The logo of Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University is a stylized white tree with many branches and leaves, set against a light teal background. The tree is positioned on the right side of the page, with its trunk extending from the bottom towards the top.

# Report of the 2024 Academic Audit of Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University

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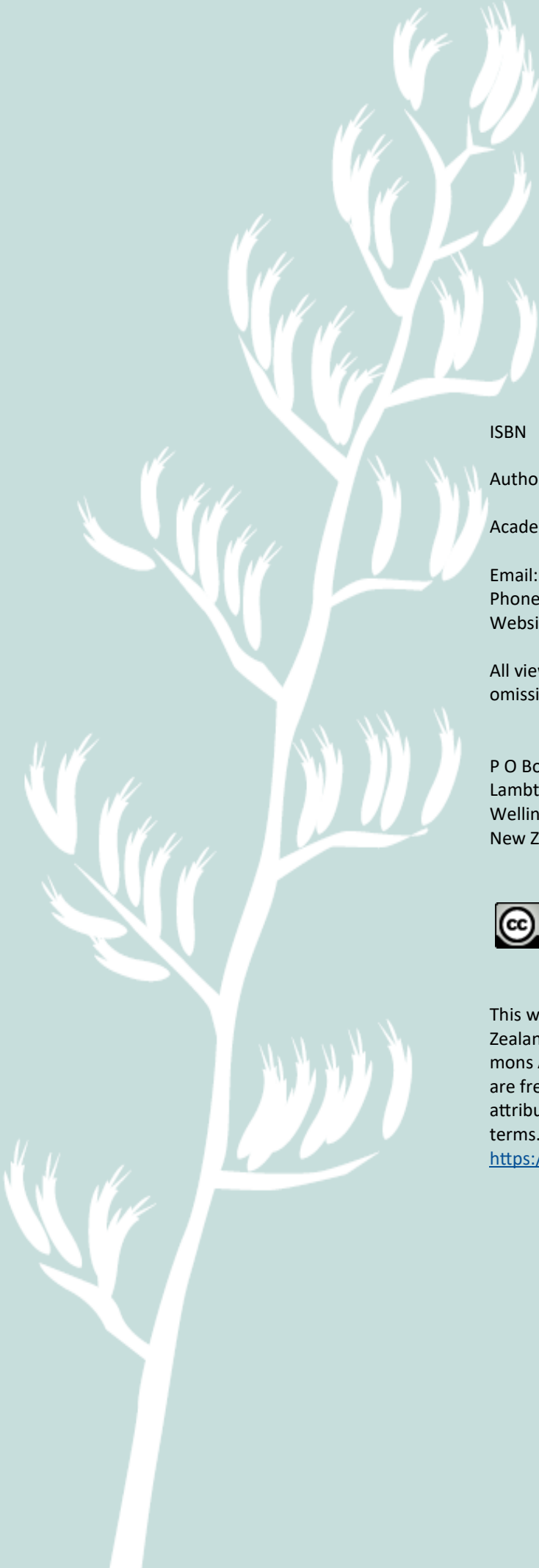
Cycle 6 academic audit undertaken by the Academic Quality  
Agency for New Zealand Universities

June 2024

*Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga  
mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa*

**AQA**

Academic  
**Quality**Agency  
For New Zealand Universities



ISBN 978-1-9911964-5-3

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# **Report of the 2024 Academic Audit of Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University**

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## He Whakarāpopototanga

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. Ko te wahanga tuarua o te huringa tuaono ko tētahi arotake i tētahi anga o ngā tauākī aratohu toru tekau. Ka aromatawai ngā whare wānanga i a rātou anō ki taua anga arotake ka tukuna ai tētahi pūrongo arotake mōna anō me tētahi kōpaki taunaki. E wātea ana ngā kōrero anō mō ngā arotake mātauranga tae ana ki ngā pūrongo arotake nō mua ki te pae tukutuku o AQA.

I tukua e Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University (te Whare Wānanga) tāna kāhua arotake i a ia anō i te 2 o Noema 2023, ā, i tukua ētahi kōrero anō i te 9 o Huitanguru 2024. E rua ngā hui (ā-ipurangi) a te Paewhiri i mua i tā rātou toro ā-tinana atu ki te Whare Wānanga i te 4-6 o Maehe 2024. I te wā o taua toronga, e 23 ngā uiuinga a te Paewhiri, ā, i kōrero hoki rātou ki tētahi mema o te Kaunihera, e 41 ngā kaimahi me ngā tauira e 27. Ko ngā kōrero i whāia nō ngā uiuitanga ka tautoko i ērā kei te kāhua arotake i a ia anō. Whirinaki ai te Paewhiri ki ngā puna e rua kia puta ai āna kitenga.

I tū te Huringa 6 Arotake ā-Kura Wānanga o Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University i te horopaki o ngā pānga mauroa o te mate urutā, o KOWHEORI-19, ngā hanganga anō i muri i te rū, me te whakawhanaketanga anō o ngā whare matua o te whare wānanga, he rōpū hautū matua hou, e whai ana i te whakahounga i te wāhanga pokapū o te mahere rautaki tekau tau a te Whare Wānanga, me te panonitanga nō nā tata nei i te rahi me te āhua o te Whare Wānanga.

E aro ana te wāhanga tuatahi (A) o te angamahi arotakenga ki te hautūtanga me te whakahaeretanga o ngā whakaakotanga, o ngā akoranga me te kounga ā-kura wānanga. He ara whāinga me te whānui tā te Whare Wānanga ki te whai wāhitanga o ngā tauira me te mahi tahi, tae ana ki te whakahaere tahi o ngā rōpū hirahira me ngā kaupapa. Ka whakaatuhia hoki tēnei i tētahi ara hononga, whaiaro hoki hei tautoko i te angitū o ngā tauira. Ahakoa he kaha o te Whare Wānanga, e māharahara ana te Paewhiri ka pēhia tēnei i te pikinga ake o ngā nama tauira, otirā, ērā e ako ā-ipurangi ana. Kāore e tino tautokona ana te ara hononga e ngā raraunga, ā, kua tautohua ko te korenga o ngā raraunga hono mō te aroturuki i ngā kokenga me te aromatawai i te pānga he wero i roto i ngā wāhanga huhua.

Ko te whakawhanaketanga o te whare wānanga ā-tinana e aratakina ana e tētahi mahere matua mō te papa wānanga me tētahi kōrero ā-ahurea. He huinga whare whakaako, whare ako hou anō tā te Whare Wānanga. Kei te whakawhanake hoki ia i tana pūnaha ā-ipurangi, ā, me mārāma ake te huarahi whakawhanaketanga mō te whakaako ā-ipurangi. E mōhio ana te Whare Wānanga, e

whānui atu ana te taiao ako i ngā taiao ā-tinana, ā-matihiko hoki, ā, kei te arotakehia te ako whakauru ki te mahi kia pūmau ai te toronga me te kounga o te wheako mō ngā tauira.

He hōtaka whānui tā te Whare Wānanga mō ngā tukunga me te whakahaeretanga mārama o ngā tūraru i te taumata rautaki, ahakoa me mārama ake ngā tūraru ā-kura wānanga i tēnei taumata rautaki. Ko tētahi taupānga SafeLU hei āwhina i te whakahaeretanga o ngā tūraru ā-mahi. Ko ngā mahi kei te haere mō tētahi angamahi whakahaere ā-kura wānanga ka whakapakari i te mahi whakatau ā-kura wānanga puta noa i te Whare Wānanga.

He tokoiti ngā nama tauira Māori me ngā tauira nō Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa engari e tautokona paitia ana e tētahi Tari Te Manutaki motuhake. E aro ana te Whare Wānanga ki te tautoko me te angitū mō ngā tauira Māori i tētahi kaupapa whānui Manaaki Tauira (Learner Success Plan) e whai wāhi ana ki ngā kaupapa hei whakapai ake i te tomonga. Ka taea te whakawhiti atu ki ngā kokenga kē atu i runga i te kopounga o tētahi DVC Māori nō nā tata nei me tētahi atu kaupapa (Whanake Ake) hei whakapiki i te nama o ngā kaimahi Māori.

He tokoiti hoki ngā nama kaimahi nō Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa. Ahakoa kua whakaurua te tomonga, te kokenga me te angitū o ngā tauira nō Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa ki roto i te kaupapa Manaaki Tauira, ko te mārama o te kokenga, te rauemi me te ārahitanga o te Mahere Motu a te Whare Wānanga he tīmatanga hirahira mō ngā kokenga kē atu. Me ārahi te Mahere Motu i tētahi ara rautaki mō te kimi me te pupuri i ngā kaimahi nō Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.

E kitea ana hoki te aronga tauira o te Whare Wānanga i te wāhanga tuarua o te angamahi arotakenga - (B) Te hurihanga ora, te tautoko me te oranga o te tauira – tae atu ki te oati ki te mātauranga kauawhi. He pai te hono o te Mahere Mahi Whaikaha ki ētahi atu tautuhinga kaupapa here me ngā kaupapa, ahakoa e tika ana te aro atu anō ki te aroturuki i te whakatinanatanga. Ko te Te Poari Wheako Tauira – he Poari whakahaere tahi e tuku ana i te tirohanga whānui. Ka whakapakarihia ngā mahi whakawhitinga e tētahi angamahi aroturuki e āhei ana te aromatawai i te whaihua o ngā kaupapa mō ngā rōpū tauira rerekē i ngā wāhanga rerekē o ā rātou akoranga, ā, me whakaaro te Whare Wānanga mēnā kei te whaihua ngā whakaritenga tohutohu ā-kura wānanga o nāianei mō ngā tauira me te Whare Wānanga, ā, mehemea e āhei ana te tautoko kia whāia tika.

Ka arotake te wāhanga tuatoru (C) o te angamahi arotakenga i te marautanga, ngā aromatawai me ngā tukunga. E kitea ana anō te tautoko mārama i te whai wāhi o ngā tauira i tēnei wāhanga, tae atu ki ngā tukunga arotake hōtaka ā-kura wānanga. Mā te kohikohi i ngā kaupapa matua nō ngā arotake hōtaka ā-kura wānanga ka taea e te Whare Wānanga te ako whānui ake i ēnei arotake. He raupapa kaupapa kei te Whare Wānanga kua whakaritea, kei te haere rānei, tae atu ki te whakangako me te aroturuki kōhi, ngā aromatawai, te whakatōpū paerewa aromatawai, me te whakawhanake i tētahi Kāhua Ihuputa ā-Whare Wānanga. He wāhi kei konei ki te whakapakari i ngā mahi kei te haere mā te whakaū i te hāngai o ngā kaupapa whakangako me te aroturuki kōhi, te whakapā atu i ngā putanga ki tēnei wā me ngā hikoinga atu nō te hui aromatawai, ā, tae atu ki ngā kawatau mō te whakamana ā-waho i ngā paerewa aromatawai (otirā mō ngā tohu Paerua whakaakona).

E tika ana kia kōrero anō ki ngā kaimahi Māori mō te pūkenga me te māia ahurea-rua kua marohitia ki te Kāhua Ihuputa ā-Whare Wānanga. Me whakaaro anō hoki te Whare Wānanga ki te whakahounga marautanga, ngā rauemi, ngā pūnaha me ngā āheinga e hiahiatia ana hei whakatinana, hei tiaki, hei aromatawai i te whakatutukitanga o te Kāhua Ihuputa. E hāngai ana ki

tēnei, me whakawhanake hoki tētahi hātepe hei aromatawai mēnā e tutuki ana ngā āhuatanga ihuputa.

Ko te aronga kotahi a te Whare Wānanga ki te whakahaere i te pono ā-kura wānanga, te pūrongo, me ngā whakawhitiwhiti kōrero a ngā Kaitirotiro he pai te rere. Heoi anō, e tika ana kia whakawhanakehia tonutia ngā tohutohu mō te whakamahinga o ngā taputapu Hanga-AI, tae atu ki te āwhina i te ako a ngā tauira whaikaha.

Kei te whakaritea hoki ngā mahi i te Wāhanga D o te angamahi arotakenga - te kounga ā-whakaako - me ngā kaupapa e aro ana ki tētahi hōtaka whakawhanake ā-whakaako ōkawa me tētahi angamahi kounga ā-whakaako, ka whakaata ēnei i ngā āhuatanga motuhake o te whakaako i Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University. Me whakamahi te angamahi kounga ā-whakaako i ngā raraunga whaimana, pono hoki.

Ka aro te wāhanga whakamutunga (E) o te angamahi arotakenga ki ngā tauira rangahau paerunga. Kua piki ake te katoa o ngā nama tauira paerunga i te Whare Wānanga, ahakoa ko te nuinga o te pikinga kei roto i ngā hōtaka Paerua whakaakona. Me whai whakaaro ngā kōrero i runga ake nei hei whakauru hoki i ngā hōtaka Paerua whakaakona. Heoi anō, i whakamōhiotia te Paewhiri e whakaaro ana te Whare Wānanga ki tētahi kura paerunga ka whai tiroiro ki ngā hōtaka PhD me ngā hōtaka Paerua katoa, me te whakauru pea i ngā Paerua whakaakona. Me whāngai tonu te ara ki te whakatairanga i te tino ōritetanga o ngā wheako a ngā tauira paerunga puta noa i te Whare Wānanga.

Ko ētahi atu mahi nō nā tata nei kua aro ki te tautoko i ngā tauira rangahau paerunga me ngā kaihomiroiro. Kei roto i ēnei ko te whakatūnga o tētahi Rēhita Kaimataki, tētahi hōtaka whakawhanake kaimataki me te whakakotahitanga o te pūrongo kauneke. Me pūrongo te whanotau ki ngā whakaritenga o te Rēhita mō ngā kopounga kaimataki, tae atu ki te whakatutukitanga o te whakangungu, ki tētahi komiti hāngai. Ko te pūrongo kauneke ā-kotahi e tuku ana i tētahi ara hei whakamōhio i te whakawhanaketanga o ngā ratonga tautoko mō ngā tauira paerunga. Ka āhei hoki te pai ake o te aroturuki rauemi me te whakamōhio i ngā hātepe pēnei i ngā whakaaetanga taumata ratonga e taea ana te whakarite ki ngā momo me ngā wāhanga rerekē o te rangahau kia whakaitihia te koretake i ngā wheako o ngā tauira rangahau paerunga. Heoi anō, kāore te tukanga pūrongo kauneke i te hātepe tika mō ngā tauira ki te whakapuaki māharahara, amuamu rānei, ā, me whakatū tētahi ara matatapu mō ēnei. Hei te mutunga, i te wāhi ki ngā tauira rangahau paerunga, me mārama mēnā e tutuki ana ngā pūrongo kotahi tekau mā rima-marama katoa e ai ki ngā kawatau.

Ka tonoa hoki e te anga tātari Whare Ako Huringa 6 kia huritao ngā whare wānanga ki ō rātou takohanga i raro i te Tiriti o Waitangi, te whirinakitanga o ngā rangahau whare wānanga me te ako me te wāhi ki ngā whare wānanga hei arohaehae hei arotika o te porihanga. Me āmio te aromatawai arotake i ngā tauira katoa, ngā ara tuku katoa me ngā kaimahi katoa e pīkau, ka tautoko rānei i ngā mahi whakaako, hōmiromiro rānei.

I rongu te Paewhiri i te manawanui ki Te Tiriti o Waitangi puta noa i te Whare Wānanga. Ahakoa he pūtake tūturu tō te Whare Wānanga ki te hono atu ki te ao Māori me te ōhanga Māori, kāore anō tāna aronga ki te tino whakaū i Te Tiriti o Waitangi kia tino kitea i te tukunga o tana marautanga me āna tautoko katoa mō ngā tauira Māori me ngā kaimahi Māori. E aro ana te Whare Wānanga ki te taupuhipuhi rangahau-whakaako me te pikinga o ngā tauira paerunga, ā, ka whakapakarīhia tēnei e

te hanumi o ngā mahere rangahau me te whakaako. E akiakihia ana ngā kaimahi ki te whāngai i te wāhi o te Whare Wānanga hei arohaehae, hei arotika o te porihanga, engari kāore tēnei akiakitanga i te rite puta noa i te Whare Wānanga.

