79.

A Postgraduate Research Student Advisory Group provides advice from students to the UPRB. This advice includes both feedback and identification of issues for development. At present there are five student representatives who can raise issues on a bi-monthly basis and are expected to report at least once per semester to the doctoral students generally.¹⁹⁶ The Group is also a mechanism for the Dean of the GRS to communicate directly with students. Postgraduate research students from each faculty are represented and the Group also includes some research Master's students.¹⁹⁷

The policy framework, requirements, processes and resources for postgraduate research students are set out in a comprehensive Postgraduate Handbook. It provides advice for students, supervisors and examiners.¹⁹⁸ The Panel is impressed with the Handbook, which provides a compendium of up-to-date information for postgraduates undertaking research including material on support and resources for research students, supervision, progression and research ethics. The Handbook also covers information for doctoral, Master's and Honour's examinations, and information on key boards and committees involved at various stages of students' candidatures.¹⁹⁹

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for providing in its Postgraduate Handbook comprehensive up-to-date information to support students undertaking research.*

The Graduate Research School (GRS) manages the admission and enrolment of doctoral and MPhil students and administers examination processes for theses and some dissertations. It also provides training and workshops for students and supervisors.²⁰⁰ However, the Panel is not clear that the GRS is in a position to manage and respond to students' expectations and lived experiences across the University where students are placed in faculties with varying resources and approaches to supporting research students. It recommends that, in its planned work on delegations, the University review whether the GRS has the appropriate delegations to be able to manage and intervene, if necessary, in the experience for postgraduate research students.

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends that the University review whether delegations are appropriate and adequate to allow the Graduate Research School to manage its responsibilities for postgraduate research students across the University.*

The University is implementing online systems to manage postgraduate research student administration and reporting, which will contribute to streamlining of these processes.

GS 27 Supervision quality

The quality of postgraduate research supervision is ensured.

The GRS maintains a Register of supervisors. Supervisors must complete an introductory supervisor training course before they can be appointed to the Register and first-time supervisors also require a mentor. The introductory supervisor training modules include cultural competence and awareness of

¹⁹⁶ <https://www.aut.ac.nz/research/postgraduate-student-support/student-community/doctoral-student-advisory-group-representatives> (Accessed 8 November 2024.)

¹⁹⁷ SRR, p. 80.

¹⁹⁸ FID 23.

¹⁹⁹ SD 117

²⁰⁰ SRR, p. 79.

the Code. Supervisors also need to comply with a Supervision Code of Conduct. Ongoing supervisor development is available through Supervisor Forums.²⁰¹

The supervisor forums are part of a series of initiatives implemented since the Cycle 5 academic audit of the University to strengthen support for supervisors. The other initiatives, which collectively form a 'supervision toolbox', are:

- a supervision agreement that must be agreed between the student and their supervisor(s)
- a doctoral exit survey
- a supervision feedback survey tool.²⁰²

The Panel is impressed with the range and quality of supervision training available at the University and the participation rate of supervisors, with approximately 3000 places filled since mid-2023 alone.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the training and other supports available for postgraduate research supervisors.*

However, the Panel is less clear how ongoing currency with meeting supervision requirements is monitored. It heard it was unusual for supervisors to be removed from the Register, once appointed. It is not convinced that the intended online annual verification process will provide sufficient information to determine whether registration should be maintained. The Panel also encountered low awareness of the Register among some of the groups it met with.

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends the University raise the profile of the Register of Supervisors and consider whether requirements for maintaining registration as a research student supervisor are adequate.*

The University seeks feedback on supervision through progress reporting (GS 29), a survey tool on the University website for giving feedback or making a complaint, and a doctoral exit survey.²⁰³ Numbers of responses to the exit survey are low and the results need to be treated with caution. However, results indicate there is room for improvement in how the supervision agreements work and students knowing how to address any issues or disagreements in supervisory relationships.²⁰⁴ This is consistent with comments heard by the Panel that some postgraduate research students were unclear about how to raise issues or concerns, particularly the potential role of GRS as a source of assistance.

