

## Summary of the 2023 Academic Audit of Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury

### Academic audit

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 holistic view of a university’s teaching, learning, student support and student outcomes.

Universities in Aotearoa New Zealand are in their sixth cycle of academic audit, which has two main phases. From 2017–2020, universities undertook an enhancement theme focusing on access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori and Pacific students.<sup>1</sup>

The second phase is an audit against a framework of 30 guideline statements. Universities undertake a self-assessment against this framework and present a self-review report and supporting evidence for a panel to consider.

The audit panel comprises 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

### Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury

The University was founded in 1873 as Canterbury College, the second institution in Aotearoa New Zealand to offer tertiary-level education. Today it considers itself to be a “medium-sized, research-intensive, comprehensive university”.<sup>2</sup>

This audit took place in the University’s 150<sup>th</sup> year and shows the university has developed a cohesive, collaborative approach to responding to challenges, which include:

- its historical commitment to enabling access to university study
- its rebuild and recovery following the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes
- the 2019 Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre attacks
- the introduction of the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice
- the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### About this report

This is the sixth academic audit of the University. The Panel considers the University meets—and in several instances exceeds—the outcomes and standards a university of good international standing would be expected to demonstrate.

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

<sup>2</sup> KD7, p. 5.

## Commendations

Commendations refer to examples of exceptionally good or innovative practice that should produce positive impacts on teaching, learning and student experience. The Panel commends the University for the following areas of good practice:

**Strengthening the partnership with Ngāi Tūāhuriri and Ngāi Tahu** — As part of its journey to become a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led university, the University has formed a partnership that operates at governance, leadership and operational levels. The Strategic Vision 2020-2030 includes statements about “working towards an education system that includes te ao Māori, Māori world views, and mātauranga Māori”.

**A consultative approach to strategy development and change** — The University has strengthened relationships with communities and stakeholders, and consulted closely with staff while developing its Strategic Vision 2020-2030.

**A cohesive, collaborative approach to responding to challenges** — The University has faced many challenges in recent years and has worked with staff and stakeholders to respond to these.

### Leadership and management of teaching, learning and academic quality

**Making data accessible for use in decision-making and improving teaching and learning** — The University gathers and uses appropriate, valid data and information to establish objectives, plan, assess progress and make improvements in its teaching and learning activities.

**Partnership with the University of Canterbury Students' Association** — The agreement with UCSA enables student voices to contribute through a wide range of channels to improved outcomes for students.

**Developing teaching and learning environments** — The University has taken a collaborative approach to planning and developing teaching and learning activities, supported by appropriate learning environments (infrastructure, spaces, media, facilities and resources).

**Managing risks and emergencies** — The University uses good practice in its approach to risk management, emergency management and business continuity that could disrupt the quality and continuity of teaching and learning.

**Building the University's capability to become a 'good Treaty partner'** — Kaiārahi Māori are helping the University make good progress towards closing the participation gap for Māori students. It will continue to address this and intends to close participation and success gaps by 2030.

### Student life cycle, support and wellbeing

**Establishing Kia Angitu** — The University is taking an inter-connected approach to removing barriers and closing equity gaps for under-served students. Kia Angitu, a six-year strategic initiative, aims to remove barriers and close equity gaps. Focusing initially on first-year success, this is helping improve access to university.

**Taking a strategic approach to access** — The University has a range of mechanisms to support the strategy, including scholarships, engagement with schools, and plans to further recognise prior learning.

**Emphasising and supporting students' successful transitions into study** — The University provides support at key points in the student life cycle to support students, particularly first-years, into further study.

**Supporting student wellbeing** — The University has reviewed its safety and wellbeing services and its comprehensive approach to safety and wellbeing extends beyond the compliance requirements of the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice, from both Te Tiriti o Waitangi and equity perspectives.

## Curriculum, assessment and delivery

**Taking a consultative approach to introducing and approving new courses and programmes** — The University's processes for introducing and approving new programmes are well documented, supported by templates and involve a wide range of stakeholder input.

**Assuring and enhancing the quality of academic programmes** — The University has a proactive, holistic approach to monitoring courses, including identifying 'catapult' courses. These have high enrolment numbers and are associated with future success but have lower achievement rates.

## Teaching quality

**Maintaining culturally affirming recruitment and appointment processes during staff recruitment.**

**Taking a research-based approach to supporting teaching practices and curriculum design** — The Ako Anamata | Future Learning and Development unit in the University brings a valuable, research-based, approach to supporting staff with blended learning strategies, course and assessment developments, and a range of other offerings.

## Supervision of postgraduate research students

**Developing Te Kura Tāura | UC Graduate School** — The University took a consultative, research-based approach to developing Te Kura Tāura | UC Graduate School.

## Affirmations

Affirmations refer to initiatives planned or underway that are likely to have a positive impact but are at an early stage with no data yet available to assess impact. The Panel has made affirmations in the following areas:

### Leadership and management of teaching, learning and academic quality

**Further developing Analytics for Course Engagement (ACE)** — ACE dashboards are available to staff and students to monitor engagement with courses. The University plans to continue developing ACE to allow more proactive outreach and to personalise learning and teaching activities further to support student success

**Monitoring academic delegations** — The University's processes for managing academic delegations reflect good practice. The Panel suggests extending them to monitor the consistency of policy implementation and decision making for teaching and learning quality, and research supervision.