I te wāhi ki ngā wāhanga hōkaitanga o te angamahi arotakenga, i rongo te Paewhiri e tūoho ana te Whare Wānanga ki te panonitanga o tōna kāhua taurira me ngā pānga o tēnei. Kua kōrero te Paewhiri mō te matea kia whakatipu ake ngā rōpū kaimahi Māori me ngā kaimahi nō Te Moananui-a-Kiwa. E whakaaro ana hoki te Paewhiri e aro ana te Whare Wānanga ki ngā momo tukunga rerekē, ā, kua kōrero mō ngā pānga ki te whakawhanaketanga kaimahi.

I runga i ngā taunakitanga i wātea ki a ia i te wā o te arotakenga, ahakoa he rerekē ētahi wāhanga, ko te nuinga, kua tutuki i te Whare Wānanga ngā putanga me ngā paerewa me whakatauiria e tētahi whare wānanga tūnga pai i te ao. Nā reira kua tutuki ngā takunetanga o te Huringa 6 Angamahi Arotake ā-Kura Wānanga. I ngā wāhi e whakaaro ana te Paewhiri me whai mahi anō, kua tuku tautohutanga, kua whakatūturu rānei i ngā kaupapa whakapaipai kua tohua kē e te Whare Wānanga. Kua tuku te Paewhiri i ngā whakamihī e iwa, ngā whakatūturutanga tekau mā toru, me ngā tautohutanga tekau mā waru e tautoko ana, e akiaki ana hoki i ngā mahi tūtika, ā, e whai ana ki te āwhina i te Whare Wānanga i a ia ka koke i tōna anō 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. Further information is available on the enhancement themes website.<sup>1</sup> The second phase of Cycle 6 is an audit against a framework of 30 guideline statements. Universities undertake a self-assessment against the audit framework and present a self-review report and portfolio of supporting evidence. Further information about academic audits, including previous audit reports, is available on the AQA website.<sup>2</sup>

Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University (the University) submitted its self-review portfolio on 2 November 2023 and provided further information on 9 February 2024. The Panel met twice (online) before undertaking an in-person site visit to the University from 4-6 March 2024. During the site visit, the Panel held 23 interview sessions and talked to one Council member, 41 members of staff and 27 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 Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University took place in the context of the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic; post-earthquake rebuilds and redevelopment of major campus buildings; a relatively new senior leadership team undertaking an update at the midpoint of the University's ten-year strategic plan; and a recent change in the size and shape of the University.

The first section (A) of the audit framework is concerned with leadership and management of teaching and learning, and academic quality. The University has an intentional and multifaceted approach to student engagement and partnership, including co-governance of significant bodies and initiatives. This is further reflected in a relational and personal approach to supporting student success. While a strength of the University, the Panel is concerned that it will come under pressure with growth in student numbers, especially those studying online. The relational approach is not well supported by data and a lack of integrated data for monitoring progress and assessing impact is identified as a challenge in several areas.

The development of the physical campus has been guided by a campus master plan and cultural narrative. The University has a suite of modern teaching and learning facilities. It is also developing its online ecosystem and the development path for online teaching needs to be set out more clearly. The University recognises the learning environment extends beyond its physical and digital

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.enhanceunz.com/>

<sup>2</sup> [www.aqa.ac.nz](http://www.aqa.ac.nz)

environments and is reviewing work-integrated learning to ensure consistency of access and quality of the experience for students.

The University has a comprehensive schedule of delegations and clear management of risks at the strategic level, although academic risks could be more explicit at this strategic level. A SafeLU app contributes to operational management of risk. Work underway on an academic governance framework will strengthen academic decision-making across the University.

Numbers of Māori students and Pacific students are relatively low but they are well supported by a dedicated Te Manutaki unit. The University is paying attention to support and success for Māori students in a comprehensive Manaaki Tauira programme (Learner Success Plan) which includes initiatives to improve access. Further progress can be expected with the recent appointment of a DVC Māori and another initiative (Whanake Ake) to increase numbers of Māori staff.

Numbers of Pacific students and staff are also low. While Pacific student access, progress and success is included in the Manaaki Tauira initiative, clarity in progressing, resourcing and leading the University's Motu Plan is an important precursor to further progress. A strategic approach to recruiting and retaining Pacific staff should be guided by the Motu Plan.

The University's student centric-approach is also evident in the second section of the audit framework—(B) Student life cycle, support and wellbeing—including a commitment to inclusive education. The Disability Action Plan is well connected to and informs other policy settings and initiatives, although further attention to monitoring implementation is warranted. A co-governed Student Experience Board – Te Poari Wheako Tauira provides valuable oversight. Work on transitions would be strengthened by a monitoring framework that allows the effectiveness of initiatives for different groups of students at different stages of their study to be evaluated. The University should consider whether the current academic advising arrangements are serving students and the University well and allowing support to be optimally targeted.

The third section (C) of the audit framework examines curriculum, assessment and delivery. Student engagement is again clearly supported in this section, including in academic programme review processes. Collating themes from academic programme reviews would enable the University to learn more broadly from these reviews. The University has a series of initiatives planned or underway including course enhancement and monitoring, assessment, moderation of assessment standards, and the development of a University Graduate Profile. There are opportunities to strengthen work-in-progress by ensuring course enhancement and monitoring initiatives are aligned, communicating outcomes to date and further steps from the assessment hui, and including expectations for external validation of assessment standards (especially for taught Master's degrees).

Further consultation with Māori staff on the proposed bicultural competence and confidence attribute in the University Graduate Profile is needed. The University should also give further thought to the curriculum renewal, resource, systems and capabilities that will be required to implement, maintain and assess the attainment of the Graduate Profile. Associated with this, a mechanism needs to be developed to assess whether graduate attributes are being achieved.

The University's centralised approach to managing academic integrity and reporting, and communications from the Proctors seems to be working well. However, guidance on the use of

Generative-AI tools is urgently needed, including how these can support learning for disabled students.

Work is also planned in Section D of the audit framework—Teaching quality—with initiatives focused on a formal teaching development programme and a teaching quality framework, both of which would reflect the particular characteristics of teaching at Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University. The teaching quality framework will need to draw on valid and reliable data.

The final section (E) of the audit framework focuses on postgraduate research students. Postgraduate student numbers overall have grown at the University, although most of the growth has been in taught Master's programmes. Comments made above include taught Master's programmes. However, the Panel was advised that the University is considering a postgraduate school that would have oversight over all PhD and Master's programmes, potentially including taught Master's. The opportunity to promote greater consistency in the experiences of postgraduate students across the University should be explored further.

Other recent work has focused on supporting postgraduate research students and supervisors. It includes establishing a Register of Supervisors, a supervisor development programme and centralising progress reporting. Conformance with Register requirements for supervisor appointments, including the completion of training, should be reported to an appropriate committee. Centralised progress reporting presents an opportunity to inform the development of support services for postgraduate students. It would also allow better monitoring of resourcing and inform mechanisms such as service level agreements, which can be calibrated to different types and stages of research to minimise inequity in the experience of postgraduate research students. However, the progress reporting process is not an appropriate mechanism for students to raise concerns or complaints and a confidential channel for these should be established. Finally, with respect to postgraduate research students, there is a need to clarify whether all fifteen-month reporting is taking place as expected.

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 did get a sense of commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi across the University. While the University has a genuine willingness to connect with te ao Māori and the Māori economy, its approach to truly embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi is yet to gain full expression in the delivery of its curriculum and in all its support for Māori students and staff. The University is paying attention to the research-teaching nexus. The increase in postgraduate students and combining the research and teaching plans will strengthen this. Staff are encouraged to contribute to the University's role of critic and conscience of society, but this encouragement is not necessarily consistent across the University.

With respect to the scope components of the audit framework, the Panel gained a sense the University was alert to the changing profile of its student body and the implications of this. The Panel has commented on the need to grow the cohorts of Māori staff and Pacific staff. The Panel also considers

the University is paying attention to different modes of delivery and has commented on implications for staff development.

On the basis of the evidence available to it at the time of the audit—and despite some unevenness—overall, the University does meet 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. 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 nine commendations, thirteen affirmations and eighteen recommendations that support and encourage good practices and are intended to assist the University as it progresses its own strategic direction.

Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University 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.

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## List of Key Terms and Acronyms

<b>APSAG</b>	Academic Programme Strategic Advisory Group
<b>AQA</b>	Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities– Te Pokapū Kōunga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa
<b>CUAP</b>	Universities New Zealand Committee on University Academic Programmes
<b>CASEWG</b>	COVID-19 Academic and Student Experience Working Group
<b>CeLT</b>	Centre for Learning and Teaching
<b>The Code</b>	Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021
<b>DVC</b>	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
<b>EFTS</b>	Equivalent Full-Time Student(s)
<b>FE</b>	Further evidence (provided by the University)
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time Equivalent (staff)
<b>Gen-AI</b>	Generative artificial intelligence
<b>GYR</b>	Graduating Year Review
<b>IP 23-25</b>	Investment Plan 2023-2025 <sup>3</sup>
<b>KD</b>	Key (supporting) document (forms part of the University’s Self-review Portfolio)
<b>LTL</b>	Learning, Teaching and Library
<b>NZQCF</b>	New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework
<b>Panel</b>	Unless otherwise specified, “the Panel” refers to the Academic Audit Panel engaged by AQA to conduct the 2024 audit of Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University
<b>PD&amp;A</b>	Professional Development and Appraisal
<b>PQOS</b>	Post Qualification Outcomes Survey
<b>SD</b>	Supporting document (forms part of the University’s Self-review Portfolio)
<b>SLT</b>	Senior Leadership Team
<b>SR, SRR, SRP</b>	Self-review, Self-review report, Self-review portfolio
<b>TEC</b>	Tertiary Education Commission
<b>TELS</b>	Technology-Enabled Learning Strategy
<b>UE</b>	University Entrance
<b>UGP</b>	University Graduate Profile
<b>WIL</b>	Work-integrated Learning

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/assets/Statement-of-Strategic-Intent-/LU-Investment-Plan-2023-2025.pdf> (Accessed 29 April 2024.)





## 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).<sup>4</sup> Further information about AQA can be found in Appendix 1 and on the AQA website.<sup>5</sup>

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”.<sup>6</sup> 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: (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. 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.<sup>7</sup> 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.

Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University (Lincoln, the University) submitted its self-review on 2 November 2023. The self-review report (SRR) and key documents (KD) were provided both in hard copy and loaded onto an AQA OneDrive site. Supporting documents (SD) were provided electronically only. The Panel was pleased to see students involved in developing the self-review but

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.inqaah.org/ggp-aligned-agencies>. (Accessed 23 February 2022).

<sup>5</sup> [www.aqa.ac.nz](http://www.aqa.ac.nz)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.enhanceunz.com/> (Accessed 4 August 2022).

<sup>7</sup> 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).

found the Self-review Report tended towards description of activities rather than evaluation of impact. Despite some expected material not being provided initially, the University was open and transparent in its provision of information.

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 4-6 March 2024.

During the site visit, the Panel held 23 interview sessions and talked to one Council member, 41 members of staff and 27 students. All interviewees were prepared to engage well with the Panel and to provide helpful insights on the audit areas.

### **About the University**

Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University was established in 1878 as the first dedicated agricultural college in the southern hemisphere and retains its focus on being a specialist, land-based university to the current day. Lincoln received university status in 1990 and the use of the name Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki (approved by the first Kaumatua of the University, Rōpata Wahawaha Stirling) also dates from this time.<sup>8</sup> The University is located on a campus next to the township of Lincoln in Canterbury. Its campus teaching and research facilities are augmented by seven farms and other land holdings<sup>9</sup> and a growing online presence.

The University's engagement with Mana Whenua is set out in a 2006 He Tutohinga Whakamatau Charter of Understanding with Te Taumutu Rūnanga. This Charter acknowledges a broader Te Tiriti o Waitangi relationship with Kāi Tahu through Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.<sup>10</sup> The Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor meet quarterly with the Chair and other representatives of Te Taumutu Rūnanga.<sup>11</sup> The University uses the Kāi Tahu mita (dialect) in official University documents and this report will try to reflect that usage.<sup>12</sup>

Internationally, the University is a partner member of the Euroleague for Life Sciences and the Global Challenges University Alliance 2030. It is ranked 362 in the QS World University Rankings 2024 with a global ranking of 62 for international faculty.<sup>13</sup>

The University is governed by a Council of 12 members, including a member appointed by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and the President of the Lincoln University Students' Association (LUSA). The LUSA President is able to attend all Council sub-committees.<sup>14</sup> There are 10 committees of Council including an Academic Board, Ahumairaki (with responsibilities for Māori development), a Capital Asset Committee and He Toki Tārai with responsibilities for an \$80 million Crown Funding Agreement to contribute to the rebuild and growth of the University following the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquakes.<sup>15</sup> The Crown Funding Agreement for new science facilities and six 'new

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<sup>8</sup> SRR, p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> IP 23-25, pp. 31-32.

<sup>10</sup> SRR, pp. 2-3; KD 7.

<sup>11</sup> SRR, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> SRR, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup> SRR, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> SRR, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/about-us/council/> (Accessed 15 March 2024.)

ways of working’ initiatives (collectively referred to as the ‘Moving Forward Programme’) has been subject to oversight from a Governance Oversight Group with an independent chair, members of the Lincoln University Council and representatives from the Tertiary Education Commission.<sup>16</sup> In turn, the Governance Oversight Group reports to Ministers.

The Academic Board of the University is expected to refer to the University strategy and associated plans and has responsibilities for course and programme quality and research quality, *inter alia*.<sup>17</sup> The inclusion of research in the terms of reference for the Academic Board reflects changes that were in train during the Cycle 5 academic audit of the University.<sup>18</sup> The Academic Board has three sub-committees: (1) the Learning and Teaching Committee; (2) the Lincoln University Research Committee; and (3) the Academic Administration Committee.<sup>19</sup> The Learning and Teaching Committee is responsible for strategic development, policy and governance of the learning and teaching environment. The Research Committee is responsible for the research environment, including postgraduate research students through its Postgraduate subcommittee. The Academic Administration Committee is responsible for “academic and administrative processes governing student progress”.<sup>20</sup>

All members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at Lincoln have been appointed since the Cycle 5 academic audit.<sup>21</sup> Given the eight-year period since the last audit, universities across Aotearoa New Zealand have seen turnover in their senior teams. While Lincoln has experienced more turnover than other universities—with the current Vice-Chancellor being the fourth since the Cycle 5 audit—it has maintained continuity through consistency in its Chancellor; an experienced acting Vice-Chancellor (formerly the Chief Academic Officer for the University); and the current Vice-Chancellor who previously served as Deputy Vice-Chancellor from 2019-2021 and who has had a long tenure at the University. The current Vice-Chancellor was appointed in 2022 and the most recent member of the SLT—the DVC Māori—commenced her role in February 2024.

The Senior Leadership Team comprises the Vice-Chancellor, DVC Māori, Provost, DVC Student Life, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Director-People, Culture and Wellbeing. Lincoln allocates academic activities between a students’ portfolio (led by the DVC Student Life) and a staff portfolio (led by the Provost). The DVC Student Life has responsibilities for Learning, Teaching and Library, Student Administration, Student Engagement, Accommodation, Health and Wellbeing; and the Provost for Faculties, Te Tuawhiti | Pathways and Quality, Research Centres and Research Management and the Postgraduate Research Office.<sup>22</sup> The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for

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<sup>16</sup> SRR, p. 6; <https://www.tec.govt.nz/assets/Ministerial-papers/B-23-00666-Tertiary-Education-Report-Report-to-Ministers-from-the-LU-Governance-Oversight-Group.pdf> (Accessed 15 March 2024.)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/assets/PoliciesAndProcedures/Academic-Board-Terms-of-Reference-v2.pdf> (Accessed 15 March 2024.)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/Lincoln%20University%20Report%20Cycle%205.pdf>, p. 4. (Accessed 15 March 2024.)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/assets/PoliciesAndProcedures/Academic-Board-Terms-of-Reference-v2.pdf> (Accessed 15 March 2024.)

<sup>20</sup> SRR, pp. 27-28.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/about-us/organisational-leadership/> (Accessed 15 March 2024.)