The GRS monitors any changes in supervision arrangements. The Panel heard that although the composition of supervision teams is designed to mitigate disruption, the impacts of the University's Financial Recovery Programme meant that it had been more difficult to maintain continuity of supervision for some students.

Increasing numbers of Māori students enrolled in postgraduate research programmes have affected the University's capacity to provide appropriate supervision. The Panel heard of innovative responses to the challenge and provision of impactful supervision practice. This included developing capacity to supervise in te reo Māori, particularly in Te Ipukārea.

²⁰¹ SRR, pp. 80-81.

²⁰² SRR, p. 81.

²⁰³ SRR, p. 81.

²⁰⁴ SD 16, p. 23.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for supporting innovative and impactful supervision practices, such as those found in Te Ipukārea.*

Nonetheless, the Panel also heard of challenges in having enough culturally competent supervisors available, and those who were available were carrying large supervision loads. The Panel has already recommended the University continue to work to increase its capacity and capability to supervise in te reo Māori (GS 21).

The enrolment of increasing numbers of Pacific students in postgraduate research programmes also has implications for supervision. More supervisors with expertise in Pacific languages and methodologies are needed. The Panel has affirmed the development of a Pacific Plan that will support capacity and capability building for teaching and research supervision for Pacific students (GS 22).

GS 28 Resourcing of postgraduate research students

Postgraduate research students are appropriately resourced and supported to undertake their research.

Students need to identify resources at different stages of their candidature—in the research proposal, in admission forms and at the point of confirmation. The Handbook includes a section on the support and resources available for postgraduate research students.

Postgraduate research students also have access to resources and workshops to help them develop as researchers. Activities and resources include:

- a postgraduate orientation and induction programme²⁰⁵
- a research blog—Thesislink—which provides resources and tips
- a monthly newsletter and weekly emails on upcoming events
- access to LTED teaching development workshops
- an annual postgraduate symposium, with opportunities to publish in Rangahau Aranga: AUT Graduate Review online journal
- advice on human ethic applications
- Shut Up and Write sessions
- MAI ki Aronui wānanga, workshops and networking opportunities for Māori and Indigenous postgraduate research students
- pastoral and social events, including postgraduate mental health and wellness sessions.²⁰⁶

Scholarships are an important source of support for postgraduate research students. Over 200 students are funded annually by faculty scholarships and up to 30 Vice-Chancellor’s Doctoral scholarships are offered annually. The stipend for university doctoral scholarships has recently been increased and will be CPI-adjusted for holders in subsequent years.²⁰⁷

The GRS is responsible for monitoring access to minimum resources. It utilises a series of survey reports, annual programme reporting and student progress reports to undertake this task. These are valuable

²⁰⁵ SRR, p. 84.

²⁰⁶ SRR, p. 83.

²⁰⁷ SRR, p. 82.

sources of information but may not be sufficiently responsive to allow resourcing and support issues to be resolved in a timely way. The Panel heard of issues of lack of support, changes to workspaces, and feelings of being not valued. There are marked differences in the numbers of postgraduate research students between faculties and this affects the postgraduate research cultures that students experience. Postgraduate research students are both current and future academic colleagues and the Panel considers there is a need to reinforce a duty of care and respectful support for these future colleagues across the University.

Recommendation: *The Panel **recommends** that the University reinforce the need for respectful support and manifesting a duty of care for postgraduate research students across the University.*

The University has recently introduced provisions for part-time study for postgraduate research students. The Panel heard that the intention is to pro-rate resource expectations for part-time students. It considers this might be appropriate for some resources, but not so for others. It encourages the University to consider the resource requirements of part-time postgraduate research students thoughtfully.

The Panel also heard of uneven experiences of resources and support across the University, although there is a Statement of Minimum Resources to be made available through the faculties. This is a further area to be addressed in the recommendation on consistency of academic decision-making across the University (see GS 4).

GS 29 Postgraduate research student progress

Student progress and achievement is monitored and supported through consistent and clear academic advice, and guidance for students on completion of requirements.

