# Report of the 2014 Academic Audit of Victoria University of Wellington - Te Whare Wānanga o Te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui

Cycle 5 academic audit undertaken by the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

November 2014

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

**AQA** | Academic **Quality**Agency
For New Zealand Universities

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# Foreword

The 2014 audit of Victoria University of Wellington is the fifth academic audit of the University carried out by the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA). The University was last audited in 2009, as part of the Cycle 4 audit of New Zealand universities, by a Panel of auditors from the (then) New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit[1].

The methodology adopted for the 2014 audit of Victoria is that used for all New Zealand universities in this cycle of audits. The focus of Cycle 5 audits is on teaching and learning and student support, including postgraduate. The methodology is based on a framework of 40 Guideline Statements which are expressions of the qualities or standards that a contemporary university of good international standing might be expected to demonstrate. The Guideline Statements were developed after extensive discussion with New Zealand university staff and Vice-Chancellors and consultation with other stakeholders, including students and academic auditors. The Guideline Statements are informed by comparable frameworks in other jurisdictions, in particular the QAA (UK).

The Cycle 5 audit was carried out by a Panel of AQA auditors, including an international auditor, between May and August 2014. This report presents the Panel's findings, based on the evidence it has considered. The report is released under the authorisation of the AQA Board.

**Dr Jan Cameron**
**Director**
Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

November 2014

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[1] The New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit changed its name to the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities from 1 January 2013.

# Executive Summary

Established in 1897 as a constituent college of the University of New Zealand, Victoria University of Wellington has existed as an autonomous university since 1962. In 2005 the University acquired the Wellington College of Education and now delivers its academic programmes from four sites in the Wellington metropolitan area. The University also has a small presence overseas. In 2013, the University had a total enrolment of 21,151 students (16,855 EFTS) and 1,885 full-time equivalent staff. Victoria's academic offerings span a wide range of programmes from foundation to doctoral level. The University lays claim to a "special character" arising out of the interplay of its interdisciplinary strengths, successful collaboration, supportive community of higher learning and the unique opportunities emanating from being located in the nation's capital city. It has New Zealand's only School of Government.

The University was audited by the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA) in 2014. The AQA audit methodology incorporates a framework of 40 Guideline Statements which articulate the qualities or standards which a contemporary university of good standing internationally might be expected to demonstrate. Victoria was most recently audited by AQA (as the then New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit) in 2009. The University provided an update against the findings of that audit and the Panel is satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to address the 2009 recommendations. In particular, the Panel noted that the University has made considerable progress in its provision for Māori and Pasifika students.

At the time of the audit, the University had recently appointed a new Vice-Chancellor. It was developing a new Strategic Plan and in the process of reformulating the senior management structure and responsibilities. The Panel commends the University on its strong strategic planning process and the extent of stakeholder consultation for its new Strategic Plan. The Panel specifically commends the University on the clarity of its commitment to Māori in the Strategic Plan and with respect to Māori and Pacific development in the Equity and Diversity Strategy, and on the endeavours made to ensure structure and leadership are appropriate to give effect to the University's plans for Māori and Pacific students and staff. The Panel also commends the University on the embeddedness of mechanisms and activities to support the recruitment, retention and achievement of Māori and Pasifika students, including the Te Pūtahi Atawhai peer mentoring programme and the Wainuiomata Pasifika Education Success Initiative.

One of the University's major strategic initiatives is the Learning Partnership project. The Panel commends this initiative and accompanying plans, guidelines, resources and activities which support the philosophy of learner-centred academic processes within a co-ordinated framework. The Panel commends the University's work in developing its new Graduate Profile. The Panel was impressed by the consultation with both staff and students; the manner in which the connections between the Profile, graduate attributes and graduate outcomes are being mapped from course level to institutional level; and the opportunities which are being provided to enable students to achieve co-curricular attributes.

Overall, the Panel commends the University on its coherent and coordinated suite of Strategies, Action Plans and Frameworks to guide its teaching, learning and student support and is satisfied the University has good processes in place to monitor use, acceptability and effectiveness of its services. The Panel recommends the University give priority to completing the Course Information Project and the review of academic advice in order to enhance the quality, reliability and consistency of academic advising across the University.

The Panel was convinced that the University has strong processes in place for endeavouring to ensure the design of spaces for teaching, learning and student informal use are informed by user experience and potential pedagogical developments. The University uses Blackboard as its learning management system, augmented by a range of other tools and technologies. The University is aware that there is scope for staff to extend their use of Blackboard beyond mainly the provision of information and that there is a challenge to link different disparate information systems together for the purposes of student reporting. The Panel recommends that the University gives priority to implementation of its Strategy for Digital Learning and Teaching.