<sup>22</sup> SRR, p. 5,

strategic direction. The Panel was advised that both the Provost and the Chief Operating Officer are responsible for planning and reporting.<sup>23</sup>

The teaching and research activities of the University are carried out in three faculties (Agribusiness and Commerce, Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Environment, Society and Design), Academic Preparation and Pathways in Pathways and Quality (Te Tuawhiti), and a series of research centres including the TEC-funded Bioprotection Aotearoa Centre for Research Excellence. The Faculty of Agribusiness and Commerce is the largest faculty with almost 50% of the University's EFTS in 2023. Environment, Society and Design is the smallest faculty in terms of student numbers, although this has grown to be close in size to the Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences.<sup>24</sup> Academic Preparation and Pathways provides English language and academic preparation programmes for students to meet admission requirements to the University. The University Group also includes Lincoln Agritech Limited (a wholly owned agricultural research and innovation company) and Lincoln University Property Joint Venture Limited (a wholly owned subsidiary established in partnership with Ngāi Tahu Property).<sup>25</sup>

The University's vision "to be a globally ranked, top-five land-based University, unlocking the power of the land to enhance lives and grow the future" is set out in a 10-year strategy (2019-2028). Six goals, grouped into a renewal strategy and a shaping strategy, have been developed to pursue this vision. The goals aligned with the renewal strategy are:

1. A distinctive Aotearoa New Zealand end-to-end student experience
2. Improved assets and sustainable operating models
3. A culture which stimulates and inspires staff and students.

The shaping strategy has the following goals:

4. A world-class research and teaching precinct
5. An organisation focused on meaningful partnerships
6. Facilitating growth.<sup>26</sup>

The strategies and goals in turn are supported by four plans: research, education, Māori and partnerships. At the time of the audit, the University is mid-way through a 10-year strategy and is undertaking an update of the priorities and progress indicators associated with each goal and merging the research and education plans into an academic plan.<sup>27</sup> The Panel agrees with the University that merging the education and research plans will strengthen the research-teaching nexus for the university. It will comment further on aspects of the strategic update where they are relevant to guideline statements.

The University's Investment Plan includes mapping the 'Moving Forward' initiatives to the University's strategy.<sup>28</sup> Two further documents important in guiding the work of the University are its Learner Success Framework (Manaaki Taura) (also part of 'Moving Forward') and its Disability Action Plan. While alignment can be seen between all plans, the Panel anticipates that the strategic

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<sup>23</sup> FE, point 6; FE 3.

<sup>24</sup> FE 8.

<sup>25</sup> SRR, p. 3.

<sup>26</sup> KD 1.

<sup>27</sup> SRR, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> IP 23-25, p. 12.

update will strengthen the coherence between the University strategy and plans and frameworks developed for other purposes.

### Context for this Audit

The Panel appreciates that all audits take place at a point in time and in a context. In common with other universities audited in Cycle 6 to date, the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 are seen in an increase in online teaching and learning, and in the financial challenges facing the sector as a whole. Cost-of-living effects on students are generating further pressures for change.

The University included questions about the impact of COVID-19 in its 2021 Post Qualification Outcomes Survey (PQOS) and participated in the i-graduate COVID-19 response barometer.<sup>29</sup> Responses to the COVID-19 response barometer indicated that Lincoln students were more satisfied with the University's response to COVID-19 than students from other institutions in Aotearoa New Zealand or globally. Not surprisingly, however, almost three-quarters of respondents to the PQOS reported at least one impact of COVID-19 on either their study or employment-seeking activities. However, the impacts had reduced since the previous year.<sup>30</sup>

Together with other factors, the above issues are influencing discussions about the 'new normal' and future for teaching and learning at the University. However, in this audit, the Panel is also conscious of a recent change in size and shape of the University and of positive impacts of new and redeveloped buildings and facilities on the University campus.

The student profile of the University has changed substantially since its Cycle 5 academic audit in 2016. At that point the student profile reflected a 2011 merger with the Telford Rural Polytechnic giving a profile in which one third of EFTS were in sub-degree programmes. The Telford Division was transferred out of the University in 2017.<sup>31</sup>

Since 2017, the University has seen overall growth in student numbers and further changes to its student profile.<sup>32</sup> The University's student profile at the end of 2023 (just before this audit) was 10% EFTS in sub-degree programmes and 43% in qualifications at level 8 and above on the NZQCF, with most of these (70%) being in taught Master's degrees. A further change in the composition of the student profile is seen in the growth of students studying at a distance (11%), mainly through online programmes.<sup>33</sup>

The University appears to be in a growth phase<sup>34</sup> and is alert to the need to carefully manage the experience of students in its growth areas: online and taught Master's programmes. It is not clear how much of this growth will have been driven by a 'fees free' initiative that includes most of the University's qualifications above level 7 on the NZQCF.<sup>35</sup> Further growth is anticipated through the development of offshore programmes. While the University has previously offered some

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<sup>29</sup> SD 62.

<sup>30</sup> SD 8.

<sup>31</sup> SRR, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> FE 8.

<sup>33</sup> FE 8.

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/news-and-events/strong-growth-in-student-enrolments-in-2024-for-fifth-year-running/> (Accessed 21 March 2024.)

<sup>35</sup> IP 23-25, p. 25; <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/study-for-free/> (Accessed 23 March 2024.)

qualifications offshore, the anticipated scale of this development is a new area for the University and will require careful management.

During its visit to the University, the Panel heard frequent reference to ‘the Lincoln way’. As the smallest New Zealand university (with 3,123 total EFTS in 2023), the University is able to foster a strong sense of belonging among its student body and a strong relational connection between staff (both academic and professional) and students. However, at some point the growth in EFTS (from 2,475 in 2017) may put pressure on ‘the Lincoln way’.<sup>36</sup> The University may need to move towards more centralised and potentially less personalised support structures and systems to meet the needs of a larger student body. Where relevant, the Panel will comment in this report on this challenge and implications for teaching, staffing and support services for students.

The development of campus facilities and of asynchronous online (plus other blended and online delivery) programmes are part of the ‘Moving Forward’ programme. Other components of this programme—including the Manaaki Tauira Learner Success Framework, the development of University-Industry Alliance Partnerships, and a ‘Food Transitions 2050’ joint postgraduate school—also provide context for this audit and the Panel heard reference to these in interviews across the University.

### **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 2 May 2024 and to the University for a review of matters of factual accuracy on 13 May 2024.

The University uses the Kai Tahu mita (dialect) in university documents and this report tries to reflect that usage. This report uses the term ‘Pacific’ to refer to Pacific students and staff, rather than Pasifika, unless Pasifika is part of a specific position description or initiative.<sup>37</sup>

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 University provided an update report on how it had addressed recommendations made in its Cycle 5 academic audit. With the exception of a recommendation about development and operationalisation of the University’s Motu Plan, the Panel considers the University has responded adequately, and in some cases well, to Cycle 5 recommendations. The Panel will comment further in this report where it considers Cycle 5 recommendations remain relevant in Cycle 6.

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<sup>36</sup> FE 8.

<sup>37</sup> Breed, X. (2022). Themes for Pasifika from the Cycle 5 academic audit of New Zealand universities. Available from <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/node/393> (Accessed 29 April 2024.)

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

This section of the audit framework examines 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.<sup>38</sup>

The senior management structure of the university was set out briefly above (p. 5). The Panel questioned why Deans of Faculties, who have senior leadership roles and responsibilities in leading and managing teaching and learning, are not members of the SLT. Their role seemed to the Panel to be more as conduits for information rather than contributing directly to strategic and leadership decisions. The Panel appreciates that thought has been given to the design and composition of the SLT. However, it does wonder if the University is missing an opportunity for strengthening the alignment between strategic and operational decision making. The Panel suggests that the University evaluate the potential risk of leaving key leaders with significant operational responsibilities for teaching and learning out of SLT discussions and decision making.

### **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's strategic planning framework was set out in the introduction to this report. The Panel's consideration of this guideline statement focuses on the University's use of data in its planning and reporting activities.

At a university level, progress on priorities and indicators is reported to the University Council via a scorecard. This uses a traffic light system to show whether the University is meeting targets set for progress indicators for each of its strategies and goals.<sup>39</sup> The Panel was also provided with templates for a project logic model and a student journey map, which both show an intent to assess outcomes and impact.<sup>40</sup> The Crown Funding Agreement has also imposed institutional or significant project reporting requirements on the University. The Panel considers that the University reporting is clear and effective at this strategic level. It therefore considers that the University has responded to a Cycle 5 recommendation that strategic plans should include objectives related to student achievement and teaching quality.

The Panel was less clear that the second part of the Cycle 5 recommendation—the inclusion of key performance indicators that inform academic quality assurance processes—had been embedded across the University, so it explored use of data and information for informing teaching and learning and student experience activities at more operational levels in the University. The Panel gained the sense that the University does have (and uses) data in its planning and reporting activities. But it

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<sup>38</sup> AQA (2020). Guide to Cycle 6 Academic Audit. p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> FE 7.

<sup>40</sup> FE 32, FE 31.

thought that much of the data the University uses either come from single-function reporting or require specialist analysis and/or dedicated monitoring roles (such as those found in Te Manutaki) and should be integrated to gain a holistic view. The consequence of this is that data are not easily available for day-to-day monitoring and planning.

The ability to use data to monitor courses is further challenged by a low response rate for student evaluations of teaching. More recently, the University has begun to use student progress and success data as part of a 'Course Enhancement Programme' in Manaaki Tauiira to identify courses that may need attention (see GS 15).

Paradoxically, the low response rate for student evaluations of teaching might be attributed in part to a well-functioning in-class feedback system through class representatives (see GS 2). However, the Panel also heard comment that lack of responsiveness to feedback also contributed to the low response to student evaluations of courses or teaching. Whatever the reason, the response rate remains problematic and does not allow for useful feedback on teaching that can be used to inform the development of practice, nor assess the impact of developments in teaching practice on student experience. The Panel will comment further on this in GS 25.

The University is taking steps to improve data availability and use through initiatives including the Manaaki Tauiira Learner Success Framework. The Manaaki Tauiira Framework implies an integrated and evaluative approach with research, qualitative and quantitative data, and analytics all being used to inform "evidence-based intervention solutions" which are then tested and reviewed, and their effectiveness measured.<sup>41</sup> While the Panel appreciates and supports this intent, it found little evidence of this happening in systemic or holistic ways. Part of the difficulty in implementing this intended approach may be the lack of an integration layer across the various systems. Although the Panel was advised that the University was not considering an integration layer as such, it also heard that the University was considering further work on its Customer Relationship Management system.<sup>42</sup>

The implementation of Gradebook is an initiative of Manaaki Tauiira that should improve data availability. Even with the implementation of Gradebook, it seemed to the Panel that there was still a reliance on individual academic (and other) staff monitoring student engagement with their learning. This highly relational approach is seen by staff as a strength of the 'Lincoln way'. However, it does have limitations in larger and online courses.

**Commendation:** *The Panel commends the University's relational approach to monitoring of student engagement, progress and wellbeing.*

The Panel considers that relational approaches could be both better supported and gain efficiencies for an anticipated larger student cohort through a more integrated approach to data and reporting. This attention to integrated data would also allow earlier and more systematic assessment of the impact of programmes and initiatives for different groups of students. As the University grows and changes shape further, it is important that it has sufficient data to inform changes to staffing and services profiles to support the new size and shape.

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<sup>41</sup> SD 2.

<sup>42</sup> SRR, p. 46.



**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University develop a more integrated approach to reporting that accesses data from different systems and functions to provide a holistic view of students, courses and staffing; and that it uses this integrated approach to systematise evaluation of impact and reporting on initiatives and processes focused on teaching and learning, and the student experience.*

The Panel will comment further where it sees there would be benefit in greater connectedness of systems, integration of data and evaluation, and monitoring of initiatives throughout this report (see GS 6, GS 9, GS 12, GS 13, GS 15, GS 25). With an increased emphasis on data for monitoring and assessing impact—and the associated increase in access to such data—the University will also need to ensure that policies and protocols for data governance and sovereignty are in place. Attention will also need to be given to upskilling staff in the use of integrated data and systematic assessment of impact.

## **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.

The first value presented in the University’s strategy 2019-2028 is that students are at the core of the University and that “students are [the University’s] reason for being”. The University intends to enact this value by:

- “putting the ‘student experience’ at the centre of all that we do
- providing excellent and inspirational learning, teaching and research
- providing an environment that helps ensure our students’ academic and personal success
- empowering and supporting students to make the right decisions”.<sup>43</sup>

A Student Charter also helps make manifest this value. The Charter sets out the expectations of students, the Students’ Association (LUSA) and the University. It is an example of a document that is clearly intended to be accessible to students.<sup>44</sup>

The Panel saw evidence of the University’s intentional and multi-faceted approach to engaging with the student voice in:

- Te Poari Wheako Taura (Student Experience Board) being co-governed between students and the University
- regular meetings between students, senior management, and a wide range of university units and functions
- student membership of boards, committees and working groups, including those that extend beyond academic committees
- engagement with students in early stages of design of initiatives (including the Disability Action Plan) so their voice contributes to their development
- an effective class representative system

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<sup>43</sup> KD 1.

<sup>44</sup> SD 5; <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/assets/PoliciesAndProcedures/Student-Charter-v2.pdf> (Accessed 22 March 2024.)

- a range of student surveys that include attention to specific groups of students, functions and services, and students’ feedback on teaching
- efforts to close the loop on student feedback.<sup>45</sup>

The Panel was pleased to see that diverse student voices were also recognised in the above processes and that the University was prepared to provide support for groups that were not as well-resourced as LUSA. Te Awhioraki (the Māori students’ association) also has membership of committees, and the Tumuaki of Te Awhioraki has a standing invitation to attend Council meetings. Te Poari Wheako Taura membership includes Te Awhioraki Tumuaki as a co-convenor and representatives of international, postgraduate, Pacific, scholarship, residential, first-year, disabled and rainbow students.<sup>46</sup> The Panel was pleased to hear Te Poari Wheako Taura was considering whether its membership adequately reflected the changing profile of students at the University.

**Commendation:** *The Panel commends the University’s commitment to working in partnership with all students and, in particular, the establishment of co-governance and early engagement approaches.*

While the remit of academic audit does not extend to the students’ associations themselves, the Panel also acknowledges the proactive work of students’ associations (LUSA, Te Awhioraki and LUPISA) in supporting their fellow students and in engaging widely and effectively with the University.

The University has identified two enhancement initiatives associated with this guideline statement. It intends to (1) develop a student voice and partnerships policy and provide guidance on “effective ways of closing the loop”; and (2) monitor and measure the effectiveness of actions taken. The Panel endorses these enhancements. The first is consistent with comments it heard about inconsistency in responding to feedback<sup>47</sup> and closing the loop (despite a recognised commitment to doing this). The second aligns with the recommendation made in GS 1 that there should be a systematic approach to evaluating initiatives.

The Panel has commented above on the low response rate to student evaluations of courses and teaching. It also notes that response rates of other surveys vary, with some also being quite low, such as the Student Experience Survey at 14.5%.<sup>48</sup> The Post-Qualifications Outcomes survey is an exception with a response rate more than 50% and an associated comprehensive report.<sup>49</sup> However, to strengthen the validity of student feedback collected through these mechanisms, the Panel suggests the development of the student voice and partnerships policy include expectations for response rates.

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<sup>45</sup> SRR, pp. 10-18.

<sup>46</sup> SD 3.

<sup>47</sup> See also SD 7, p. 24.

<sup>48</sup> SD 7, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup> SRR, p. 18; SD 8.

### GS 3 Teaching and learning environments

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

The teaching and learning environments at the University have also undergone considerable change since the Cycle 5 academic audit. Development of the physical campus environment is guided by a Campus Master Plan and cultural narrative, gifted by Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki ki Taumutu, and supported by the Crown Funding Agreement. Online and blended learning is a priority area in the University strategy.

The Campus Master Plan was refreshed in 2022 and included student and staff input.<sup>50</sup> As noted above (p. 5), new and redeveloped spaces have opened since 2020 and further redevelopment of the physical campus is ongoing. The new flagship science building—Waimarie—is the focal point of this development. Other initiatives include a redevelopment of the University gym (2021), a new Science South building (2021), and a central hub (Grounded) for student life (2020).<sup>51</sup>

**Commendation:** *The Panel commends the way in which the University has been guided by its cultural narrative and campus master plan in developing and refurbishing buildings and facilities on its campus.*

The Panel heard appreciation for these new spaces and, consistent with the recommendation made in GS 1, it considers the University should continue to monitor their effectiveness as teaching and learning spaces. The 2022 Student Experience Survey showed moderate levels of satisfaction (69%)<sup>52</sup> with the quality of buildings on campus and it will be important to monitor this as new buildings come into greater use. Perhaps inevitably, it also heard that older facilities compared unfavourably in terms of their capabilities (particularly the ability to record or stream lectures or other sessions) and non-flexible configuration.

