

## **Summary of the 2022 Academic Audit of Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland**

### ***Academic Audit***

Academic audits for universities in Aotearoa New Zealand are completed by the *Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities – Te Pokapū Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa* (AQA). These audits take a broad, whole-of-institution view of a university’s teaching, learning support and student outcomes. Audits are completed by a panel made up of senior academics or academic managers in Aotearoa New Zealand. Panels include a Māori panel member, an international panel member, and a student or recent graduate.

The sixth cycle of academic audits run by AQA has two main phases. Phase one (2017 – 2020) had universities take part in the enhancement theme ‘Access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and for Pacific students’<sup>1</sup> and, phase two, which is an academic audit of each university. The framework for this academic audit is made up of 30 guideline statements, which are divided into five sections. The framework also has three supporting parts, which the audit also looks at. These are Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations, interdependence of university research and teaching, and universities’ role as critic and conscience of society. More details about the Cycle 6 academic audits can be found in the *Guide to Cycle 6 Academic Audit*<sup>2</sup>, including an overview of the method, information about the process, and explanations of the different steps of the audit.

### ***About the University***

Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland was established in 1883 and is well regarded and active internationally. The University has seven campuses with eight faculties representing each of its main disciplines: Arts; Business and Economics; Creative Arts and Industries; Education and Social Work; Engineering; Law; Medical and Health Sciences; and Science. The University also has over 44,000 students and more than 13,000 staff<sup>3</sup>.

### ***About this report***

This report summarises the commendations, affirmations, and recommendations made by the Panel. The Panel has commended areas of effective or good practice, affirmed developments or initiatives that should result in good practice and made recommendations where it considers attention needs to be paid to enhancing practice.

To develop the commendations, affirmations, and recommendations, the Panel considered a Self-review portfolio produced by the University, as well as information gained during a site visit to the University. At the site visit, the Panel held 23 interview sessions and met with 74 members of staff and 41 students.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.enhanceunz.com/> (Accessed 30 August 2022).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/cycle6> (Accessed 30 August 2022).

<sup>3</sup> Waipapa Taumata Rau, University of Auckland Self-review Report, p. 19.

## **Commendations**

The University was commended for the following areas of excellent practice and good, well-defined outcomes:

- 1. Response to COVID-19** – the Panel recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant and ongoing impact. The University, its staff, and its students experienced longer periods of lockdown and restrictions than in other parts of the country. The University responded to these circumstances well and is striving to retain enhancements to practice that were implemented during COVID-19, such as digital assessment, offshore learning centres, and streamlined processes.
- 2. Investment in data collection** – the University has made a significant investment in data collection and the development and rollout of data dashboards to help support decision-making. The University’s initiative to embed data analysts within Faculties to assist with developing and interpreting data was welcomed, however, not all these positions had been filled at the time of the audit.
- 3. Risk management and business continuity frameworks** – the University’s risk-management and business continuity frameworks and processes are well-developed. These were thoroughly tested through the COVID-19 pandemic and were effective. However, the pressure staff and students face, and continue to face, in the continuity of learning, teaching, and support is also acknowledged.
- 4. Learning support services** – the University offers a wide range of learning support options to its students, in their response to COVID-19, these services became available online to ensure that they remained accessible to students throughout the pandemic.
- 5. Integration and enhancement-oriented approach to the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and international Learners) Code of Practice (the Code)** – the University is taking a constructive approach to integrating the Code, looking beyond the regulatory requirement, and using it as a mechanism for enhancement. Though additional work is required, this is a practical and holistic approach to its integration.
- 6. Curriculum Framework Transformation Project** – the University’s *Curriculum Framework Transformation Project* will guide future development on the structure of degrees across the University and the learning experiences that are available. It includes four priority education areas and eight principles, including a commitment to mātauranga Māori, fostering a sense of belonging, and providing breadth and depth of learning. The coherence of the framework’s vision across the University and the intentions around the learning experience were commended.

- 7. Annual Academic Quality Review** – the University conducts an annual academic quality review process where data is used to identify key themes and reports from academic and/or accreditation reviews and provided to Faculties. This data is used widely, including in discussions regarding key issues and challenges for learning and teaching, and informing the development of annual learning and teaching priorities. It is a commendable practice model of data-informed quality enhancement.
  