The Panel was impressed by the coherence of the various institutional quality management processes and associated documentation developed in recent years. In particular the Panel commends the University on its suite of academic handbooks which comprehensively and clearly set out expectations and requirements for programme development, approval and review and for assessment, thereby forming a set of guidelines for all staff. The Panel is confident the University's review processes for programmes and courses are robust, systematic and are followed up to ensure good outcomes for the programme. It is recommended that the University develops a high-level benchmarking statement which sets out the objectives and potential strategies whereby staff might assure themselves that programmes, curricula and assessment are benchmarked to prevailing national and international standards. The Panel also discerned a disjunction with respect to quality assurance of programmes delivered overseas which needs to be addressed.

The Student Feedback on Teaching and Courses Policy sets out the conditions of and frequency with which courses and lecturers, including new lecturers and tutors, are expected to be subject to student evaluation.  The Panel recommends that the University gives urgent attention to implementation of a proposal to require course outlines to include feedback to students regarding the outcomes and actions taken as a consequence of responses from course and teaching evaluations. The Panel is satisfied the University's academic appeals and grievance processes are robust.

The Panel commends the University on its success in raising the profile and valuing of excellence in teaching during a period of significant focus on improving institutional research output, and on its strong commitment to the development of teaching excellence.

The establishment of the Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR) was seen by the Panel to be a good initiative. The Doctoral Policy and the Master's Thesis Policy were considered to be examples of good practice. The Panel suggests the FGR might extend its monitoring processes to include aspects of master's supervision and also recommends that the University explores development of a protocol which enables some centralised reporting of individual issues which might be serious,

systemic or point to problems with University processes which need to be addressed. Overall, the Panel is satisfied that the requirements for external scrutiny through the examination process of both doctoral and master's theses facilitate national benchmarking and, in the case of PhDs, international evaluation.

The Panel had no issues of serious concern regarding Victoria University of Wellington's conformity with the expectations expressed in the Cycle 5 Guideline Statements. The Guideline Statements were met, in some cases at a high standard. The University identified eight Enhancement Initiatives which it intends to complete within the next audit cycle (by 2019). The Panel supports these enhancement initiatives and has emphasised some of them for prioritising.

The Panel has made 12 commendations, seven affirmations and eight recommendations.

# Contents

# List of Key Terms and Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **AQA** | Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities |
| **AUSSE** | Australasian Survey of Student Engagement |
| **Banner** | Victoria's student management information system. |
| **CAD** | Centre for Academic Development |
| **CATs** | Contacts for Academic Technology |
| **CDP** | Campus Development Plan |
| **CUAP** | Universities New Zealand Committee on University Academic Programmes |
| **DVCA** | Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) |
| **EFTS** | Equivalent Full-Time Student(s) |
| **FGR** | Faculty of Graduate Research |
| **FTE** | Full-time Equivalent (staff) |
| **GDS** | Graduate Destination Survey |
| **GES** | Guaranteed Entry Score |
| **ITS** | Information Technology Services |
| **Komiti Pasifika** | Victoria's network of Pacific students and staff. |
| **KPI** | Key Performance Indicator |
| **NZSM** | Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music |
| **PAMI** | Planning and Management Information Unit |
| **Panel** | Unless otherwise specified, "the Panel" refers to the Academic Audit Panel engaged by AQA to conduct the 2014 audit of Victoria University of Wellington. |
| **PGSA** | Postgraduate Students' Association |
| **PRC** | Proposals Review Committee |
| **PVC** | Pro Vice-Chancellor |
| **SAMP** | Strategic Asset Management Plan |
| **SD** | Supporting document (forms part of the University's Self-review Portfolio) |
| **SEIS** | Student Experience Improvement Survey |
| **SLSS** | Student Learning Support Service |
| **SR** | Self-review Report |
| **TESOL** | Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages |
| **Toihuarewa** | A committee of the Academic Board and the forum for Māori academic matters. |
| **TPP** | Teaching Performance Profile |
| **VILP** | Victoria International Leadership Programme |
| **VUWSA** | Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association |

## Preface

Established in 1897 as a constituent college of the University of New Zealand, Victoria University of Wellington has existed as an autonomous university since 1962. In 2005 the University acquired the Wellington College of Education, based in Karori, which is now run as a satellite site of the University.