While the physical campus environment is undergoing considerable renewal, the Panel became aware of specific areas and groups where more attention may be needed. It heard of physical access challenges for disabled students, including in the redeveloped Whare Hākinakina where students were unable to access facilities on the upper floor. However, the Panel does note the University is developing dedicated space for neurodiverse students. The development of the Motu Plan will be important in guiding further provision of space for Pacific students.

The development of the online teaching and learning environment has two main drivers: first, the need to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and, second, the establishment of strategic priority. At the start of 2020, the University delivered little to no teaching online. A COVID-19 Academic and Student Experience Working Group (CASEWG) was established by the Academic Board on the request of the Critical Incident Management Team. CASEWG met first in January 2020 (before the government direction to move to COVID-19 Alert Level 4 (lockdown))<sup>53</sup> and continued to meet until

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<sup>50</sup> SRR, p. 19.

<sup>51</sup> SRR, pp. 6-7.

<sup>52</sup> SD 7, p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19\\_alert\\_levels\\_in\\_New\\_Zealand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_alert_levels_in_New_Zealand) (Accessed 26 April 2024.)

June 2022, although with reduced frequency after September 2020.<sup>54</sup> The development of policies and procedures for online teaching and redesign of teaching, learning and assessment were led by CASEWG. The University returned to on-campus, face-to-face teaching and learning with mandatory recording of all lectures as its primary mode of teaching from Semester 2, 2022.<sup>55</sup>

The pandemic-initiated move to online teaching and learning has been followed by a strategic approach in the form of the Lincoln Connected programme.<sup>56</sup> Lincoln Connected involves converting selected programmes and qualifications to be available as fully online, asynchronous options for students. Nine fully online asynchronous programmes and 42 courses have been developed.<sup>57</sup> Lincoln Connected conversions are supported by dedicated instructional designers, although the Panel heard that these resources were also being diverted to other online initiatives. However, the Panel is pleased to see the attention the University is paying to the experience of online students, including monitoring that their completion rates remain in line with students in face-to-face qualifications.

Asynchronous online delivery is one component of the University's approach to online teaching and learning, with synchronous online and blended and flexible options also being developed. A Technology-Enabled Learning Strategy (TELS) is intended to provide direction for the development of the "technological ecosystem".<sup>58</sup> The Panel found some confusion between Lincoln Connected and TELS with TELS being implemented through Lincoln Connected and not having its own reporting pathway.<sup>59</sup> This makes it difficult to gauge the development of the technological ecosystem for the University.

Online teaching and learning is obviously becoming more important to the University. It is reflected in the University's strategy and the University has committed resource to operationalise this strategic priority. However, the Panel also found a lack of clarity about how online teaching and learning was anticipated to move from being a strategic initiative to business as usual. It recommends that, in the update of its strategic plan, the University provides clarity about the place of online learning, the delivery of online programmes, and how the future contribution of 'Lincoln Connected' will be developed.

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University set out the development path and reporting expectations for online teaching and learning in its strategy update.*

The Panel heard other comments about the online environment and lack of user-friendliness and non-connectedness of systems. These comments align with student survey data that show lower levels of satisfaction with administrative processes and systems.<sup>60</sup> The Panel considers the University is aware of these issues and has mechanisms to address them, including Te Poari Wheako Taurira<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> SRR, p. 19.

<sup>55</sup> SRR, pp. 19-20.

<sup>56</sup> SRR, p. 20.

<sup>57</sup> SRR, p. 97.

<sup>58</sup> SRR, p. 20.

<sup>59</sup> FE, p. 9.

<sup>60</sup> SD 7, p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> SRR, p. 11.

and specific initiatives such as development of the CRM<sup>62</sup> and the constraints-based approach to developing the University timetable.<sup>63</sup> However, the Panel again considers that greater integration of systems would assist students and the University.

Experiential learning environments are also an important aspect of the Lincoln experience for many students. In addition to labs and site visits, these include field trips and tours, practical work, and work-integrated learning (WIL). WIL is identified as a priority area under Goal 1 of the University strategy and the University intends to have a work-integrated learning plan in place for all students.<sup>64</sup> The Panel considers the University's intent to review work-integrated learning to ensure consistency of access for students and the quality of their experience to be a positive step.

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms the University's intent to review work-integrated learning to ensure consistency of access for students and the quality of their experience.*

#### **GS 4 Academic delegations**

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

The Cycle 5 academic audit of the University had recommended the University “communicates to all staff a clear delegations statement for all academic decision-making”. This was completed in 2017 and revised in 2023. The University now has a comprehensive schedule of delegations that is attached to the Delegations of Authority policy with explicit connections to other relevant policies.<sup>65</sup>

The University is now redeveloping its model of academic governance to provide for separation of academic and managerial decision-making, to strengthen the standing of academic decision-making and to promote consistency of decision-making across the University.<sup>66</sup> This work takes the form of an academic governance framework. The Panel considers the academic governance framework will be a useful and enabling piece of work. It will need to complement other work in planning and implementing academic policies and procedures to address variations in practice across the University. Again, this will be important as the University grows and needs to be oriented to the future.

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms the University's enhancement initiative to progress and implement an Academic Governance Framework.*

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<sup>62</sup> SRR, p. 49.

<sup>63</sup> SRR, pp. 22-23.

<sup>64</sup> KD 2.

<sup>65</sup> SD 12.

<sup>66</sup> SRR, pp. 26-27.

### **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.

The University manages risk through a Strategic Risk Register, risk registers for each business unit, business continuity frameworks, processes for oversight approval of variations for academic decisions, and dedicated policies on specific areas of risk including staff-student relationships, academic partnerships, field trips and tours, and academic integrity.<sup>67</sup>

The Strategic Risk Register is a high-level document and, while it does include a failure to meet student expectations as a risk, the Panel considers academic risks such as lack of appropriate staff capability for the changing student profile and lack of academic integrity could be expressed more fully in the risk register. The Panel also suggests that concerns it heard about the ‘Lincoln way’ coming under pressure due to growth in student numbers and changing modes of delivery might also be considered from a risk perspective.

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends that the University make academic risks more explicit in its Strategic Risk Register.*

The University is currently undertaking further work on its policies on conflicts of interest and field trips and tours. It intends to add further requirements for declarations of interest of relationships between supervisors to the Conflicts of Interest Policy, include declarations of interest as a standing item in academic committee agendas, and develop a new Field Trip / Field Tour Risk Management Policy. The Panel endorses these developments and is pleased to see how the University’s Disability Action Plan (DAP) has influenced other changes to policy and practice for field trips and tours.<sup>68</sup>

The University has developed a SafeLU app which provides easy access to emergency contacts and procedures, the ability to raise issues or concerns, and links to other resources. The app also allows the University to communicate important information, such as whether the campus is open to students and staff in the case of an emergency. The University used the app during the 2019 Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre attacks and during COVID-19, and the Panel experienced a test of the app while they were on campus for the site visit. The Panel considers the SAFELU app to be a useful initiative.

**Commendation:** *The Panel commends the development and use of the SafeLU app.*

### **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 established six objectives for its Enhancement Theme Plan. These have been carefully mapped as they contribute to both existing and subsequent initiatives, including Manaaki Taura—the

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<sup>67</sup> SRR, pp. 29-33.

<sup>68</sup> SRR, p. 110.

University's Learner Success Plan—but not the University's Māori Plan.<sup>69</sup> The Panel saw evidence of a great deal of attention to support and success for Māori students (it will comment further on Pacific students in GS 7), but not an overall plan<sup>70</sup> (other than the business case for the Manaaki Taurira programme), nor assessment of impact of initiatives.

However, the Panel considers the Manaaki Taurira programme is comprehensive; addresses multiple perspectives (students, courses (see GS 15), staffing (GS 24), and the teaching and learning environment (GS 3)); has committed and dedicated staff, and appropriate oversight (including from the University Council); and provides evidence of the University making a significant commitment to supporting student success.<sup>71</sup> The University provided aggregate data on Manaaki Taurira progress measures (which are essentially the TEC's Educational Performance Indicators). These indicate that the University is tracking ahead of its targets for Māori students in all but participation in NZQCF level 4-7 non-degree courses.<sup>72</sup>

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms the Manaaki Taurira programme and suggests more attention be paid to finer-grained evaluation and reporting of the impact of individual initiatives in the programme for different groups of students.*

Much of the monitoring of Māori student success is undertaken on an individual basis with committed staff from a small Te Manutaki unit making a major contribution to this.<sup>73</sup> Monitoring has been assisted with the implementation of Gradebook but does still appear to be a largely manual process and therefore demanding on individuals. Combined with the highly relational 'Lincoln way', this manual approach presents challenges in maintaining progress when staff turnover occurs. However, Te Manutaki staff were proactive in engaging students. Other reports on the student experience, for example the PQOS, did not identify the experiences of Māori students, although international students were identified.<sup>74</sup> This provides another example of available data not being integrated to provide a holistic view.

**Commendation:** *The Panel commends the work of Te Manutaki in supporting the progress of Māori and Pacific students at the University.*

The DVC Māori had very recently started her role at the time of the site visit to the University. The Panel appreciates that neither she nor other members of the University will have had time to fully discuss how the DVC Māori will engage with Manaaki Taurira and other initiatives. With such a substantial programme in place and commitment to co-governance of this programme, it may seem practical to maintain previous mechanisms and contributions. However, the Panel considers there would be benefit in having a more fundamental discussion about future roles and responsibilities in Manaaki Taurira.

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<sup>69</sup> SRR, pp. 35-36.

<sup>70</sup> FE, p. 12.

<sup>71</sup> FE 12.

<sup>72</sup> FE 14.

<sup>73</sup> SRR, p. 64.

<sup>74</sup> SD 8.

### **GS 7 Progress on the Enhancement Theme (Pacific students)**

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

The University elected to combine GS 6 and GS 7 in its self-review report. The Panel considers that it is preferable to treat them separately to allow a clear focus on Pacific students, something it considers is lacking in the University's approach to and management of Pacific students. The number of Pacific students enrolled at the University is low (fewer than 45 EFTS) although it has grown slightly since 2020.<sup>75</sup> Pacific staff numbers are very low, to the point that the Panel was unable to speak with a group of Pacific staff. The Panel did hear that Māori and Pacific students regularly join together and have a shared sense of community. Nonetheless, as numbers of Māori and Pacific students (and staff) grow, the University will need to consider its obligations to best serve the needs of both cohorts.

Focusing on the job title, rather than the individual or the role, the appointment of a DVC Māori means there is no visible leadership of a Pacific agenda at a senior level within the University. The change in position title (from DVC Māori and Pasifika to DVC Māori) cannot be considered in isolation from the responsibilities of the role that included Pacific.

The Panel explored how the University sees its role in the Pacific and was reassured to find that the University did see a role but felt constrained by lack of resources (financial and staffing) to be able to progress this. The lack of progress on the University's Motu Plan,<sup>76</sup> which was the subject of a recommendation in the Cycle 5 academic audit of the University<sup>77</sup> and has been identified by the University as an enhancement initiative in this cycle of academic audit,<sup>78</sup> indicates the challenges the University faces in progressing its Pacific agenda. Although the Motu Plan is identified as an enhancement initiative that is underway, the Panel did not see evidence of this being the case.

The Panel considers that the University has a significant journey ahead in positioning itself in the Pacific and addressing Pacific student success in almost everything from curriculum content and delivery to guidance and support. Progress is being made in building Māori staff capacity and deliberate attention may need to be paid to building Pacific staff capacity (see GS 22).

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends that the University clarify how and when the Motu Plan is to be progressed, resourced and led.*

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<sup>75</sup> FE 8.

<sup>76</sup> KD 7.

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/Lincoln%20University%20Report%20Cycle%205.pdf>, pp. 23-24 (Accessed 24 March 2024.)

<sup>78</sup> SRR, p. 110.



## Section B: Student life cycle, support and wellbeing

Section B 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 growth in student numbers and change in profile was summarised in the Introduction to this report and is likely to have a particular impact on the quality aspects addressed in this section of the audit framework. As the student population grows and changes, the University's support services (in both dimensions of student learning and wellbeing) will continue to come under pressure to maintain current standards. These need to be monitored and kept under review as the focus for existing services may need to change.

In 2023 the University enrolled 3,122 EFTS, with 657 (21%) of those being international students. European/Pākehā are the largest ethnic group (50%), followed by Asian (39%), and Māori students (6.3%). Pasifika students accounted for 1.4% of the University's cohort in 2023. The gender profile is oriented toward female students at 55% EFTS and 0.1% of EFTS were gender diverse; 40% of EFTS were aged 25 and above.

### **GS 8 Access**

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

Entry requirements for qualifications are set out in the University Māramataka | Calendar and on the University website.<sup>79</sup> An admissions policy delegates responsibility for admissions to the Academic Administration Committee.<sup>80</sup> The Panel did hear that entrance requirements and the applications and enrolments systems can be difficult to navigate, but that support was readily available. The University has no limited entry qualifications (as long as entrance requirements are met).<sup>81</sup>

Activities to support early access to the University centre on liaison activities with schools. These include the opportunity for high-achieving secondary school students to study some first-year university courses. The University also works with students who narrowly miss meeting University Entrance (UE) to provide other pathways for accessing university study.<sup>82</sup>

A series of scholarships also supports access to the University, including scholarships that are part of the Manaaki Tauira programme. The SRR states "there are numerous Māori and Pasifika scholarships available".<sup>83</sup> However, from other data provided by the University, fewer than 20 scholarships appear to be focused on supporting access for Māori or Pacific students.<sup>84</sup> The Panel appreciates that Māori and Pacific students may also be awarded non-focused scholarships.

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/study/apply-and-enrol/apply/entry-requirements/> (Accessed 24 March 2024.)

<sup>80</sup> SD 29.

<sup>81</sup> SRR, p. 40.

<sup>82</sup> SRR, p. 48.

<sup>83</sup> SRR, p. 51.

<sup>84</sup> FE 15.

The University appears to assess the effectiveness of access to the University through a low number of reported appeals against decisions to decline an application. However, a recommendation from the 2022 Student Experience Survey suggests that enrolment processes should be reviewed, and the University has identified an enhancement initiative to review the domestic prospect conversion journey. The Panel endorses this work.

The University intends to develop curated pathways for access as part of the Manaaki Taurua programme. Given the relatively low participation rates of Māori and Pacific students at the University, the Panel affirms this initiative. The Panel considers this initiative will also be important if the University is to support access for increasing numbers of students who will have studied in kura kaupapa.<sup>85</sup>

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms the development of Manaaki Taurua curated pathways and encourages the University to ensure that its establishment includes plans for evaluating effectiveness.*

### **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.

The SRR sets out a number of initiatives and events to support transition, mainly focused on transition to university, with some differentiation of activities to cater to different groups of students, for example, scholarship students, disabled students, residential students and international students.<sup>86</sup> A 'Transition to University' programme has been established. This recognises that transition may be a longer-term process that can take weeks, or even months. The Panel is pleased to see the University is drawing on transitions pedagogy work to inform this programme and endorses the University's aim to increase measurement to be able to assess the long-term effectiveness of this programme.

Some data on specific aspects of the transition to university are available. The University has also identified an enhancement initiative to "review ... mechanisms to measure the experience at different stages of transition to ensure student feedback is informing continuous improvement". The Panel also endorses this initiative, but recommends it be consolidated with the transitions to university programme and pursued in line with the recommendation made with respect to GS 1. It also suggests the University considers including questions about transition to university in its student experience survey.<sup>87</sup>

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University establish an integrated and holistic approach to monitoring transitions that allows the effectiveness of initiatives for different groups of students at different stages of their study to be evaluated.*

<sup>85</sup> <https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/maori-language-in-schooling> (Accessed 25 March 2024.)

<sup>86</sup> SRR, pp. 42-57.

<sup>87</sup> SD 7.

The University does monitor ongoing transitions through an “Academic Progress Review” process.<sup>88</sup> Support is available to students whose progress is below the required threshold. However, this is an inherently reactive process that is not initiated until a student has failed to make progress. The University’s enhancement initiative and the above recommendation should allow a more proactive (and preventative) approach to be established.

