

Cycle 6 Academic audit of Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa 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 to 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.¹ 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.²

Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa submitted its self-review portfolio on 31 October 2022 and provided further information requested by the Panel on 2 February 2023 and at the site visit. The Panel found the self-review to be well-structured and easy to navigate. The Panel met twice (online) before undertaking an in-person site visit to the University from 6-8 March 2023. During the site visit, the Panel held 25 interview sessions and met with 61 members of staff and 28 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 Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa took place in the context of the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other contextual factors relevant to this audit are the relative complexity of the University—with three campuses, a large distance/on-line cohort of learners and the diversity of the student body. The University's pre-COVID experience of on-line learning and teaching was an important contributor to its effective response to the pandemic and the University continues to learn from the experience.

The University's aspirations to be a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led university were apparent throughout the audit and the Panel has commended the ways in which the University is supporting and giving effect to these aspirations. The Panel has also commended a further whole-of-university initiative to

¹ <https://www.enhanceunz.com/>

² www.aqa.ac.nz

improve student success (Pūrehuroatanga). This initiative recognises the challenges of providing access to university education for a student body and contributes to a student-centric approach.

The University did not identify specific enhancement initiatives in its self-review, and this has contributed to the Panel making relatively few affirmations. One affirmation, however, is endorsement of the University's plans to monitor progress on response to recommendations made in this audit report. The Panel considers that some recommendations from the previous audit that had not been addressed remain relevant.

The first section (A) of the audit framework is concerned with leadership and management of teaching and learning, and academic quality. The Panel finds the University has a coherent planning framework and strengths in academic and student data systems to support decision-making and practice improvements. Corporate support functions could be better connected to priorities and planning for teaching and learning. Mechanisms for ensuring that policies are reviewed on schedule, and visibility and awareness of academic risks should also be strengthened. Work on moving towards a partnership approach with students is in progress and the Panel sees this as a positive development.

Progress on the enhancement theme is also assessed in this section. The Panel commends how enhancement theme initiatives have contributed to ongoing initiatives, in particular Pūrehuroatanga. Structural changes and the establishment of dedicated roles are also seen as positive developments.

The second section of the audit framework—student life cycle, support and wellbeing—is an area of strength for the University. Much of the University's work in this section (B) is shaped by Pūrehuroatanga, with a structural decision to centralise academic advising also having an influence. The Panel is pleased to see how concerns about academic advising (noted in the previous audit) have been resolved. It is also impressed with the training and development model and the professionalisation of academic advising. The building of capacity and capability to support student wellbeing is also commended. Further work on student wellbeing is underway. The Panel affirms this and other work on a complaints project. It recommends the University engage with students early in the complaints project and sees an opportunity to clarify relationships between Tikanga, formal and informal resolution processes.

Reflecting its diverse student body, the University pays attention to ensuring access is equitable and processes are enabling. However, the Panel recommends the University review access to Accessibility Services, especially for Māori students and Pacific students. It also recommends the University review the availability, delivery and effectiveness of psycho-social support for students and how this might be incorporated in the curriculum.

The impact of Pūrehuroatanga is also evident in the third section (C) of the audit framework which examines curriculum, assessment and delivery. Data generated to examine student success are used

to inform changes to curricula, courses and programmes. The Panel commends this as an example of good practice.

The Panel affirms plans to review qualification review policies and procedures, develop an assessment policy, redevelop academic integrity policy and procedures, and increase assessment in Te Reo Māori. A Cycle 5 recommendation that the University develop an institutional graduate profile had not been completed, although priority has now been given to this work. The Panel recommends this work be progressed with urgency. It also recommends that guidance on benchmarking curricula be included in the University's work on its assessment policy and that a recommendation on benchmarking in the Cycle 5 academic audit report remains relevant.

The fourth section for the audit framework (D) examines Teaching Quality and includes staff recruitment, induction, development and recognition. The Panel recommends the University develop a workforce development strategy to support its aspirations to be Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led. The Panel appreciates that growing the numbers of Māori staff and Pacific staff is a challenge for all universities in Aotearoa New Zealand. It considers the Kaiārahi Tiriti initiative to build capability to be promising. The Panel also affirms the University's intent to develop a Pacific Staff Recruitment Plan.

The Panel recommends the University review induction processes and practices to ensure these are coherent and appropriate across the institution. It was impressed with the use of the Advance HE Framework to allow staff to gain recognition of their teaching competencies but recommends that a comprehensive framework of teaching expectations at different levels be established. More broadly, the Panel recommends the University develop a framework to ensure academic quality of teaching.

The final section (E) of the audit framework focuses on postgraduate research students. Doctoral research students are well supported by services across the University. This includes an accreditation model for doctoral supervisors, which the Panel considers to be a further example of good practice. However, the situation is less clear for research Master's students and the Panel recommends the University revisit a recommendation from Cycle 5 that the University review the management of sub-doctoral research. Associated with this, the Panel recommends the University review its processes and support for students to transition into postgraduate study and whether resources for doctoral students could also be made available to research Master's students.

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. The self-review assessment should encompass all students, all delivery and all staff who undertake or support teaching or supervision. The Panel saw clear evidence of obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi being reflected in the self-review materials and in meetings. The interdependence of research and teaching conforms to expected practice and the Panel was pleased to see staff being encouraged and supported to contribute to the university's role of critic and conscience of society. With respect to the scope components of the audit framework, the Panel considers the University understands the diversity of its student body and their needs,

appreciates diversity in its staffing profile, is taking steps to build capacity and capability in key areas and pays careful attention to delivery modes.

Overall, the Panel considers the University's conformity with the Cycle 6 academic audit framework to show strength in several areas but gaps in others, specifically the lack of a graduate profile and clear expectations of teaching practice. The University has work underway in both areas and, once this is progressed, the Panel considers the University will meet the expectations of the Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework. The Panel has made fifteen commendations, ten affirmations and seventeen recommendations that support and encourage good practices and are intended to assist the University as it progresses its own strategic direction.

The 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.