- 8. Te Taumata Ngaio Programme** – the *Te Taumata Ngaio initiative* provides ongoing professional development opportunities for staff to gain a foundational understanding of *Taumata Teitei*, te ao Māori principles, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and biculturalism, and te reo Māori pronunciation. The programme and the University's goal of 50% of permanent or fixed-term staff engaging with the initiative by 2025 were recognised and commended.

### **Affirmations**

The Panel affirmed work underway at the University in the following areas:

- 1. Student Voice Framework** – the University has undertaken considerable work in strengthening and valuing student voice(s) and the University's initiative to develop a *Student Voice Framework* with students is a meaningful part of this work.
  
- 2. Learning Management System** – the variability in the University's online learning environment was emphasised during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the University's aim to have future developments of their learning management system support more engaged learning and new assessment modalities was recognised.
  
- 3. Centralised course advice** – the University's development of a centralised course advising model aiming to improve the student experience, as well as the development of metrics to monitor its performance, which intend to improve the student experience were acknowledged. However, the loss of existing connections with staff and potential loss of institutional knowledge could create a risk, and the Panel suggested that student experience of course advice will need to be monitored closely.
  
- 4. Service Delivery Model for Student Services** – the University's strategic service delivery model for student services initiative aims to make greater use of analytics to identify students who would benefit from support and the tailoring of that support. This initiative also includes capabilities for earlier identification of students who may require support.
  
- 5. Programme development and management support** – as a part of the University's response to COVID-19 Ranga Auaha Ako was established to provide learning design support. Alongside this, the University has also created Programme Portfolio Managers in faculties to help support programme management. The creation of roles to support programme management and the embedding of learning design with programme development was affirmed.

6. **End-of-course review** – to help ensure all courses complete a course review at the end of each offering, the University has outlined an initiative to develop a university-wide online system for end-of course reviews. The University outlined how this would support the continuous enhancement of courses.
7. **Refreshed Graduate Profile** – the University refreshed its *Graduate Profile* to align with its *Taumata Teitei* Strategy and embed employability. The University’s aim to make Graduate Profiles a valuable document in practice for students; that is useful for their learning experiences and their future employability was affirmed.
8. **Assessment development** – the University is working on developing assessments to be more flexible, equitable, and accessible. The attention to this will be ongoing as the University implements its Curriculum Framework Transformation Project, the refreshed graduate profile, and a digitally supported learning environment.
9. **Academic Standards Policy** – the University acknowledged a large-scale, high-priority initiative to review their Academic Standards Policy which will include expectations of both new and existing staff. This enhancement was recognised by the Panel.
10. **Sub-doctoral processes and support** – the University plans to review and improve their sub-doctoral processes and support.

### **Recommendations**

The University has been asked to consider the following recommendations:

1. **Te Tiriti o Waitangi** – the Panel recognised that the University sought to embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsiveness in its strategic documents and key initiatives. However, it recommends that the University ensure that Te Tiriti o Waitangi implications are included in terms of reference for all reviews, including reviews of policies and procedures, and that this process does not rely on a Māori staff member or student being present.
2. **Recognising the increased demand on student voices** – the increasing commitment to student voices places an increased demand on students to make contributions to the development of initiatives and quality assurance processes. In the development of the Student Voice Framework, the University should undertake further work on training, recognition, and managing the impact on students when they contribute to university initiatives and decision-making. The University should also ensure that how they have responded to student feedback is clearly available.
3. **Whole-of-University focus for Māori students** – the enhancement theme of Cycle 6, “Access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and for Pacific students”, have been mapped to the University’s *Taumata Teitei* initiative’s objectives and priorities. This

was emphasised by the priorities for the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Māori) which include “improved retention and success of Māori students”<sup>4</sup>. However, a whole-of-University focus is needed when considering access, outcomes, and opportunities for Māori students. This work should be led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Māori), but this should sit alongside a whole-of-University approach.