Other transitions appear to receive less attention and the SRR notes that the University does not have a formal process to support a transition to postgraduate study.<sup>89</sup> This seems inconsistent with the growth in postgraduate numbers and the strategic attention the University is paying to these students. The inclusion of “stages of their study” in the above recommendation should include effectiveness of initiatives to support transition into postgraduate study.

The Panel was pleased to see the attention the University was paying to supporting students to transition to the workforce. A Careers Service provides drop-in support, scheduled appointments, workshops and events. Some sessions are available online. The University is also part of the Pike Ake programme that supports postgraduate Māori students into academic careers.

This guideline statement also asks whether students are well-equipped to contribute in their chosen fields. The University assesses this through its PQOS and anecdotal feedback from graduates and employers. The PQOS report comments that mixed feedback is received on whether qualifications provide students with the necessary skills for employment.<sup>90</sup> Strong employment rates indicate that students are well equipped, and 87% of graduates in employment consider their job to be in line with their career aspirations.<sup>91</sup> However, it is not clear that the attainment of graduate attributes is assessed other than when a qualification is approved, for example through curriculum mapping.

#### **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.

Academic advice is available at the University, but there is no requirement for undergraduate students to access it,<sup>92</sup> nor does the University seek feedback on students’ experience with academic advising.<sup>93</sup> The Panel heard that academic advice varied from degree to degree and was at times difficult to access in postgraduate studies.

While the personal and relational ethos of support for students at the University gives the Panel confidence that students would be able to get advice if needed, this *ad hoc* approach seems to be inconsistent with the attention given to other aspects of student support and guidance—such as access, transitions, learning support or wellbeing—where a range of support is available. Similarly,

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<sup>88</sup> SRR, p. 56.

<sup>89</sup> SRR, p. 55.

<sup>90</sup> SD 8, p.47.

<sup>91</sup> FE, p. 14.

<sup>92</sup> SRR, p.57.

<sup>93</sup> FE, p. 15.

the inclusion of academic progress monitoring in the Manaaki Taura programme seems inconsistent with a lack of commitment to ensuring students receive advice.<sup>94</sup>

As the University grows, the Panel considers that academic advising will come under pressure, and the non-mandatory and distributed delivery of advising means it is difficult to plan resourcing. Students need to know where to get advice and there is a need to ensure this is consistent. Academic advising has the potential to inform other support services about needs for student success. It could also provide guidance about transition to postgraduate study.

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University consider whether the current academic advising arrangements are serving students and the University well and allowing support to be optimally targeted.*

#### **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 University recently reviewed its policy and procedures for academic complaints, appeals and grievances and developed two new policies and procedures that separate academic appeals from student complaints.<sup>95</sup> The Panel was pleased to hear that Te Poari Wheako Taura had been engaged with the review process.

Both policies and procedures provide advice on where assistance and support in making an appeal or complaint can be found, include reference to appeals and complaints being heard in a culturally appropriate manner, and provide information about the Dispute Resolution Scheme established under the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 (the Code).<sup>96</sup> The Panel is also pleased to see evidence of the University monitoring trends in appeals and taking steps to amend policy and/or processes.<sup>97</sup>

The University is currently investigating the purchase of a software solution to support the management of complaints.<sup>98</sup> The Panel encourages this development, which should allow for analysis and reporting of trends in complaints (in addition to appeals) across the University.

Survey data indicate that around 60% of students are aware of how to make a complaint.<sup>99</sup> The Panel also heard that even if students were not aware of formal processes, they knew to ask LUSA or staff with whom they had built a positive relationship for advice. However, with the relative newness of policies and procedures, the Panel considers further socialisation and awareness-building of these processes for students is needed. A lack of awareness of complaints and grievance processes creates a barrier to accessing these processes.

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<sup>94</sup> FE 12.

<sup>95</sup> SRR, p. 58.

<sup>96</sup> SD 34; SD 35.

<sup>97</sup> FE, p. 16.

<sup>98</sup> SRR, p. 104.

<sup>99</sup> SD 7.

The Panel will comment further on the particular challenges of raising issues for postgraduate research students in Section E.

**GS 12 Learning support**

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

Learning support is provided centrally through Te Whare Pūrākau | Learning, Teaching and Library (LTL).<sup>100</sup> This is a central location and survey data indicate most students know how to get help with learning or research needs, although this proportion is lower for undergraduate students.<sup>101</sup> LTL includes learning advisors in an Academic Skills unit who provide a range of general and targeted services for different groups of students, including online students. The Panel notes that these services are provided by relatively few staff. This is another area that will come under pressure as student numbers grow and the number and proportion of postgraduate students increases. The Panel suggests the University monitor and benchmark learning support and other support units' (such as Te Manutaki) staff-to-student ratios.

The University presented detailed data on some aspects of learning support, and further information on request.<sup>102</sup> However, these reports tended to focus on single functions and the Panel heard that different units did not always know what others were doing, nor were they able to integrate data across functions, nor, in some cases, access data.<sup>103</sup> The Panel has already made a recommendation regarding data integration in GS 1. That recommendation is also relevant here.

Inclusive education is part of LTL with overall direction set by an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy<sup>104</sup> and the University's Disability Action Plan, which is part of the Manaaki Taurua programme.<sup>105</sup> The Disability Action Plan is a comprehensive framework to guide University systems, processes and environments in supporting disabled students. The Panel heard that students had been involved in its development. The Panel is pleased to see explicit attention being given to aspects such as staff induction (GS 23) and course design, including how field trips and other forms of work-integrated learning are accessible to disabled students. A further aspect the Panel suggests the University could pay attention to is how academic recognition mechanisms (for example, Deans' Lists), support the equitable recognition of disabled students. This should be part of the University's enhancement initiative for student progress reporting.<sup>106</sup>

The Panel recognises the University's commitment to inclusive education. It saw this enacted in a number of ways including working with and supporting students over the (sometimes prolonged) timeframe it can take for a formal assessment of diagnosis, regular meetings with and an open-door policy for disabled students, and development of a dedicated space for neurodiverse students.<sup>107</sup> However, it did hear of areas of inconsistency that should be addressed, including whether the

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<sup>100</sup> SRR, p. 59.

<sup>101</sup> SD 7.

<sup>102</sup> SD 36; SD 37; FE, pp. 16-17.

<sup>103</sup> SRR, p. 64.

<sup>104</sup> SD 39.

<sup>105</sup> KD 3.

<sup>106</sup> SRR, p. 110.

<sup>107</sup> SRR, pp. 61-62; p. 65.

regular meetings do occur. The Panel also heard of inconsistency in how individual management plans are implemented across the University, of more than one case of individual lecturers making their own assessment of the extent of a student's impairment, and other instances of asking questions that demonstrated a low level of disability awareness. Advice about the sorts of tools and technologies available for use by disabled students was a further topic where guidance seemed to be inconsistent. Opportunities afforded by some tools intersect with guidance on the use of generative artificial intelligence tools, and students were receiving mixed advice on whether they are allowed to access such tools that could enhance their learning.

**Commendation:** *The Panel commends the University's commitment to inclusive education and its Disability Action Plan.*

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends that, in monitoring its Disability Action Plan, the University assess how planned support is being implemented consistently and fairly across the University.*

The Panel supports the University's planned enhancement initiative to seek more feedback on inclusive education but suggests that thought be given at an early stage as to how this will be integrated with other data sources.

### **GS 13 Safety and wellbeing**

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

The Panel has previously commented on the centrality of the student experience to the University's strategy (p. 9) and the establishment of Te Poari Wheako Tauira. In addition to Te Poari Wheako Tauira, an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group provides further oversight of safety and wellbeing. The need for an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy arose from the University's gap analysis of its compliance with the Code. The Code is also particularly relevant to this guideline statement.

The DVC Student Life is responsible for reporting on Code compliance. This includes annual reporting to the University Council and quarterly reporting to the Committee on University Student Pastoral Care.<sup>108</sup> The Panel reviewed a Code Attestation report and considers it to be a transparent and honest assessment.

The SRR sets out a range of pastoral and social support services, including specific initiatives to address experiences of discrimination by Rainbow students, suicide prevention, prevention of sexual harm and assault, and alcohol harm reduction.<sup>109</sup> The Panel is pleased to see how these (and other) initiatives have been informed by research and other frameworks, including national models. Other initiatives include support for cultural diversity.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> FE 17.

<sup>109</sup> SRR, pp. 65-69.

<sup>110</sup> SRR, p. 67.

The Panel is impressed with the proactive approach taken by the Counselling and Wellbeing Team and Te Manutaki in appreciating that students may sometimes find it difficult to ask for support. The University's relational approach means that teaching staff identify students who may need further assistance. The Counselling and Wellbeing Team is developing a referral process for academic staff and considering how training can be provided to academic staff to help them identify potential issues.<sup>111</sup> The Panel supports these initiatives.

In addition to the units that provide health and wellbeing services, the University has appointed specific roles to support safe and inclusive behaviours. These are a Safer Communities Programme Advisor and Student Facilitators employed by the University.<sup>112</sup> The Panel gained a further sense of a strongly student-oriented approach to safety and wellbeing with significant contributions from students in both shaping and implementing initiatives. Once again though, it did not see an integrated approach to use of data and assessment of effectiveness. However, it did hear that health and wellbeing services were responsive to student needs, including and importantly, in times of crisis. This is supported by survey data indicating that most students are satisfied with support for wellbeing and safety, although international research students are less satisfied than other groups.<sup>113</sup>

**Commendation:** *The Panel commends the University's commitment to a highly student-centric approach to safety and wellbeing (including its responsibilities under the Code), the range of services available, and the responsiveness of the units that provide those services.*

The Code attestation highlights the importance of Māori, Pacific and disabled students being supported to reach their potential. The Panel has previously commended the work of Te Manutaki in supporting Māori and Pacific students and also saw that support being extended into cultural and pastoral support. One area it suggests where further support could be considered is the opportunity for Māori and Pacific students to be co-located in residential settings with other Māori and Pacific students. There also appear to be opportunities to improve accessibility of accommodation for disabled students.

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<sup>111</sup> SRR, p. 70.

<sup>112</sup> SRR, p. 65.

<sup>113</sup> SD 7.

## 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 has significant work underway or planned with respect to guideline statements in this section including incorporating mātauraka Māori in curricula; developing and implementing a University Graduate Profile (UGP); work on assessment; and attention being paid to Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen-AI). The development of the Academic Governance Framework (GS 4) will be important in supporting internal consistency and awareness of academic quality expectations across the University.

The University's qualification portfolio is aligned with skill needs in land-based sectors and the University strategy includes developments in how programmes are delivered, for example, including work-integrated learning or online.<sup>114</sup> The 2023 qualification portfolio extends from a Certificate in University Studies to a PhD programme. Almost 100 qualifications are offered, although the presence of major subjects in qualifications makes the number of academic programmes offered higher than this.<sup>115</sup> Two qualifications are offered in partnership with European Universities (the University of Göttingen and the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna) and one qualification with the University of Canterbury.<sup>116</sup> Seven qualifications and two major subjects are professionally accredited.<sup>117</sup> The growth in postgraduate enrolments, particularly in taught Master's qualifications was noted in the Introduction to this report.

### **GS 14 Programme approval**

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

The SRR sets out the University's process for approval of new qualifications or majors, which has strategic and academic approval stages. The first step in the process is approval by an Academic Programme Strategic Advisory Group (APSAG), which is chaired by the Provost. APSAG is responsible for "ensuring the coordination and strategic alignment of new academic programmes across the university". If approved by APSAG, a concept proposal is developed by the faculty or Academic Preparation and Pathways for approval by the Vice-Chancellor's Office.<sup>118</sup>

Advice on developing an academic proposal is set out in a Guide to Completing Proposals for Qualifications or Majors, and an Academic Programme Partner works alongside the proposer. Emphasis is placed on consultation with internal and external stakeholders.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> KD 1.

<sup>115</sup> KD 8.

<sup>116</sup> KD 8.

<sup>117</sup> SRR, p. 88.

<sup>118</sup> SRR, p. 74; <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/about-us/academic-departments/> (Accessed 2 May 2024.)

<sup>119</sup> SRR, p. 75; SD 41.



Academic proposals must set out how they contribute to the Māori Plan and appropriately address mātauraka Māori. The Director, Te Manutaki must be consulted. In future this will be the DVC Māori. This requirement would seem to go some way to addressing a Cycle 5 recommendation that the University “assess how best to implement the aspects of the Whenua matrix [part of the Māori strategy in place at the time of the Cycle 5 academic audit] which pertain to programme content and pedagogy”.

The Panel heard that the University intended to introduce a flagship Māori qualification. It is supportive of this direction and other efforts to include mātauraka Māori, kaupapa Māori and te ao Māori in courses. However, it has concerns that the University does not yet have the capability or capacity in place to support such an initiative. It will comment further in Section D.

Following approval from the Director, Te Manutaki, the proposal-approval process then proceeds through the Learning and Teaching Committee, Academic Board and the University Council before being submitted to the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP).<sup>120</sup> Twenty-one programme proposals have been approved by CUAP since the Cycle 5 academic audit, providing evidence of the effectiveness of the University’s processes.<sup>121</sup>

**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.

The quality of courses is monitored through an end-of-course student evaluation of courses and teaching, grade analysis and examiners’ meetings.<sup>122</sup> The Panel heard that online courses were treated no differently from a monitoring perspective, although additional monitoring protocols appear to be undertaken before delivery of the course.

A course enhancement pilot programme has been developed as part of the Manaaki Taura programme. In addition to the above quality indicators and processes, the Manaaki Taura Course Enhancement Programme also examines pass rates (including pass rates for Māori, Pacific and disabled students), class size, course level, programme contributions and feedback from student representatives.<sup>123</sup> This appears to be a more integrative approach, although the Panel is unclear how data are being integrated to inform this assessment.

Two groups of courses with the “greatest opportunity to improve pass rates and student satisfaction” have been selected for the pilot programme.<sup>124</sup> Academics delivering these courses are supported by the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CeLT) to examine course design, assessment, student engagement and course delivery, and redevelop their courses to improve pass rates, retention and satisfaction.

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<sup>120</sup> SRR, p. 74.

<sup>121</sup> FE 18.

<sup>122</sup> SRR, pp. 78-80.

<sup>123</sup> SRR, p. 95.

<sup>124</sup> SRR, p. 95.

A course appraisal process (in development) is intended to align with the Manaaki Tauiira initiative but operate on greater scale and address an identified gap in the course monitoring process. The Course Appraisal process is intended to provide immediate feedback to course examiners (academics with responsibility for a course) and identify gaps in examiner skills. The Panel is not clear how this will work, given the concerns over the validity of the end-of-course evaluation process due to low response rates (p. 8) and the lack of teaching quality indicators that could be expected to be part of a teaching quality framework (GS 25). The Panel acknowledges the University's enhancement initiative to make greater use of qualitative data collected in course evaluations<sup>125</sup> but notes that this can be resource intensive and wonders how this might be aligned with other course monitoring initiatives.

The Panel considers the Manaaki Tauiira Course Enhancement Programme to be a positive development that should help embed a more systematic approach to course and programme monitoring. However, enabling factors require further consideration. The first is a clear articulation of the way in which these elements of quality assurance will work together (perhaps in a quality framework), including the possible consequences of the academic governance framework. The second is the availability of integrated data for effective monitoring. The Panel suggests further development of the course appraisal process be reconsidered alongside an assessment of the Manaaki Tauiira Course Enhancement Programme, work on improving response rates for course evaluations, and teaching quality.

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms the Manaaki Tauiira Course Enhancement Programme.*

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University take an integrated and aligned approach to course monitoring using data that can be validated and cross-referenced.*

Annual programme monitoring was suspended during the COVID-19 period but reinstated in 2023 as an "Annual Programme Reflection" for all taught programmes.<sup>126</sup> Academic Board is advised that the reflection has occurred but not necessarily of any issues that could be more widely relevant.<sup>127</sup> The Panel was provided with an example of an annual programme reflection and could see that data on participation and completion rates were available but not that the reflective commentary considered trends in the data.<sup>128</sup> Deans and Directors are responsible for implementing changes<sup>129</sup> and the Panel wonders if the Academic Governance Framework might have implications for this.

