

The logo for the Academic Quality Agency (AQA) consists of the letters 'AQA' in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The 'Q' is stylized with a white dot in the center.


Academic
QualityAgency
For New Zealand Universities

Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework

Sheelagh Matear

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Second Edition

A stylized white silhouette of a tree with many branches and leaves, set against a light teal background. The tree is positioned on the right side of the cover, extending from the top to the bottom.

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

Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework

The overarching objectives of the Cycle 6 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
2. to provide assurance of the quality of New Zealand universities.

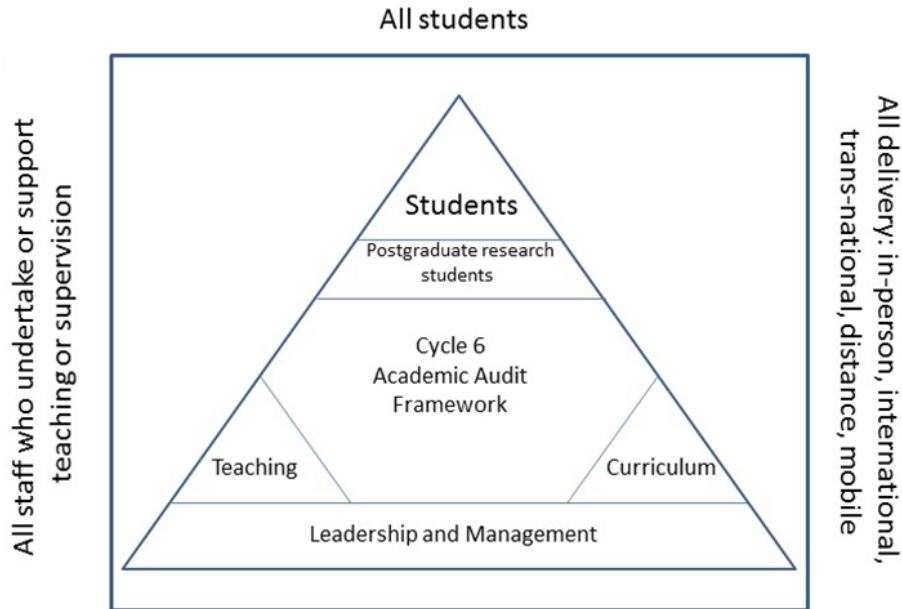
The guideline statements set out expectations of outcomes and standards that a university of good international standing would be expected to demonstrate. They are not fixed, minimum, standards but are relative and dynamic.

The Cycle 6 framework contains 30 guideline statements, organised into 5 sections (Figure) plus an introduction/preface:

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- A Leadership and management of teaching and learning and academic quality**
 - B Student life-cycle, support and wellbeing**
 - C Curriculum, assessment and delivery**
 - D Teaching quality**
 - E Supervision of postgraduate research students**
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The sections of the audit framework are inter-connected. Students are placed at the ‘top’ of the framework as the focal points of academic quality assurance are the experience and achievement of students and having confidence in the standards achieved. Student experience and achievement is delivered through good quality curricula and teaching; and all are underpinned by good quality university-level processes and systems in the leadership and management of teaching and learning.

In addressing the guideline statements, universities are expected to consider **all students**, **all delivery** and **all staff** who teach or supervise or support teaching or supervision, and give emphasis to specific groups as appropriate to their priorities, student body and delivery profile.



Self-review portfolios should reflect:

University obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi
The interdependence of university research and teaching
Universities' role as critic and conscience of society

The Cycle 6 academic audit framework is underpinned by relevant New Zealand legislation and constitutional framework. In addressing the Cycle 6 guideline statements, universities and audit panels will be expected to reflect:

- university obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- the close interdependence of university research and teaching and most university teaching being undertaken by people who are research-active
- universities' role as critic and conscience of society.

Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework:

All students, all delivery, all staff who teach or supervise or support teaching or supervision

A. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING AND ACADEMIC QUALITY

- 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.
- 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.
- GS 3. Teaching and learning environments: Teaching and learning activities are supported by appropriate learning environments (infrastructure, spaces, media, facilities and resources).
- GS 4. Academic delegations: Academic delegations support consistent and effective decision making and accountability for teaching and learning quality and research supervision.
- GS 5. Academic risk management: Potential disruption to the quality and continuity of teaching and learning at the university, including risks to infrastructure, is mitigated through effective risk management processes.
- 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.
- GS 7. Progress on the Enhancement Theme (Pasifika students): The university has achieved the objectives in its enhancement theme plan with respect to Pasifika students and successful practice has been embedded and is sustainable.

B. STUDENT LIFE-CYCLE, SUPPORT AND WELLBEING

- GS 8. Access: Access to university, including through recognition of prior learning and credit transfer pathways, is consistent, equitable and transparent for students.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- GS 12. Learning support: Students have timely and equitable access to appropriate learning support services.
- GS 13. Safety and wellbeing: Student wellbeing is supported through the provision of appropriate pastoral and social support services in safe and inclusive environments.

C. CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT AND DELIVERY

- GS 14. Programme approval: Programme standards and relevance are maintained through internal course and programme approval processes that meet national (CUAP/NZQF) expectations and, where appropriate, expectations for other jurisdictions.

Guideline Statements

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- GS 18. Assessment: Assessment is appropriate and effective.
- GS 19. Assessment standards: Assessment and outcome standards are appropriately set and moderated.
- GS 20. Academic integrity: Universities promote and ensure academic integrity and demonstrate fairness, equity and consistency in addressing concerns.
- GS 21. Assessment in te reo Māori: Assessment in te reo Māori, where appropriate, is facilitated by the university.

D. TEACHING QUALITY

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- GS 26. Teaching recognition: High-quality teaching is recognised and rewarded.

E. SUPERVISION OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

- GS 27. Supervision quality: The quality of postgraduate research supervision is ensured.
- GS 28. Resourcing of postgraduate research students: Postgraduate research students are appropriately resourced and supported to undertake their research.
- 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.
- GS 30. Thesis examination: Thesis standards are assured through examination processes that are nationally and internationally benchmarked.

Evidence criteria in Cycle 6

The Cycle 6 audit framework applies to all students, all delivery and all staff who teach or supervise or support teaching or supervision. Universities and audit panels will need to consider how evidence reflects this systemic or embedded nature of academic quality.

The following criteria have been developed to assist in presenting and considering 'good' evidence:

- 1 Evidence in Cycle 6 will be presented in the context of an individual university. What is appropriate evidence for one university may not be for another.

- 2 Both universities and audit panels should anticipate that most of the evidence presented in Cycle 6 will be pre-existing evidence.

- 3 Evidence should be explicit and sufficient, relevant, representative, verifiable, cumulative, actionable, contextual and holistic, and able to be triangulated.

- 4 The most important criterion for evidence is relevance. In Cycle 6 this means relevance of the evidence to the guideline statement and relevance to the embedded or systemic nature of evidence.

- 5 Evidence can be strengthened by drawing on multiple perspectives and sources from across the university.

- 6 Tensions are likely to exist between the pre-existing nature of evidence and relevance of that evidence, and universities may need to both explain how the tension has been resolved and use other criteria to determine whether the evidence is indeed appropriate for the guideline statement.

- 7 Where possible and appropriate, evidence should reflect a longitudinal component so that universities and audit panels can appreciate the direction of change.

- 8 Universities and audit panels should be open to and expect that evidence may take a variety of forms and some evidence may be based on indigenous knowledge systems.

Cycle 6 Timelines

Cycle 6 academic audit has three main phases:

1. The enhancement phase (2017 – 2019)
2. The audit phase (2021 – 2024)
3. The review, evaluation and planning phase (2025)

Academic audits of universities are scheduled as follows:

2022: The University of Auckland
Victoria University of Wellington

2023: Massey University (*self-review due 2022*)
University of Canterbury
Waikato University

2024: Lincoln University (*self-review due 2023*)
University of Otago
Auckland University of Technology

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