Postgraduate research students need to submit a progress report every six to twelve months, as specified in the supervision agreement. The University is aware of inconsistency of practice and anticipates the move to online systems will improve consistency of (and compliance with) progress reporting requirements. Progress reports are monitored through faculty processes with 'more serious' issues being elevated to the GRS or UPRB.²⁰⁸

Where issues with academic progress are identified, a Specific Progress Plan is developed in conjunction with the Associate Dean Postgraduate in the faculty. The default review period is three months.²⁰⁹ This is intended to ensure that issues are resolved in a timely manner and the student is able to progress.

Doctoral and MPhil student progress is reported monthly to the Academic Board via the UPRB and Programme Annual reports (see GS 15) are produced for the PhD, MPhil, Doctor of Education and Doctor of Health Sciences programmes.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ SRR, p. 84.

²⁰⁹ SRR, p. 84.

²¹⁰ SRR, pp. 78-79.

GS 30 Thesis examination

Thesis standards are assured through examination processes that are nationally and internationally benchmarked.

The Postgraduate Handbook provides the procedures for thesis examination, including procedures for *practice-oriented* research. Doctoral theses are examined by two external examiners, including one international examiner, unless by special permission. There are special considerations for the appointment of examiners for practice-oriented research.²¹¹ Special permission may be given for the examination of theses in te reo Māori or theses based on kaupapa Māori methodologies. Examiners must be nominated and meet criteria.²¹²

Convenors are appointed to manage doctoral examination processes. All new convenors must attend a workshop and observe an oral examination before convening an examination.²¹³

The Panel considers the thesis examination processes conform with normally accepted practice in Aotearoa New Zealand, with the addition of provisions for examination in te reo Māori and theses based on kaupapa Māori methodologies.

²¹¹ SD, 117

²¹² SRR, p. 85.

²¹³ SRR, p. 85.

Conclusion

The concluding section of this report first provides an assessment of the underpinning and scope components of the audit framework before summarising the commendations, affirmations and recommendations the Panel has made.

Underpinning and scope components of the audit framework

In addressing the guideline statements in the Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework, universities are expected to reflect:

- University obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- the close interdependence of university research and teaching
- universities' role as critic and conscience of society.²¹⁴

Strong leadership from the Office of Māori Advancement has enabled the University to uphold and advance its Te Tiriti o Waitangi commitments. The Panel sees evidence of proactive steps being taken to enact and embody provisions of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. These are evident through Te Aronui and Te Aronui Ora and staff appear to have a high level of understanding of the framework and are working diligently to implement programmes of work that embrace the Te Aronui Framework. The challenge will be to ensure that other areas throughout the University can lessen the dependence on the Office of Māori Advancement to develop their work to enact Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University's commitment to becoming a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-enacting University and the leadership from the Office of Māori Advancement that has contributed to this work.*

The Panel heard that debate across the University as to what it means to be a 'university of technology' contributes to how the University gives effect to the relationship between research and teaching. This debate is informing redevelopment of courses and programmes, and the University also engages with other universities of technology.

Academic freedom is a contributing factor in a university's ability to give effect to its role as critic and conscience of society. The University has developed an Academic Freedom charter and has a KPI of media articles as an indicator of how it is giving effect to this role.²¹⁵ Academic freedom is the first term of reference for the University's Academic Board. The Panel is pleased to see the University recognises the challenges, particularly harmful effects of social media, for individual staff in making contributions to the University's role as critic and conscience of society. Nonetheless, the Panel considers there is scope for further work in raising staff awareness of this role and the support that is available to them to contribute to this.

With respect to the scope components of the audit framework, the Panel considers the University has a detailed understanding of its student body and is working to achieve a staffing complement that reflects this student body. One group that may merit further attention are part-time students, particularly part-

²¹⁴ Guide to Cycle 6 Academic Audit, p. 11.

²¹⁵ SRR, p. 96.

time postgraduate research students. Work is developing with respect to AUT Online and the learning and teaching plan will contribute further to the development of online teaching and learning.