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<sup>125</sup> SRR, p. 79.

<sup>126</sup> SRR, p. 81.

<sup>127</sup> SD 45.

<sup>128</sup> FE 21.

<sup>129</sup> SD 45.

## **GS 16 Review**

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

The first review of a new qualification or major is its Graduating Year Review (GYR). This is followed by an external academic programme review.<sup>130</sup> Professionally accredited programmes undergo review as required by their professional body.

The University has established procedures for undertaking GYRs.<sup>131</sup> A self-reflection report is completed by the programme co-ordinator and is then reviewed by an evaluation group. A student must be included as a member of the evaluation group and provision exists for an external industry perspective to be included. The Panel considers this to be good practice. The University has indicated that it intends to consolidate recommended actions from GYRs and provide that information to the relevant Dean. This initiative seems to focus on individual GYRs and it seems to the Panel there would be merit in consolidating recommendations at a higher level to be alert to any themes that could be relevant for upcoming GYRs.

The schedule for external academic programme review takes the timing of GYR and professional accreditation reviews into account. Some academic programme reviews were deferred over the COVID-19 period.<sup>132</sup> The completion of programme reviews was reported to CUAP until this requirement was removed in October 2023.<sup>133</sup>

The process for an external academic programme review follows normally accepted practice. The Panel is pleased to see the inclusion of a student and a member of CeLT in the self-review phase as well as a person able to provide advice related to the University's Māori Plan. A recent graduate is included in the external review panel. While a submission to the panel will be solicited from what was until recently the DVC Māori and Pasifika, there is no requirement for the external review panel to include a Māori member.<sup>134</sup>

**Commendation:** *The Panel commends the University's attention to ensuring student perspectives are well-represented in programme review processes.*

Deans are expected to report to the Academic Board on the planned response to an external academic programme review and on progress in implementing the recommendations from the review. As the University sees value in consolidating recommended actions in the GYR process, the Panel considers the University could learn from the systematic collation of themes in academic programme reviews. This would include professional accreditation reviews and implementation/follow-up reports.

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<sup>130</sup> SRR, pp. 81-82.

<sup>131</sup> SRR, pp. 76-78.

<sup>132</sup> SD 46.

<sup>133</sup> SD 48.

<sup>134</sup> SD 47.

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University establish a process for the systematic collation of themes in academic programme and professional accreditation reviews and their associated follow-up reports.*

**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.

Individual qualifications have sets of graduate attributes—categorised in terms of knowledge, skills and values—listed on the University website. This is a fairly recent development after previous approaches were either discontinued or became unfeasible with changes in technology.<sup>135</sup> The SRR states that all proposals for courses must demonstrate the alignment between assessment tasks and learning outcomes.<sup>136</sup> New programme proposals must demonstrate the alignment of courses to achieving graduate attributes. Both the annual programme reflection<sup>137</sup> and the external academic programme review<sup>138</sup> require the relevance and achievement of the graduate profile to be considered.

The achievement of graduate attributes is expressed in terms of graduate outcomes, specifically whether graduates consider their career aspirations are in line with their expectations.<sup>139</sup> This is, of course, important but the Panel is not clear that curriculum mapping is done systematically, other than mapping against programme-level graduate profiles when programmes are developed. The University’s assessment policy does refer to assessment as being the mechanism through which the attainment of learning outcomes is achieved.<sup>140</sup> However, without confidence in the currency of the mapping of the curriculum to the graduate profile, it is unclear that the University can assess whether specific programme graduate attributes are achieved.

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University develop a mechanism to assess more directly whether graduate attributes are being achieved.*

At the time of this audit, the University was developing a University Graduate Profile (UGP) and provided the Panel with a draft of the UGP.<sup>141</sup> This is a significant undertaking, and the Panel has some concerns that the scale of the work involved in not just developing but implementing and maintaining a UGP has been under-estimated and whether consultation on the proposed attributes has involved all key stakeholders.

With respect to consultation, the Panel heard some debate and unease as to whether the proposed “bi-cultural competence and confidence” attribute could be meaningfully achieved and assessed across all qualifications and for all students and, more fundamentally, what bi-culturalism means for Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University. While appreciating the University has work underway through a bi-cultural competency workshop series, the Panel agrees with these concerns, especially

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<sup>135</sup> SRR, p. 83.

<sup>136</sup> SRR, p. 83.

<sup>137</sup> SD 45.

<sup>138</sup> SD 47.

<sup>139</sup> SRR, p. 83.

<sup>140</sup> SD 51.

<sup>141</sup> FE 2.

given the low numbers of Māori staff able to guide this work. The Panel considers greater consultation with and reflection of the views of Māori staff is needed before this attribute is finalised.

The SRR states that changes to programme-level attributes are not anticipated with the implementation of a UGP.<sup>142</sup> The Panel is concerned that this could reflect a lack of appreciation of how a UGP can be implemented, maintained and assessed in a way that adds value to individual qualifications and therefore to students. That other universities have implemented a Curriculum Management System as part of this sort of initiative indicates the work involved and the scale of the implementation journey that could be associated with successfully implementing a UGP. Students seem to be largely unaware of graduate profiles and what they mean, although the Panel appreciates that this situation is probably not unique to this university. However, it does also indicate that further work will be required to raise awareness of the existence and value of a UGP with students. Implications for staff capacity and capability to support the implementation, maintenance and assessment of a UGP are also likely.

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends that, in progressing the development of a University Graduate Profile, the University consult further with Māori staff on the proposed bicultural competence and confidence attribute, and give further thought to the curriculum renewal, resources, systems and capabilities required to implement, maintain, and assess the attainment of the Graduate Profile.*

#### **GS 18 Assessment**

Assessment is appropriate and effective.

Assessment is guided by the University's Assessment Policy.<sup>143</sup> The Assessment Policy is accompanied by procedures and other policy and procedures setting out the roles and responsibilities of course examiners,<sup>144</sup> the University's commitment to and management of academic integrity,<sup>145</sup> and assessment in te reo Māori.<sup>146</sup> This provides a comprehensive policy framework for assessment and addresses a Cycle 5 recommendation that the University considers all forms of assessment and clarifies expectations for teaching staff.<sup>147</sup> The assessment policy was again reviewed in 2023.<sup>148</sup>

A guide to designing assessment has been developed by LTL.<sup>149</sup> This also addresses feedback issues raised in the Cycle 5 academic audit report. Student feedback on assessment is sought through the class representative system, end-of-course evaluations and the Student Experience Survey.

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<sup>142</sup> SRR, p. 84.

<sup>143</sup> SD 51.

<sup>144</sup> SD 52.

<sup>145</sup> SD 53.

<sup>146</sup> SD 55.

<sup>147</sup> <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/Lincoln%20University%20Report%20Cycle%205.pdf>, p. 60. (Accessed 1 April 2024.)

<sup>148</sup> SD 51.

<sup>149</sup> <https://lil.lincoln.ac.nz/teaching/plan-your-teaching/assessment/> (Accessed 1 April 2024.)

However, only just over two-thirds of domestic survey respondents agreed they received relevant and timely academic feedback.<sup>150</sup>

While the Assessment Policy and the Guide to designing assessment consider diversity in forms of assessment, they say relatively little about diversity in the student body. The Assessment Policy refers to assessments reflecting the diversity of student backgrounds, but not to assessment for disabled students or culturally appropriate assessment for Māori students, beyond being able to submit assessment in te reo Māori.<sup>151</sup> The Disability Action Plan does refer to assessment, and it would be helpful if the Assessment Policy also made this connection.<sup>152</sup>

Prompted by its experience in the COVID-19 pandemic, the University recognises that its post-pandemic position on assessment has not been fully defined. It has undertaken a series of assessment hui to articulate this further. The hui did consider student workload, but not, apparently, student diversity. The Panel heard mixed views about the assessment hui. While this was thought to be a valuable and much needed discussion to have, there was also uncertainty about the reason for the hui and the outcome(s) reached. Nonetheless, the Panel considers this assessment hui to be a useful initiative and encourages the University to set out the expectations for the next steps in this work, including how it is expected to intersect with the Academic Governance Framework.<sup>153</sup>

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms the assessment hui initiative and recommends the University communicate the outcomes to date and further expectations for this work.*

#### **GS 19 Assessment standards**

Assessment and outcome standards are appropriately set and moderated.

Assessment standards are set and moderated through a combination of pre- and post-moderation processes, external academic programme review and professional accreditation.<sup>154</sup> Pre-moderation of assessment design is predominantly an internal process and is required for all pieces of assessment worth 10% or more of the final grade for a course. This also applies to examination scripts. Post-assessment moderation occurs as part of examiners' meetings, with further oversight from AAC.<sup>155</sup> This post-assessment moderation focuses on analysing grade distributions rather than directly assessing whether marks awarded are consistent with national or international disciplinary norms. Evaluation of outcome standards might be expected to occur during the external academic review and professional accreditations processes, although these are less frequent.

The University has sought to strengthen the consistency of its post-examination moderation processes by introducing cross-faculty observers in examiners' meetings.<sup>156</sup> While these have the potential to be useful for promoting consistency of practice, their focus is on conformance with

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<sup>150</sup> SRR, p. 85.

<sup>151</sup> SD 51.

<sup>152</sup> KD 3.

<sup>153</sup> SRR, p. 87.

<sup>154</sup> SRR, pp. 87-88.

<sup>155</sup> SRR, p. 87.

<sup>156</sup> SRR, pp. 79-80.

policy. The substantive issue of alignment of outcomes with disciplinary norms is the responsibility of the examiners' meetings.

This was identified as an issue in the Cycle 5 academic audit, which recommended the University explore opportunities for benchmarking academic standards to ensure student achievement is externally validated.<sup>157</sup> The Panel recognises the University intends to develop further guidance on moderation.<sup>158</sup> There is some guidance on benchmarking assessment standards in the academic quality framework.<sup>159</sup> However, the Panel considers that its further development should include external validation of assessment standards. This is particularly important as the University increases its provision of taught Master's qualifications, which could be expected to demonstrate alignment with international standards. As with other initiatives, the Panel suggests the University should also consider how the effectiveness of this initiative will be evaluated.

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms the University's plans to develop further guidance on moderation and considers this should include expectations for external validation of assessment outcomes, particularly for taught Master's degrees.*

#### **GS 20 Academic integrity**

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

The University's approach to academic integrity is guided by its policy and procedures.<sup>160</sup> These are updated frequently as new challenges emerge. Expectations of academic integrity are communicated through a range of channels and the two University Proctors also send regular emails.<sup>161</sup> These recognise the need to ensure that contract staff are also aware of and can access advice and guidance on ensuring academic integrity.<sup>162</sup>

In practice, a University Proctor is responsible for investigating and resolving concerns about academic integrity (including, if appropriate, imposing penalties). This is a centralised process in which all instances of academic dishonesty are either notified or referred to a Proctor. Course examiners may handle some types of academic dishonesty if this is the first occurrence. Second instances will be handled by the Proctors. The Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure provided guidance on types and levels of academic integrity and the processes to be followed in each case.<sup>163</sup> The Panel is pleased to see evidence of educative and preventative dimensions of academic integrity as well as detection and response. It is also pleased to see evidence of the Proctors' reports being considered at meetings of the Academic Board.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/Lincoln%20University%20Report%20Cycle%205.pdf>, p. 60. (Accessed 1 April 2024.)

<sup>158</sup> SRR, p. 88.

<sup>159</sup> FE 22.

<sup>160</sup> SD 53.

<sup>161</sup> SRR, p. 89.

<sup>162</sup> FE 27.

<sup>163</sup> SD 53.

<sup>164</sup> FE 26.

**Commendation:** *The Panel commends the University’s centralised approach to management of academic integrity and the reporting and communications from the Proctors.*

One area where the Panel considers more guidance is needed is the use of Generative-AI (Gen-AI). This is a rapidly developing field but one perception heard more consistently than others was that Gen-AI was not permitted at the University. The Panel also heard confusion expressed as to what was considered a Gen-AI tool and therefore proscribed. The Panel considers clear guidance on this topic is needed and, potentially, professional development for staff. The potential for Gen-AI tools to support learning for disabled students should be included in this guidance.

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University urgently develop guidance on the use of Generative-AI tools, including the potential for them to support learning for disabled students.*

**GS 21 Assessment in te reo Māori**

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

The Assessment Policy establishes that assessments may be completed in te reo Māori<sup>165</sup> with further guidance set out in Policy and Procedures for Assessment in Te Reo Māori.<sup>166</sup> These Procedures establish that advance notice of an intention to submit in te reo Māori must be provided. If the examiner is not able to assess in te reo Māori, a translator may be appointed, and the Procedures include guidelines for translators.

To date, the University has received no requests to submit assessment in te reo Māori. The University considers it is not yet ready to support students from kura kaupapa pathways.<sup>167</sup> The Panel agrees with this assessment and further suggests the University has work to do in building capacity to be able to assess in te reo Māori as well as the broader development of a bi-cultural environment that would support such students. Therefore, while it appreciates the intent of the planned enhancement initiative to design a process to transition kura kaupapa students into the University, it suggests that the capacity and bi-cultural environment issues should be addressed first.

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<sup>165</sup> SD 51.

<sup>166</sup> SD 55.

<sup>167</sup> SRR, p. 91.



## Section D: Teaching quality

This section of the Audit Framework focuses on teachers and teaching. The Panel is conscious of the changing size and shape of the University in considering the guideline statements in this section. In June 2023 the University employed 651 people (585 full-time equivalent). Both the number of people and FTE have increased slightly from 2021.<sup>168</sup> Only four per cent of staff employed by the University are Māori and one per cent Pacific staff. While this includes two Māori professors; from data provided to the Panel, it appears that only five academic staff are Māori and five are Pacific staff. Fifty-six per cent of staff are female and four staff are gender diverse or unknown.<sup>169</sup>

### **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.

Employment policy and recruitment, selection and appointment procedures set out the expectations for staff recruitment.<sup>170</sup> These include requirements for referee checks and qualification verification. The SRR states that recruitment of academic staff is “needs-directed” and managed by the Provost, Deans and Directors.<sup>171</sup> This should allow staff recruitment to be more strategic and aligned to the changing shape of the University. The Panel considers this to be important for the University at this time.

The University has developed a Whanake Ake programme (as part of Manaaki Tauiira) to address the strategic issue of low numbers of Māori staff. Whanake Ake has to date resulted in the appointment of five early-career Māori staff. Their roles are to support the growth of mātauraka Māori within their discipline areas and not to act as cultural advisors, although the Panel did hear some staff do face this expectation.<sup>172</sup> It appreciates, however, that it will be difficult to support mātauraka Māori within the curriculum without some cultural guidance at times. Specific line management and other support is in place to manage the expectations and load on Whanake Ake appointments. The Panel notes that similar protections may be needed for other Māori staff who are stretched very thinly and are asked to respond to demands from many directions.

The Panel considers the Whanake Ake programme to be a positive development and recognises that the University is being robust and honest in its assessment of challenges.<sup>173</sup> However, early-career staff cannot be expected to lead curriculum development (for the Māori flagship programme), undertake primary supervision or lead research grants and centres. The strategic approach to the recruitment of Māori staff should be extended to include senior academic staff who can undertake these roles and provide leadership for Whanake Ake. Similarly, further work is required to develop

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<sup>168</sup> KD 9.

<sup>169</sup> KD 9.

<sup>170</sup> SD 56; SD 57.

<sup>171</sup> SRR, p. 92.

<sup>172</sup> SRR, p. 92, FE, p. 24.

<sup>173</sup> FE 28.

the bicultural campus,<sup>174</sup> so these staff are safe and supported across the University. Some of this work is underway with the implementation of a bi-cultural competency workshop series.<sup>175</sup>

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms the development of the Whanake Ake programme and suggests that similar support and protection may be needed for existing Māori staff as well as further attention being required to attract and retain more senior Māori academic staff.*

Numbers of Pacific staff are also critically low. If the University is to progress its Motu Plan and develop its Pacific agenda (GS 7), further thought will need to be given to how Pacific academic staff are to be recruited, supported and retained.