4. **Whole-of-University focus for Pacific students** – a commitment to the enhancement theme of Cycle 6, “Access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and for Pacific students”, can be seen in the University’s Te Tai Tonga campus development and the appointment of a Pro Vice-Chancellor (Pacific). However, as parity of access and achievement has not yet been achieved for Pacific students relative to non-Pacific students, it is recommended that the University maintains its focus on improving access, outcomes, and opportunities for Pacific students. This work should be led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Pacific), and sit alongside a whole-of-University focus.
5. **Holistic approach to academic integrity** – the University has begun implementing recommendations made by an Academic Integrity Working group including changes on how it promotes and ensures academic integrity. However, it is recommended that a holistic approach to academic integrity should be taken when the University considers its enhancement initiative concerning academic integrity. This should include support for prevention, detection, investigation, and reporting.
6. **Assessment in te reo Māori** – as the number of students entering the University who are fluent in te reo Māori increases, it is recommended that the University should review its processes to ensure the demand for assessment in te reo Māori is monitored centrally.
7. **Future-ready workforce** – the University’s recruitment and appointments are shaped by the University’s strategic initiatives and their academic unit teaching plans. To help progress its strategic priority of a future-ready workforce (and addressing enhancement initiative 7), it is recommended that the University review its recruitment policies and practices to ensure they support the strategic direction and the *Curriculum Framework Transformation Programme*.
8. **Māori recruitment strategy** - the University recognises the need to appoint more Māori staff and a Māori strategic staffing strategy is being developed by the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Māori. However, given the high demand on Māori staff to undertake cultural work and to support the University’s other plans and strategies, it is recommended that the Māori recruitment strategy is progressed with urgency.
9. **Pacific staff** – the University’s staffing profile highlighted a lack of Professorial Pacific staff in the University. This will be a significant barrier to being able to provide the leadership

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<sup>4</sup> Table 7, SRR, p. 50.

required in the *Curriculum Framework Transformation Project*. It is recommended that in the development of the University's Pacific staffing strategy, examining and addressing barriers to the recruitment and recognition of Pacific staff should be considered, particularly for the appointment or promotion to Professorial level positions.

- 10. Induction processes** – the University acknowledged that induction processes can sometimes be overlooked for experienced staff or staff from non-university backgrounds. It is recommended that the University review its induction processes so that access to induction programmes is equitable and that induction programmes are used by those they are aimed at. These programmes should also be monitored and reviewed regularly to make sure they are improved.
- 11. Induction programmes for new Māori staff and Pacific staff** – though there are positive peer networks that provide support within the University, having dedicated induction programmes for new Māori staff and Pacific staff could assist with the challenges and opportunities in recruiting Māori staff and Pacific staff. It is recommended that the University develop induction programmes for Māori staff and Pacific staff.
- 12. Teaching excellence awards** – the University has Faculty initiatives to help emphasise student voice or teaching teams in recognising good teaching. More independent student-led or peer-led approaches to nomination might provide pathways for people who might not nominate themselves to be recognised. It is recommended that the University review the nomination processes it uses for teaching excellence awards to ensure they are inclusive and supportive of those that would not nominate themselves.
- 13. Supervision** – overall, student feedback indicates that most doctoral students are very satisfied with the quality of supervision they receive. However, when exploring provisions for addressing problems with supervision, issues were raised regarding difficulties students faced. It is recommended that the University assess its process for addressing issues with doctoral and sub-doctoral supervision ensuring they are transparent, timely, effective, and protect both the student and supervisor. The University should engage students early in this process and support their contribution.
- 14. Cultural competency** – as the University wants to raise enrolments of postgraduate research students (doctoral and sub-doctoral) who are Māori or who are Pacific, ensuring the student's experiences are culturally safe and supported is vital. Including cultural competency in the University's supervisor development programme and having it as a requirement for supervisor accreditation would support this. It is recommended that the University include cultural competency in its supervisor development programme and requirements for supervisor accreditation

### ***Further information***

A detailed report of the 2022 Academic Audit of Waipapa Taumata Rau, The University of Auckland can be found [here](#).

AQA's academic audit and its findings relate to the institution as a whole and do not provide information about individual programmes of study or subjects.

Further information about the Cycle 6 Academic Audit process can be found in the [Guide to Cycle 6 Academic Audit](#).

Further information about the Cycle 6 Enhancement Theme, "Access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and Pacific students", can be found here <https://www.enhanceunz.com/>.