Enhancement initiatives

Identifying enhancement initiatives is an important component of the self-review process as the University assesses whether it meets the guideline statements in the Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework. The University identified five enhancement initiatives. The Panel has commented on and endorsed the direction of all the University's enhancement initiatives.

Summary of commendations, affirmations and recommendations

The Panel considers the University does meet, and in a number of instances exceeds, the outcomes and standards a university of good international standing would be expected to demonstrate. It therefore meets the expectations of the Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework. Commendations of good practice, affirmations of work planned or underway and recommendations of matters for the University to consider are summarised below. The pattern of commendations, affirmations and recommendations reflects the strategic work underway at the University. The Panel has made recommendations that encourage further good practice and are intended to assist the University as it progresses its own strategic direction.

Commendations

In an academic audit, commendations refer to examples of exceptionally good practice or to examples of innovative practice that should produce positive impacts on teaching, learning and student experience. The Panel has made the following commendations:

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|--------------|----|--|
| Introduction | C1 | <i>The Panel commends the University for its well-presented and easy to use self-review report and portfolio.</i> |
| Context | C2 | <i>The Panel commends the University for for achieving its financial recovery plan and developing Te Aronui and Te Kete, while managing through external and internal changes.</i> |
| GS 1 | C3 | <i>The Panel commends the University for its mature approach to change management, including the establishment of the Transformation Management Office and the Academic Transformation Governance Group.</i> |
| GS 1 | C4 | <i>The Panel commends the University's use of good quality data to understand and respond to different student groups. This is particularly evident in the University's approach to managing student transitions and student wellbeing.</i> |
| GS 1 | C5 | <i>The Panel commends the University for the development of Te Aronui and the ways in which this is being used to guide change across the University.</i> |
| GS 2 | C6 | <i>The Panel commends the University for its range of mechanisms and good practices in enabling student voices to contribute to academic quality.</i> |
| GS 3 | C7 | <i>The Panel commends the provision of culturally affirming spaces for Māori students and Pacific students.</i> |

- GS 3 C8 *The Panel **commends** the approach taken by the University to move to Canvas as its learning management system.*
- GS 8 C9 *The Panel **commends** the University's well-designed application and admissions processes.*
- GS 9 C10 *The Panel **commends** the University for the thoughtful attention it pays to student transitions, including the emphasis placed on work-integrated learning.*
- GS 13 C11 *The Panel **commends** the University for the richness and effectiveness of engagement by Student Services, the Office of Māori Advancement and the Office of Pacific Advancement, in supporting undergraduate student success; and the interconnectedness of and relational approaches used by these services.*
- GS 13 C12 *The Panel **commends** the University's commitment to having professional qualified staff able to support students' safety and wellbeing.*
- GS 14 C13 *The Panel **commends** the University's commitment to developing culturally responsive curricula.*
- GS 16 C14 *The Panel **commends** the University for its evidence-informed, comprehensive and responsive programme review process.*
- GS 18 C15 *The Panel **commends** the University's development of assessment principles, policy and procedures and the assessment policy implementation project.*
- GS 22 C16 *The Panel **commends** the University's initiatives to recruit staff from under-represented groups and in particular the development of the Eke Tangaroa programme.*
- GS 24 C17 *The Panel **commends** the work of the Office of Learning, Teaching and Educational Design in supporting teaching development across the University.*
- GS 24 C18 *The Panel **commends** the development and roll-out of Aronui Ora.*
- GS 26 C19 *The Panel **commends** the establishment of Te Kāhui and the availability of other advice to support promotion opportunities for Māori, particularly to senior academic appointments.*
- Section E C20 *The Panel **commends** the University for the ways Rautaki Rangahau reflects Te Aronui and addresses postgraduate research students and supervision.*
- Section E C21 *The Panel **commends** the University for providing in its Postgraduate Handbook comprehensive up-to-date information to support students undertaking research.*