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University develop a strategic approach for the recruitment and retention of Pacific academic staff, in line with the aspirations of the Motu plan.*

### **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.

An induction policy establishes the expectations for welcoming new staff and the responsibilities for doing this.<sup>176</sup> Two induction programmes are offered for new staff. The first is an organisational induction managed by Human Resources and the second is an orientation programme managed by CeLT, the Research Office and Human Resources. The organisational induction programme moved online in 2023.

The induction policy itself does not refer to growing a bicultural campus or supporting bicultural experiences, but the examples of new staff orientation programmes provided to the Panel do reflect some aspects of te ao Māori.<sup>177</sup> The Panel is pleased to see that bicultural competence workshops will be a required component of future induction and orientation programmes.<sup>178</sup> New staff account for only a small proportion of the staffing cohort and the Panel suggests that thought be given to how bicultural competence workshops can be rolled out for all staff.

The Disability Action Plan includes a training and capacity-building goal with associated actions of contributing to new staff induction processes.<sup>179</sup> The Panel is pleased to see this reflected in the learning and teaching component of the new staff orientation programme.<sup>180</sup>

The Panel heard that induction processes varied across faculties, but new staff felt welcomed and supported. However, the Panel suggests the University should monitor the impact of the changes

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<sup>174</sup> KD 1.

<sup>175</sup> SRR, p. 94.

<sup>176</sup> SD 58.

<sup>177</sup> SD 59.

<sup>178</sup> SRR, p. 94.

<sup>179</sup> KD 3.

<sup>180</sup> SD 59.

already made to and planned for the induction and orientation programmes, as well as the overall effectiveness of the programmes. This is in line with the recommendation made in GS 1.

Specific management training is available for new Heads of Department and others new to management positions.<sup>181</sup> The Panel heard this was well received and found to be useful, with good uptake.<sup>182</sup>

The Panel notes new staff, including early-career staff, are expected to undertake a full teaching load. The Panel suggests there would be merit in considering whether some provision could be made for a reduced teaching load to help new staff establish their teaching and research profiles. This could be part of the review of the Staff Workload Policy planned for September 2024.<sup>183</sup>

While the University is unable to assert that all staff maintain currency with academic policies and expectations, the Panel considers the University has appropriate systems in place to support this. All the policy it reviewed in the course of this audit was current.

#### **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.

Goal four of the University strategy includes investing in enhanced support of teaching, although the progress indicators for this goal do not reflect this explicitly.<sup>184</sup> However, the goal recognises that online, blended, research-based and work-integrated learning are important contributors to Lincoln's teaching programme. These have been previously recognised with respect to GS 3 and in Section C of this report, as has development as part of the Manaaki Taura Course Enhancement Programme (GS 15) and the assessment hui (GS 18).

Support for teaching development is provided by CeLT through online resources, workshops, drop-in sessions and individual consultations.<sup>185</sup> Some specific development for tutors is provided in faculties. Other teaching development has occurred in the context of strategic needs and initiatives: the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic; the Manaaki Taura Course Enhancement Programme; development of asynchronous online teaching as part of the Lincoln Connected programme; and through other initiatives such as the assessment hui.

However, the University does not have a formal programme for developing teaching capabilities other than as part of the professional development and appraisal process (PD&A).<sup>186</sup> The Panel agrees that developing such a programme would be valuable but considers this work should occur alongside other planned work to progress a teaching quality framework.

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<sup>181</sup> SD 63.

<sup>182</sup> FE 7.

<sup>183</sup> SRR, p. 128.

<sup>184</sup> KD 1.

<sup>185</sup> SRR, p. 95.

<sup>186</sup> SRR, p. 97.

The Panel has some concerns, however, about the resource and capacity available to develop and deliver a formal programme (potentially a Postgraduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching) and the capacity of academic staff to be able to take advantage of it. It suggests that both these factors need to be considered when developing the proposal.

The University has identified an enhancement initiative to develop a teaching quality framework to support ongoing teaching development for staff.<sup>187</sup> The Panel heard that this initiative had been talked about for some time but had lapsed due to staff turnover and competing priorities. The Panel considers it is an important piece of work that will assist the University to deliver and recognise quality teaching consistent with its particular strengths and priorities (for example the delivery of a University Graduate Profile), and the changing size and shape of the University.

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms the University's plan to develop a formal teaching development programme aligned with the particular characteristics of teaching at the University.*

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms the University's intention to develop a teaching quality framework to guide the development of capabilities and attributes that characterise good teaching at the University.*

#### **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.

Teaching quality at the University is currently assessed through student feedback and an end-of-course student evaluation system. The development of a teaching quality framework will allow this and other feedback to contribute to a richer assessment of what good teaching looks like at Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University.

The Panel explored the characteristics of good teaching at the University and heard that the applied nature of many of the disciplines, an experiential approach, and being available and responsive to students were all considered important and distinctive. Reflection of university values and biculturalism were also features of good teaching and the Panel heard that promotions criteria had been updated to include how mātauraka Māori and te ao Māori were included in curricula.<sup>188</sup>

It is important that the teaching quality framework and promotions criteria are aligned. However, the Panel has serious concerns over the quality of the data available to assess good teaching (see GS 1). If end-of-course student evaluations of teaching are to be used in assessing teaching quality, it is important that these reflect the characteristics of what is considered to be good teaching at the University and the response rate is increased to a meaningful rate. However, the Panel also reminds the University of known issues with over-reliance on this feedback, including known biases for

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<sup>187</sup> SRR, p. 111.

<sup>188</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/assets/PoliciesAndProcedures/Annual-Promotions-Procedures-and-Guidelines-for-Academic-Staff-and-Tutors-v3.pdf> (accessed 2 April 2024.)

female lecturers and staff from under-represented and marginalised groups.<sup>189</sup> The Panel acknowledges the advice in promotion criteria that a range of evidence should be used.<sup>190</sup> Notwithstanding the challenges of using student evaluations of teaching for assessing teaching quality, the low response rate also means these data have limited utility in providing feedback on teaching from a formative perspective.

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University review how appropriate data to assess teaching quality will be collected and presented. If student evaluations of teaching are to contribute, steps need to be taken to improve the usefulness of these data.*

The Panel did not hear of concerns about teaching quality. Similarly, survey data indicate that students are satisfied with the quality of teaching at the university.<sup>191</sup> The Panel heard that the class representative system and meetings between students' associations and Deans of faculties are the predominant mechanisms through which any shortfalls in teaching quality are identified. Deans are then expected to report back to students on how any issues have been resolved.<sup>192</sup> A management of poor performance procedure is in place and the PD&A process has provision for setting and monitoring development needs.<sup>193</sup>

#### **GS 26 Teaching recognition**

High-quality teaching is recognised and rewarded.

High-quality teaching is recognised through the promotions process and a series of teaching excellence awards.<sup>194</sup>

Promotions criteria were reviewed and updated in 2022. The examples of evidence of good teaching include how mātauraka Māori, te ao Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations are incorporated into curricula. While these are signalled as indicators of good teaching, there appears to be no requirement that they be addressed in an application for promotions. However, the Panel is pleased to see that promotion criteria do appear to recognise the contributions that Māori staff make to “fulfilling iwi/hapū obligations” and other wider contributions in enhancing mātauraka Māori, te reo Māori and te ao Māori.<sup>195</sup> Participation in the Manaaki Tauira Course Enhancement programme will also contribute towards meeting promotion criteria.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> See, for example, Troy Heffernan (2022) Sexism, racism, prejudice, and bias: a literature review and synthesis of research surrounding student evaluations of courses and teaching, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 47:1, 144-154, DOI: 10.1080/02602938.2021.1888075

<sup>190</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/assets/PoliciesAndProcedures/Annual-Promotions-Procedures-and-Guidelines-for-Academic-Staff-and-Tutors-v3.pdf> (accessed 2 April 2024.)

<sup>191</sup> SD 7, p. 6.

<sup>192</sup> SRR, p. 99.

<sup>193</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/assets/Management-of-Poor-Performance-Procedure.pdf> (Accessed 3 April 2024.); <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/assets/PoliciesAndProcedures/Professional-Development-and-Appraisal-Policy-v3.pdf> (Accessed 3 April 2024.)

<sup>194</sup> SRR, pp. 100-101.

<sup>195</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/assets/PoliciesAndProcedures/Annual-Promotions-Procedures-and-Guidelines-for-Academic-Staff-and-Tutors-v3.pdf>, p. 9. (Accessed 3 April 2024.)

<sup>196</sup> SRR, p. 101.

While the promotions criteria provide examples of evidence of good teaching practice, they are examples rather than expectations (or even standards). The development of the teaching quality framework should provide greater clarity on the expectations of good teaching at different levels of appointment. The Panel also heard some comments that indicated the workload associated with preparing an application for promotion was prohibitive. The timing of applications was also challenging as it coincided with busy teaching times. The University could consider these further factors as it progresses its dialogue on what is good teaching and how is it recognised.

Teaching excellence awards recognise teams and individuals and can be made in general and kaupapa Māori/supporting Pacific learners categories. A further award recognises exceptional contribution to the University's role as critic and conscience of society.<sup>197</sup> The University has received a small but steady number of applications to the awards since their inception in 2023. The University has also supported applications to Te Whatu Kairangi, the national awards for teaching excellence.<sup>198</sup>

The Panel considers the University has appropriate processes in place to recognise teaching excellence and suggests attention be paid to ensuring these remain aligned with other major developments in teaching and curricula.

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<sup>197</sup> SRR, p. 100.

<sup>198</sup> FE, p. 25.

## 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 focus for this section is postgraduate research students. As has already been noted, the University has experienced significant and rapid growth in the proportion of students enrolled in taught Master's degrees. This growth will need to be well managed by the University, and taught Master's programmes are included in the scope of the Panel's commentary in the earlier sections.

In 2023, the University enrolled just under 200 EFTS in postgraduate research qualifications, most (167 EFTS) of these in the PhD programme. EFTS in both PhD and research Master's programmes have declined from a pre-pandemic peak of 260 and 47, respectively. In 2023, just over 60% of PhD enrolments were from international EFTS compared to 25% of research master's EFTS. Over 50% of PhD EFTS were enrolled in the Faculty of Agriculture and Life Sciences with 27% in the Faculty of Agribusiness and Commerce, and 20% in the Faculty of Environment, Society and Design.<sup>199</sup> Despite the decline in PhD and research Master's students, the University is projecting and preparing for growth in postgraduate research enrolments.<sup>200</sup>

The development of a land-based postgraduate research school—the Food Transitions 2025 Joint Postgraduate School—is part of achieving the fourth goal in the University's strategy.<sup>201</sup> The Food Transitions 2050 Postgraduate School is a partnership initiative between Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University, Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury, Plant & Food Research, Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research and AgResearch. This partnership aims to “support the transition to more future-focused, sustainable food systems and preparation by the year 2050”. PhD students are enrolled at either Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University or Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha – University of Canterbury. Students are enrolled in cohorts and the School facilitates a community of practice of enrolled students and their supervisors.<sup>202</sup>

Within the University, a Postgraduate Research Director, reporting to the Provost, is responsible for oversight of PhD students. The Panel understands the role of Postgraduate Research Director was re-established after being in abeyance for a couple of years. This is an important role for the University and the Panel heard positive comments about the energy and commitment of the incumbent role-holder.

The Panel understands the University is also considering establishing a Postgraduate School with oversight over all PhD and Master's programmes, including taught Master's. It considers this would be a positive development to promote greater consistency in the experiences of postgraduate students across the University.

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<sup>199</sup> FE 8.

<sup>200</sup> IP, p. 56.

<sup>201</sup> KD 1, p. 8.

<sup>202</sup> <https://www.foodtransitions2050.ac.nz/> (Accessed 27 April 2024.)

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms further consideration of a proposal (including benefits and costs) to establish a postgraduate school within the University.*

Currently, a postgraduate subcommittee of the research committee is responsible for processes and systems to support the progression of postgraduate research students, and a postgraduate subcommittee of the Academic Administration Committee oversees admission, progression, examination and completion of postgraduate research students.<sup>203</sup> The Postgraduate Research Director chairs one committee and is a member of the other. The Panel wonders whether there would be value in consolidating responsibilities under one committee.

A set of house rules provides guidance for PhD students. This advises that PhD students are assigned to a home faculty or research centre. In contrast with the policy framework, however, the authorising body for these rules is not clear.<sup>204</sup> The Panel considers this is rather a static way to provide information and guidance to students and that it inevitably faces challenges in maintaining currency. For example, the House Rules available on the University website are dated 2021 and do not include the Postgraduate Research Director in the list of useful contacts, or otherwise refer to this role. The same applies to the House Rules included in the University Māramataka | Calendar.<sup>205</sup> Similarly, the House Rules do not reference recent policy such as the Postgraduate Research Funding Allocation Policy and Procedure.<sup>206</sup> Moving the House Rules to an online platform would make it easier to make regular (annual) updates and provide information by stages of the research process for students, as well as maintaining a sense of their overall journey.

In general, postgraduate research students are less satisfied than other cohorts of students with their experience of the University.<sup>207</sup> There is some variation in this experience, with research students being more satisfied with the feedback they receive. However, the pattern of responses indicates this is an area of activity where particular attention should be paid. There are indications this is happening, with a net promoter score improving since the previous survey and the Panel did hear a good sense of belonging among postgraduate research students. It is also pleased to see attention being paid to the postgraduate student voice with a Postgraduate Student Voice Committee that meets informally, but regularly, with the Postgraduate Research Director.<sup>208</sup>

#### **GS 27 Supervision quality**

The quality of postgraduate research supervision is ensured.

Criteria for appointing postgraduate supervisors are set out in the PhD House Rules.<sup>209</sup> The Panel has noted above concerns about the currency of this document. Postgraduate committee chairs within faculties are responsible for approving the appointment of supervisors. There appears to be no university-level oversight of this process, nor currently any requirements for supervisors to undergo

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<sup>203</sup> SRR, pp. 27-28.

<sup>204</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/assets/PhD-House-Rules.pdf> (Accessed 3 April 2024.)

<sup>205</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/assets/Academic-Calendar.pdf>. P. 95 ff.

<sup>206</sup> SD 69.

<sup>207</sup> SD 7.

<sup>208</sup> SRR, p. 16.

<sup>209</sup> SRR, p. 102.



training. The Panel understands that work is underway to address both issues with the development of a Register of Supervisors and a programme of supervisor training which will be compulsory and contribute (in time) to the PD&A process. The Panel strongly affirms these developments and is pleased to hear that supervisor training seems to have started well. As with other initiatives, the Panel suggests the University seeks feedback on and monitors the effectiveness of these initiatives. It further recommends that compliance with criteria for appointing supervisors, including completion of training, be reported to an appropriate university-level committee.

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms the development of a University Register of qualified supervisors and the requirement for supervisor training to be undertaken.*

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends that compliance with requirements of the Register for the appointment of supervisors, including the completion of training, be reported to an appropriate university-level committee.*

The Panel has previously commented (GS 22) on the scarcity of Māori and Pacific staff available to supervise Māori and Pacific students. While the numbers of these students are also low, the lack of supervision capacity constrains growth in their numbers and limits their agency in selecting a supervisor. These factors should be considered in addressing the affirmation and recommendation made with respect to GS 22. While Māori supervisors might not be available, the University does recognise and make provision for a Māori research mentor as part of the supervision arrangements for a student.<sup>210</sup>

Postgraduate students appear to have limited opportunity to raise confidential concerns about the quality of their supervision. The University recognises that existing processes are not adequate, and the Panel agrees with this assessment. The Panel appreciates this is a challenging area, but nonetheless postgraduate research students do need access to a trusted and confidential channel for raising complaints. The online system being explored by the University could provide such a channel.<sup>211</sup> It will need to operate in conjunction with the processes established by the Postgraduate Director for addressing and resolving complaints and the Student Complaints Policy and Procedure.<sup>212</sup>

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University implement the option of a confidential online channel through which postgraduate research students can raise complaints. The University should monitor the utility of this channel for students.*

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<sup>210</sup> SD 58.

<sup>211</sup> SRR, p. 104.

<sup>212</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/assets/PoliciesAndProcedures/Student-Complaints-Policy-and-Procedure.pdf> (Accessed 28 May 2024.)

## **GS 28 Resourcing of postgraduate research students**

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

Resourcing of postgraduate research students is a faculty responsibility, guided by the Postgraduate Research Funding Allocation Policy and Procedure.<sup>213</sup> Students and supervisors are required to sign a 'mutual expectations agreement' that includes the resources a student has access to. However, these agreements are established at an early stage in the research when a student may not be fully aware of their resource requirements. The ongoing adequacy of resourcing is part of ongoing progress reporting. However, as noted above, this is not necessarily the most appropriate mechanism through which to raise complaints or concerns.