**Developing an academic risk register** — The University is identifying academic potential risks. These will be consolidated and assessed, followed by the development of mitigation and controls.

**Progressing the enhancement theme for Pasifika students** — The University is working on strengthening the whole-of-University focus on access, outcomes and opportunities for Pasifika students and staff, led by the new PVC Pasifika.

### Student life cycle, support and wellbeing

**Embedding Career Development Learning in curricula** — The University intends to better coordinate its careers and work-integrated-learning opportunities and embed Career Development Learning in the curricula of large first-year courses to better support transitions from learning to work.

**Developing a coordinated and comprehensive advising framework** — While Te Pātaka, the hub for support services (including academic advice) is starting to work well, the University is

also developing an academic advising framework to ensure co-ordinated and consistent advising services.

**Continuing to monitor the peer-assisted learning support (PALS) component of Kia Angitu** — PALS is available to 90% of first-year students and is not currently targeted at priority student groups. The University is monitoring PALS to ensure it optimally supports *all* students, including priority groups.

### **Curriculum, assessment and delivery**

**Developing and implementing a curriculum management system (CMS)** — The University plans to improve processes for new and amended qualifications by developing a CMS for programme approval—to ensure consistency of process and information, and support academic advising.

**Establishing an assessment working group** — This will support appropriate and effective assessment practices, in line with the Assessment Policy, across all programmes, within faculties, and for diverse student groups.

### **Teaching quality**

**Adopting a digital platform to ensure consistency in onboarding new staff** — To improve induction, the University plans to make a digital platform available to all new staff.

**Further reviewing and enhancing the induction programme for new staff.**

**Developing strategically aligned metrics that take a holistic view of teaching quality.**

### **Supervision of postgraduate research students**

**Fully implementing and reviewing the establishment and operation of Te Kura Tāura | UC Graduate School.**

## **Recommendations**

Recommendations refer to areas where the Panel considers the University would benefit from making some improvements or changes. The Panel asked the University to consider:

### **Extending its consultative and engagement-oriented approach into implementation of change** —

The University is managing a series of structural and technological changes. Extending the successful approach already used elsewhere would help resolve some of the tensions arising. This would include a mechanism for monitoring and communicating the programme of changes that would allow staff and students to appreciate progress and provide early feedback on implementation.

### **Leadership and management of teaching, learning and academic quality**

**Providing ongoing professional development opportunities and support for staff (and students) to use data appropriately and effectively.**

**Ensuring consistency across the University in responding to student feedback** — A more consistent approach to responding to feedback and closing the loop on student surveys and evaluations is warranted.

**Strengthening opportunities and support for the voices of Māori students and students from other priority student groups** to be heard by continuing to work with Te Akatoki and UCSA.

### **Student life cycle, support and wellbeing**

**Assessing the effectiveness of its communication of complaints, appeals and grievances processes and outcomes** — This assessment should allow differentiation by student groups, including postgraduate students.

## Curriculum, assessment and delivery

**Examining how the University Graduate Profile attributes are met** — The University is reviewing the attributes of its Graduate Profile to ensure they are fit for purpose and align with University strategy.

**Ensuring students are aware how graduate profile attributes equip them with key knowledge and skills** — Students do not fully understand the graduate profile and its value, which needs further attention from the University.

**Continuing to monitor the demand for assessment in te reo Māori** — Low numbers of students are currently involved, but the demand needs to be monitored—including from postgraduate research students—to ensure the University can meet it.

## Teaching quality

**Ensuring all staff have access to culturally affirming opportunities to develop their teaching and supervision practices** — The University should pay further attention to how staff from under-represented groups are supported to develop their teaching and supervision. Staff who provide professional opportunities to others should also be able to access appropriate professional development for themselves.

**Ensuring that recognition of teaching excellence can be culturally appropriate and affirming** — Models for recognising teaching excellence do not necessarily reflect the contributions made by Māori and Pacific staff. Workload and other priorities may also hold them back from engaging in the process.

## Supervision of postgraduate research students

**Reviewing its communications for postgraduate research students** — Information on processes, key steps or milestones is currently dispersed. Comprehensive and coherent information should be made available to guide students.

**Ensuring confidentiality for postgraduate research students who want to raise concerns.**

**Whether Kia Angitu would provide a useful model for postgraduate student success** — Such an approach would help with transitions into postgraduate study and contribute to closing parity gaps.

## What happens next?

Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury has been invited to provide a follow-up report one year after the release of the audit report. The follow-up report should address progress on both affirmations and recommendations. Once it has been accepted by the AQA Board, the University's follow-up report should be made publicly available.

## Further information

Further information about academic audits, including previous audit reports, is available on the AQA website.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [www.aqa.ac.nz](http://www.aqa.ac.nz)