- | | | |
|------------|-----|--|
| GS 27 | C22 | <i>The Panel commends the training and other supports available for postgraduate research supervisors.</i> |
| GS 27 | C23 | <i>The Panel commends the University for supporting innovative and impactful supervision practices, such as those found in Te Ipukārea.</i> |
| Conclusion | C24 | <i>The Panel commends the University's commitment to becoming a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-enacting University and the leadership from the Office of Māori Advancement that has contributed to this work.</i> |

Affirmations

Affirmations refer to initiatives planned or underway that are likely to have a positive impact but are at an early stage and data is not yet available to assess impact. The Panel has made affirmations in the following areas:

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| GS 1 | A1 | <i>The Panel affirms the redevelopment of the Learning and Teaching Plan and development of an Academic Quality Framework.</i> |
| GS 2 | A2 | <i>The Panel affirms the University's enhancement initiative to develop an overall framework for student voice(s) and review how student feedback is sought, shared and changes based on this feedback are reported.</i> |
| GS 4 | A3 | <i>The Panel affirms the University's enhancement initiative to develop a university-wide schedule of academic delegations as part of its wider project on academic governance.</i> |
| GS 7 | A4 | <i>The Panel affirms the restructure of the Office of Pacific Advancement and the development of culturally affirming programmes and initiatives that support success for Pacific students.</i> |
| GS 11 | A5 | <i>The Panel affirms the University's revision of policies and procedures that support student complaints, appeals and grievances in culturally respectful ways.</i> |
| GS 14 | A6 | <i>The Panel affirms the University's intention to implement a curriculum management system</i> |
| GS 15 | A7 | <i>The Panel affirms the University's enhancement initiative to review its learning and teaching reporting to ensure that data related to student achievement, course and programme performance, and curricula are accessible and centrally reported and that monitoring processes identify actionable information for academic leaders to support decision-making and continuous improvement.</i> |
| GS 17 | A8 | <i>The Panel affirms the University's intention to redevelop its graduate profile to align with Te Aronui and Te Kete.</i> |
| GS 20 | A9 | <i>The Panel affirms the University's approach to understanding the impact Generative Artificial Intelligence is having on learning and teaching.</i> |

- GS 22 A10 *The Panel **affirms** development of a Pacific Plan that will support capacity and capability building for teaching and research supervision for Pacific students.*
- GS 23 A11 *The Panel **affirms** the University's intention to redevelop its Academic Expectations framework.*

Recommendations

Recommendations refer to areas where the Panel considers the University would benefit from making some improvements or changes. Recommendations alert the University to what the Panel needs to be addressed, not how this should be done. The Panel has made the following recommendations:

- GS 1 R1 *The Panel **recommends** that the University consider how information and data governance include principles for Māori data sovereignty and Pacific data sovereignty.*
- GS 3 R2 *The Panel **recommends** that the University consider how reflecting appropriate tikanga for its different campuses in teaching spaces can support the implementation of Te Aronui and Te Kete.*
- GS 4 R3 *The Panel **recommends** the University urgently address a lack of consistency in academic decision-making that affects the equitable treatment of students with respect to academic advice, academic complaints and appeals, breaches of academic integrity or student discipline. Other areas of inconsistency, including guidance on the use of Gen-AI, support and resourcing for postgraduate research students, and responding to student feedback should also be addressed. The effectiveness of measures to ensure consistency should be monitored and reported regularly.*
- GS 4 R4 *The Panel **recommends** the University review the terms of reference for and activities of Academic Board to ensure they are providing adequate guidance and monitoring of academic quality.*
- GS 9 R5 *The Panel **recommends** that in progressing its planned work on administration of placements, the University also pay attention to ameliorating the challenges faced by students, particularly those with caring responsibilities or studying part-time, in completing their placement requirements.*
- GS 10 R6 *The Panel **recommends** the University revisit recommendation 2 from its Cycle 5 academic audit and ensure that students are able to access accurate and timely course advice that supports the completion of their qualifications in the least time possible.*
- GS 14 R7 *The Panel **recommends** the University strengthen the contributions of Pacific voices to formal curriculum development, approval and review processes.*
- GS 21 R8 *The Panel **recommends** the University increase capacity and capability to undertake assessment and supervision in te reo Māori.*