Other university-level resourcing includes access to scholarships (although relatively few of these are available),<sup>214</sup> and PhDs and the research component of Master's degrees are not covered by the postgraduate fee waiver.<sup>215</sup> The Food Transitions 2050 Postgraduate School does provide access to further scholarships. The University benchmarks its scholarship spend per EFTS against other institutions.<sup>216</sup> Adding the stipend amount for an individual student to this analysis would help make useful comparisons. Additional resources, including, for example, writing retreats and advice on thesis preparation, are provided through CeLT and LTL. Some of these resources are being converted into asynchronous online formats to increase their accessibility.<sup>217</sup>

The Cycle 5 academic audit recommended the University review its orientation offerings targeted at PhD students. The University reported that this was addressed in a review of the PhD programme.<sup>218</sup> A student buddy programme is available (although not targeted to PhD students) and international student advisors meet with new international PhD students.<sup>219</sup> The Hui Whakawhanaukataka programme includes postgraduate connection events.<sup>220</sup> The Panel is satisfied this recommendation has been addressed.

A further set of resources is being developed through the Food Transitions 2050 Postgraduate School. These include Te Tiriti o Waitangi workshops, guidance in policy writing, and engagement with futurists and industry leaders. The University intends to leverage this development and make these types of resources available to all postgraduate research students.<sup>221</sup>

Variation in resourcing, including facilities and study space, is a source of considerable dissatisfaction for postgraduate research students. The Panel notes the Postgraduate Research Director is working with students on preferred spaces.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> SRR, p. 105; SD 69.

<sup>214</sup> FE 15, Table 2.

<sup>215</sup> <https://www.lincoln.ac.nz/study-for-free/> (Accessed 27 April 2024.)

<sup>216</sup> FE 15, Table 5.

<sup>217</sup> SRR, p. 106.

<sup>218</sup> SRR, p. 128.

<sup>219</sup> SRR, p. 48.

<sup>220</sup> SRR, p. 45.

<sup>221</sup> SRR, p. 106.

<sup>222</sup> SRR, p. 23.

The Panel's assessment is that the mutual expectations agreement is not an adequate tool for managing equity of resourcing for postgraduate research students and recommends the University consider other mechanisms such as service level agreements that can be calibrated to different types and stages and research.

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University consider mechanisms such as 'service level agreements' that can be calibrated to different types and stages of research to minimise inequity in the experience of postgraduate research students.*

#### **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 student progress is monitored through six-month reporting processes. A fifteen-month report is also required for PhD students.<sup>223</sup> The SRR indicated that not all faculties were complying with the fifteen-month reporting process and heard mixed views on whether this was in fact the case. This matter requires clarification and, if necessary, redressing.

**Recommendation:** *The Panel recommends the University confirm that all fifteen-month reports are being completed as expected and, if not, take steps to ensure that they are.*

The Panel has commented above that the six-month progress reports are not an appropriate channel for raising complaints. They should, however, be able to collect information on trends, enablers and challenges to progress. This could include experience of other services and resources beyond the student's home department. It appears to the Panel that the University is currently unable to consolidate potentially valuable information gained through this channel. Such information could improve delivery from service units. If the University is to develop an online reporting system that would allow relevant information to be consolidated and/or shared, the Panel believes it should not be another standalone system but should be part of an enterprise solution. This would allow a holistic view of a student and their progress (see recommendations made with respect to GS 1 and GS 9), and supervisors. The University has identified an enhancement initiative to centralise six-monthly progress reporting and the Panel considers this a useful first step.<sup>224</sup>

**Affirmation:** *The Panel affirms the University's enhancement initiative to centralise the six-monthly reporting process.*

The University monitors time to completion and completion rates for PhD students.<sup>225</sup> These show an average discontinuation rate of around 20% from 2010 to 2020.<sup>226</sup> The Panel suggests this statistic should be kept under review.

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<sup>223</sup> SRR, p. 107.

<sup>224</sup> SRR, p. 104.

<sup>225</sup> FE 29.

<sup>226</sup> FE 29.

**GS 30 Thesis examination**

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

Regulations for thesis examination are set out in the House Rules in the University Māramataka | Calendar.<sup>227</sup> These appear to follow normally accepted practice and include provisions for being able to conduct the oral examination online, and the management of disputes and appeals. However, the Panel is not clear what advice is provided to examiners, nor how trends in examination outcomes are recorded. The Supervisor Training Programme includes a module on examination, which should provide clear standardised examination processes, as well as accurate and comprehensive records of ongoing trends in examination outcomes.

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<sup>227</sup> SRR, p. 108.

## 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.<sup>228</sup>

With respect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Panel did get a sense of commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi across the University. Its assessment is that the University has a genuine willingness to connect with te ao Māori and the Māori economy. However, the University's approach to truly embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi and tikanga practices is yet to gain full expression in the delivery of its curriculum across faculties and in all its support for Māori students. The proposed Māori research centre, the development of a flagship programme, and incorporation of mātauraka Māori into curricula are all positive developments but will place demands on a small group of staff. The Panel has commented on the need to attract and retain senior Māori academic staff.

The Panel considers the University is paying attention to the research-teaching nexus and the increase in postgraduate students and the combining of the research and teaching plans will strengthen this nexus. The Panel heard that staff were encouraged to contribute to the University's role of critic and conscience of society, but this encouragement was not necessarily consistent across the University.

With respect to the scope components of the audit framework, the Panel gained a sense the University was alert to the changing profile of its student body and the implications of this. The Panel has also commented on the need to grow the cohorts of Māori staff and Pacific staff. The Panel also considers the University is paying attention to different modes of delivery and has commented on implications for staff development.

### 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 20 enhancement initiatives it indicated were underway and a further eight planned initiatives. The Panel has commented on most of these initiatives. It has not commented explicitly on enhancement initiatives that seem to be complete, or close to completion, or those that are small-scale, such as improvements to policy that might come under a normal continuous improvement approach.

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<sup>228</sup> Guide to Cycle 6 Academic Audit, p. 11.

## Summary of commendations, affirmations and recommendations

Commendations of good practice, affirmations of work underway and recommendations of matters for the University to consider are summarised below. The commendations reflect areas of strength and good practice at the University, and recommendations indicate where the Panel considers further attention is required.

The Panel considers the most important areas for further work are:

- growing the numbers of Māori staff, including senior staff, at the University
- progressing the Motu Plan and building associated capacity among Pacific staff
- developing the teaching quality framework so that it can guide further development in online and transnational delivery
- making valid and integrated data available to support monitoring and assess impact of initiatives.

While there is some unevenness, overall the Panel considers the University does meet 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

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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|-------|----|--|
| GS 1  | C1 | <i>The Panel <b>commends</b> the University's relational approach to monitoring of student engagement, progress and wellbeing.</i>   |
| GS 2  | C2 | <i>The Panel <b>commends</b> the University's commitment to working in partnership with all students and, in particular, the establishment of co-governance and early engagement approaches.</i>   |
| GS 3  | C3 | <i>The Panel <b>commends</b> the way in which the University has been guided by its cultural narrative and campus master plan in developing and refurbishing buildings and facilities on its campus.</i>   |
| GS 5  | C4 | <i>The Panel <b>commends</b> the development and use of the SafeLU app.</i>  |
| GS 6  | C5 | <i>The Panel <b>commends</b> the work of Te Manutaki in supporting the progress of Māori and Pacific students at the University.</i>   |
| GS 12 | C6 | <i>The Panel <b>commends</b> the University's commitment to inclusive education and its Disability Action Plan.</i>  |
| GS 13 | C7 | <i>The Panel <b>commends</b> the University's commitment to a highly student-centric approach to safety and wellbeing (including its responsibilities under the Code), the range of services available, and the responsiveness of the units that provide those services.</i> |

GS 16 C8 *The Panel **commends** the University's attention to ensuring student perspectives are well-represented in programme review processes.*

GS 20 C9 *The Panel **commends** the University's centralised approach to management of academic integrity and the reporting and communications from the Proctors.*

### **Affirmations**

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

GS 3 A1 *The Panel **affirms** the University's intent to review work-integrated learning to ensure consistency of access for students and the quality of their experience.*

GS 4 A2 *The Panel **affirms** the University's enhancement initiative to progress and implement an Academic Governance Framework.*

GS 6 A3 *The Panel **affirms** the Manaaki Taura programme and suggests more attention be paid to finer-grained evaluation and reporting of the impact of individual initiatives in the programme for different groups of students.*

GS 8 A4 *The Panel **affirms** the development of Manaaki Taura curated pathways and encourages the University to ensure that its establishment includes plans for evaluating effectiveness.*

GS 15 A5 *The Panel **affirms** the Manaaki Taura Course Enhancement Programme.*

GS 18 A6 *The Panel **affirms** the assessment hui initiative and recommends the University communicate the outcomes to date and further expectations for this work.*

GS 19 A7 *The Panel **affirms** the University's plans to develop further guidance on moderation and considers this should include expectations for external validation of assessment outcomes, particularly for taught Master's degrees.*

GS 22 A8 *The Panel **affirms** the development of the Whanake Ake programme and suggests that similar support and protection may be needed for existing Māori staff as well as further attention being required to attract and retain more senior Māori academic staff.*

GS 24 A9 *The Panel **affirms** the University's plan to develop a formal teaching development programme aligned with the particular characteristics of teaching at the University.*

GS 24 A10 *The Panel **affirms** the University's intention to develop a teaching quality framework to guide the development of capabilities and attributes that characterise good teaching at the University.*

- Section E A11 *The Panel **affirms** further consideration of a proposal (including benefits and costs) to establish a postgraduate school within the University.*
- GS 27 A12 *The Panel **affirms** the development of a University Register of qualified supervisors and the requirement for supervisor training to be undertaken.*
- GS 29 A13 *The Panel **affirms** the University's enhancement initiative to centralise the six-monthly reporting process.*

### **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** the University develop a more integrated approach to reporting that accesses data from different systems and functions to provide a holistic view of students, courses and staffing; and that it uses this integrated approach to systematise evaluation of impact and reporting on initiatives and processes focused on teaching and learning, and the student experience.*
- GS 3 R2 *The Panel **recommends** the University set out the development path and reporting expectations for online teaching and learning in its strategy update.*
- GS 5 R3 *The Panel **recommends** that the University make academic risks more explicit in its Strategic Risk Register.*
- GS 7 R4 *The Panel **recommends** that the University clarify how and when the Motu Plan is to be progressed, resourced and led.*
- GS 9 R5 *The Panel **recommends** the University establish an integrated and holistic approach to monitoring transitions that allows the effectiveness of initiatives for different groups of students at different stages of their study to be evaluated.*
- GS 10 R6 *The Panel **recommends** the University consider whether the current academic advising arrangements are serving students and the University well and allowing support to be optimally targeted.*
- GS 12 R7 *The Panel **recommends** that, in monitoring its Disability Action Plan, the University assess how planned support is being implemented consistently and fairly across the University.*
- GS 15 R8 *The Panel **recommends** the University take an integrated and aligned approach to course monitoring using data that can be validated and cross-referenced.*



- GS 16 R9 *The Panel **recommends** the University establish a process for the systematic collation of themes in academic programme and professional accreditation reviews and their associated follow-up reports.*
- GS 17 R10 *The Panel **recommends** the University develop a mechanism to assess more directly whether graduate attributes are being achieved.*
- GS 17 R11 *The Panel **recommends** that, in progressing the development of a University Graduate Profile, the University consult further with Māori staff on the proposed bicultural competence and confidence attribute, and give further thought to the curriculum renewal, resources, systems and capabilities required to implement, maintain, and assess the attainment of the Graduate Profile.*
- GS 20 R12 *The Panel **recommends** the University urgently develop guidance on the use of Generative-AI tools, including the potential for them to support learning for disabled students.*
- GS 22 R13 *The Panel **recommends** the University develop a strategic approach for the recruitment and retention of Pacific academic staff, in line with the aspirations of the Motu plan.*
- GS 25 R14 *The Panel **recommends** the University review how appropriate data to assess teaching quality will be collected and presented. If student evaluations of teaching are to contribute, steps need to be taken to improve the usefulness of these data.*
- GS 27 R15 *The Panel **recommends** that compliance with requirements of the Register for the appointment of supervisors, including the completion of training, be reported to an appropriate university-level committee.*
- GS 27 R16 *The Panel **recommends** the University implement the option of a confidential online channel through which postgraduate research students can raise complaints. The University should monitor the utility of this channel for students.*
- GS 28 R17 *The Panel **recommends** the University consider mechanisms such as ‘service level agreements’ that can be calibrated to different types and stages of research to minimise inequity in the experience of postgraduate research students.*
- GS 29 R18 *The Panel **recommends** the University confirm that all fifteen-month reports are being completed as expected and, if not, take steps to ensure that they are.*

### **Follow-up report**

The Panel invites Te Whare Wānaka o Aoraki Lincoln University 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

Professor Tim Cooper  
*Chair of the Panel*

Dean, Teaching and Learning  
University of Otago

Dr Sharon Toi

Independent consultant

Heather Merrick, MA

Director of Academic Quality  
Auckland University of Technology (AUT)

Professor Emma Kruse Va'ai i

Pro-Chancellor  
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Liam Davies, BC

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#### *Secretariat:*

Sheelagh Matear

Executive Director  
Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

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### 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 Paula Morrison, Kaiwhakahaere o Te Huka Kouka | Academic Quality and Policy Manager, for her support of the Panel while on the University campus and for the provision of information and response to queries.

Thanks also to Sharon Cuzens for proofreading this report.

The translation of the Summary into Te Reo Māori was undertaken by Ōkupu.<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> <https://www.okupu.co.nz/>

## Appendix 1: The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities, Te Poukapū Kōunga Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa (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.<sup>230</sup>

AQA helps support universities in achieving standards of excellence in research and teaching by conducting institutional audits of the processes in universities that 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.

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](http://www.aqa.ac.nz).

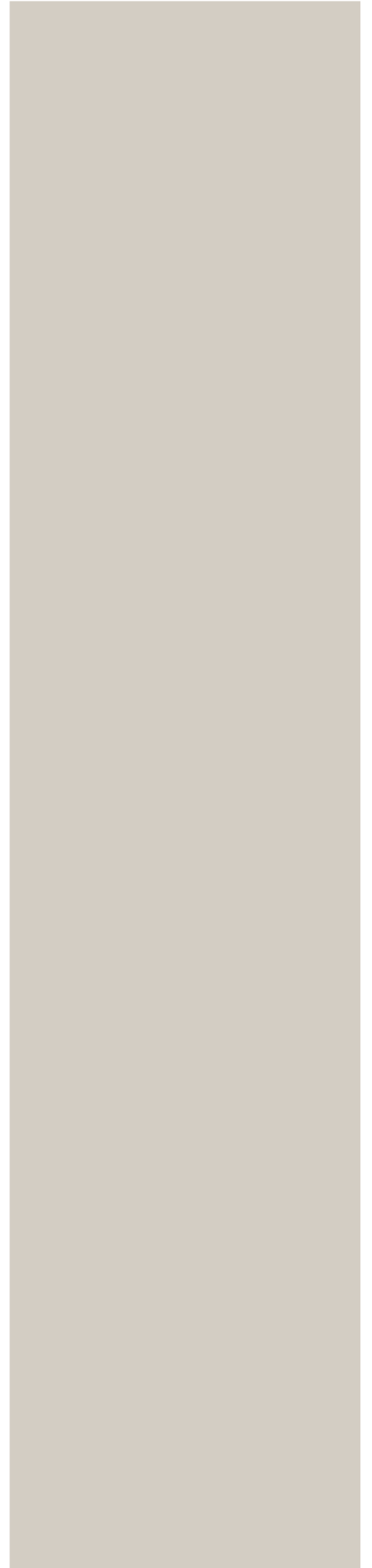
### Quality assurance principles

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.

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<sup>230</sup> AQA (2020), Constitution. Available at <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/AQA%20Constitution%20Amended%20Oct%202020.pdf>. (Accessed 23 February 2022).



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**Quality**Agency  
For New Zealand Universities