- GS 24 R9 *The Panel **recommends** the University encourage and monitor engagement in professional development for teaching and update its Professional Learning framework.*
- Section E R10 *The Panel **recommends** that the University review whether delegations are appropriate and adequate to allow the Graduate Research School to manage its responsibilities for postgraduate research students across the University.*
- GS 27 R11 *The Panel **recommends** the University raise the profile of the Register of Supervisors and consider whether requirements for maintaining registration as a research student supervisor are adequate.*
- GS 28 R12 *The Panel **recommends** that the University reinforce the need for respectful support and manifesting a duty of care for postgraduate research students across the University.*

Follow-up report

The Panel invites Auckland University of Technology Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau to provide a follow-up report one year after the release of this report. The report should address progress with respect to both affirmations and recommendations. Once it has been accepted by the AQA Board, the University's follow-up report should be made publicly available.

Members of the Audit Panel

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|---|--|
| Dr Hamish Cochrane <i>Chair of the Panel</i> | Director of Student Administration, Student Health and Accommodation Lincoln University |
| Professor Meihana Durie (Rangitāne, Ngāti Kauwhata, Ngāti Raukawa Te Au ki Te Tonga, Ngāti Porou, Rongo Whakaata, Ngāi Tahu) | Amurangi / Deputy Vice Chancellor Māori Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa Massey University |
| Dr Keaka Hemi | Assistant Vice-Chancellor Pacific University of Waikato |
| Emeritus Professor Mairéad Browne | Independent Consultant Sydney, Australia |
| Vikram Selvaraj | Policy Advisor/ Recent Graduate |

Secretariat:

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Sheelagh Matear | Contract Audit Director Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities |
| Rochelle Gribble | Acting Executive Director Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities |

Acknowledgements

The Panel acknowledges with gratitude the mihi whakatau that welcomed them to the University campus to undertake the site visit. The Panel wishes to acknowledge and thank the students and staff who met with the Panel and Heather Merrick and Shirley Pollock from the Academic Quality Office for their support for the Panel while on the University campus and for the provision of information and response to queries.

The translation of the Summary into Te Reo Māori was undertaken by Ōkupu.

Thanks also to Sharon Cuzens for proofreading this report.

Appendix 1: The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities, Te Poukapū Kounga Matauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa (AQA) AQA is an operationally independent entity established by the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee in 1994. Its purpose is to contribute to the advancement of New Zealand university education by:

- engaging as a leader and advocate in the development of academic quality
- applying quality assurance and quality enhancement processes that assist universities in improving student engagement, academic experience and learning outcomes
- supporting confidence in the academic quality of New Zealand universities.²¹⁶

The AQA helps support universities in achieving standards of excellence in research and teaching by conducting institutional audits of the processes in universities which underpin academic quality and by identifying and disseminating information on good practice in developing and maintaining quality in higher education. Activities include a quarterly newsletter and regular meetings on quality enhancement topics.

The AQA interacts with other educational bodies within New Zealand and with similar academic quality assurance agencies internationally. The Agency is a full member of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), and of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). AQA was assessed in 2020 as being aligned with the INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice in Quality Assurance. This [recognition of alignment](#) is current until November 2025.

Further information is available from the AQA website: www.aqa.ac.nz.

Quality assurance principles

AQA and CUAP have jointly agreed principles that underpin quality assurance. These are that quality assurance acknowledges the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and is:

- developed by the universities
- evidence-based
- enhancement-led
- founded on self-review
- assured by peer review
- collective and collegial
- individually binding
- internationally benchmarked
- independently operated
- publicly accountable
- in partnership with students.

²¹⁶ AQA (2020), Constitution. Available at <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/AQA%20Constitution%20Amended%20Oct%202020.pdf>. (Accessed 23 February 2022).





Level 3, 69 The Terrace
PO Box 5787, Wellington 6145, New Zealand
p + 64 4 801 7924 | e admin@aqa.ac.nz | w www.aqa.ac.nz



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QualityAgency
For New Zealand Universities