In 2013 the University had a total enrolment of 21,151 students (16,855 EFTS), and 1,885 staff (FTE).[2] The University's academic offerings span a wide range of programmes from foundation to doctoral level. Located in the capital city, the University considers that its partnerships with a number of national organisations located in Wellington add to its distinctiveness. It sees itself as "both a partner and critic of government",[3] helping to shape public debate on critical issues; it has New Zealand's only School of Government. Victoria aspires to achieve academic excellence in its disciplinary and interdisciplinary strengths in the context of "a constrained budgetary environment".[4]

In 2014 the University delivered its academic programmes from four sites in the Wellington metropolitan area: Kelburn which is the major site and provides core central services, plus the other sites of Karori (Education), Pipitea (Law and Commerce) and Te Aro (Architecture and Design), none of which is more than four kilometres from the main site. At the time of the audit, Victoria was joint owner with Massey University of Te Kōki New Zealand School of Music, located at Victoria's Kelburn campus and Massey's campuses in Wellington, Albany and Palmerston North.[5] Victoria also has a small presence overseas, teaching foundation and some first year courses in China and Vietnam and the first and fourth years of a BEd (TESOL) in Malaysia. A limited range of postgraduate programmes is also taught with overseas partners, in Vietnam, Australia and Singapore. The University leases space at the University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City.

## University Profile

Victoria University of Wellington is structured academically as seven faculties, each of which is headed by a Dean (some of whom are also Pro Vice-Chancellors). The Faculty of Commerce is referred to as Victoria Business School. The New Zealand School of Music (under separate governance at the time of the audit), is headed by a Director. Just prior to the audit site visit the University announced a decision to cease joint operation of the School of Music between itself and Massey University with each University continuing to offer individually specialised programmes.[6]

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[2] 2013 Annual Report (henceforth referred to as AR), pp16–17.
[3] AR, p 15.
[4] Strategic Plan 2009–2014 (henceforth referred to as SP), p 8.
[5] In a media release on 14 July 2014 the University announced: "The current courses and activities offered by Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music (NZSM) will transfer to Victoria, while Massey will develop a commercial music programme that will be offered in 2016, in association with NZSM. In total, 34 staff will transfer to Victoria. All current students will be able to complete their studies and receive a jointly awarded qualification. New students will continue to enrol in NZSM courses through Victoria."
www.victoria.ac.nz/news/2014/exciting-developments-ahead-for-music-education accessed 26.08.14.
[6] *Ibid.*

Most faculties comprise several schools plus several research institutes and centres and a faculty administrative office.

In addition to the Vice-Chancellor, the senior management of the University at the time of the audit comprised two Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Academic and Research), the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Māori), Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) and four other academic Pro Vice-Chancellors (some of whom are also faculty Deans), the Chief Operating Officer and the Director of Human Resources. Most services pertaining to students and to teaching and learning report to the DVC (Academic), as does the AVC (Pasifika). The Faculty of Graduate Research (FGR) reports to the DVC (Research).[7] Two sets of faculties (Humanities and Social Sciences plus Education; Engineering plus Architecture and Design plus Science) are under the overall management of two Pro Vice-Chancellors.

The University's academic committee structure flows from the Academic Board (a committee of Council) and from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic):

Committees of Academic Board:  Academic Committee
                               Library and Information Services Committee
                               University Entry Committee
                               Research Committee
                               Toihuarewa[8]
                               Faculties
Other committees which are the responsibility of the DVCA:
                               Equity and Diversity Committee
                               Learning and Teaching Strategy Committee
                               Student Experience Group
                               PVC and Deans Committee.

Of the University's 16,855 EFTS in 2013, 83% (14,075 EFTS) were enrolled in undergraduate degree-level programmes, approximately 10% in taught postgraduate programmes and 7% in postgraduate research programmes.[9] Just over one third (36%) of students studied part-time. The majority (86%) of Victoria students are domestic. Just under 2,000 students identify as Māori and just over 1,000 as of Pacific ethnicity.[10]

Of the 1,885 staff (FTE) reported in 2013, 860 (46%) were teaching and research staff.[11]

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[7] The structure as at the time of the audit was to change in October 2014 to include a new position of Provost with direct reports of Vice-Provost (Academic and Equity), Vice-Provost (Research), Vice-Provost (International Affairs), AVC (Sustainability) and AVC (Pasifika). In this structure the Provost, remaining Pro Vice-Chancellors, DVC (Māori) and DVC (Engagement) will report to the Vice-Chancellor, along with the Chief Operating Officer and the Director of Human Resources. Current reports to the DVC (Academic) remain as reports to the Vice-Provost (Academic and Equity). This audit report refers to positions as they were at the time of the audit (August 2014).

[8] Toihuarewa is the forum and vehicle for Māori academic matters at the University. Although Toihuarewa does not offer any degrees, students are able to graduate through this 'Faculty' at both graduation ceremonies. www.victoria.ac.nz/maori-at-victoria/rangatiratanga/toihuarewa accessed 31.07.14.

[9] Calculated from Annual Report 2013, p 17.

[10] AR, p 17.

[11] AR, p 16.

## Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan

The Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan discussed below refer to the Plan provided at the time of the submission of the Self-review Portfolio.[12]

The University's Mission is to play a leading role in shaping New Zealand's future by:
- Adding significantly to the knowledge and understanding of natural phenomena, society, culture and technology through research, teaching and interdisciplinary perspectives;
- Engaging with local, national and international communities in creating, disseminating and applying knowledge that has scholarly and societal impact;
- Developing graduates with skills in leadership, communication, and critical and creative thinking.[13]

In addition, the University affirms its commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi with a series of objectives related to Māori.

In summary, the University's values are:
- Academic freedom
- Excellence in all activities
- Advancement, application and dissemination of knowledge and expertise
- The Treaty of Waitangi
- Internationalisation
- Accountability
- Honesty and respect
- Equity
- A strong university community
- Community engagement
- Sustainability.[14]

In order for Victoria to achieve its vision, its 2009–2014 Strategic Plan specifies eight goals, which in summary are:
- To dramatically improve overall research performance
- To strengthen the high-quality research-led learning and teaching environment
- To engage students as active and life-long members of the community of higher learning
- To build and maintain mutually beneficial external relationships
- To recruit, develop and retain high quality staff
- To ensure long-term academic and financial viability
- To make a public contribution by communicating and applying scholarly expertise
- To provide an inclusive and representative environment that is conducive to equity of opportunity for participation and success.

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[12] SP, p 3.
[13] SP, p 5.
[14] SP, p 4.

The 2009–2014 Strategic Plan elaborates further on these goals, indicating the main ways in which the University intended to achieve the goals, the specific actions needed and measures of success.[15]

The University refers to its "special character" arising out of the interplay of its interdisciplinary strengths, successful collaboration, supportive community of higher learning and the unique opportunities emanating from being located in the nation's capital city.[16] It claims its distinctiveness from its culture of domestic and international engagement; its effective international connections; and its focus on raising the educational performance of Māori and Pacific students.[17] The draft 2015–2035 Strategic Plan highlights the University's vision to be a great "civic university", imbued with values connected to the Treaty of Waitangi and Mātauranga Māori and contributing to the advancement of the Asia-Pacific region.[18]

The University's current approach to learning and teaching reflects the Learning Partnership project undertaken since 2012. Essentially, the Learning Partnership is intended to frame principles and structures related to teaching and learning from the perspective of the learner/student. Learning Partnership initiatives are discussed further in subsequent sections of this report.

## The 2014 Academic Audit

The current audit follows the methodology used for all New Zealand universities in the fifth cycle of academic audits. It focuses on teaching and learning and student support, including postgraduate.

AQA academic audits draw on the University's self-review and the supporting documentation it provides, publicly accessible pages of the University's website and interviews with staff, students, Council members and a number of external stakeholders. These various sources enable Panel members to triangulate claims made by the University and to ensure the Panel's own conclusions do not rely on a single source of evidence. The Panel has used the current 2009–2014 Strategic Plan and associated planning documents to provide the context for this audit.[19]

The University submitted its Self-review Portfolio, including a report and key supporting documentation in both print and electronic form, at the beginning of May 2014. The Self-review Report included hyperlinks to documents on the University's public website and also references to documents organised by the University in a Dropbox online depository for the purpose of the audit. These processes ensured the audit Panel had a large amount of information available to it. Further documents were provided on request as needed. In addition, the University provided some more recent reports a short time before the site visit. These included an update on recent and proposed restructuring of senior management roles at the University.

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[15] SP, pp 9–13.
[16] SP, p 6.
[17] SR, p 4.
[18] Draft Strategic Plan 2015–2035, p 1.
[19] The new draft Strategic Plan was tabled at the audit site visit so was not available to the Panel for its prior deliberations.

As part of the audit process, an invitation was extended to the Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA) to comment on the Guideline Statements as they saw fit. A comprehensive submission was received from VUWSA in May 2014.

The Chair of the audit Panel and the AQA Director met with the Vice-Chancellor and DVC (Academic) and then visited the University for a pre-audit planning meeting in July 2014.

The full Panel of five auditors came together in Wellington on 18 August for the site visit to the Kelburn Campus on 19–21 August 2014. In total, during the site visit the Panel spoke to about 75 staff and 40 students, as well as four members of the University Council and some members of Komiti Pasifika.

# 1. Leadership and Management of Teaching and Learning

As indicated in the Preface, Victoria at the time of the audit had a structure common to New Zealand universities, led by a Vice-Chancellor who was supported by a senior leadership team of two Deputy Vice-Chancellors, six Pro Vice-Chancellors (PVCs), the Chief Operating Officer and the Director of Human Resources. The PVCs are the senior managers of the faculties, groups of faculties or of specific portfolios (Māori and International).

The new Vice-Chancellor commenced his appointment in 2014 and a process of reformulation of the senior management structure and responsibilities was under way at the time of the audit. The new structure includes a position of Provost with oversight of all academic activity of the University. The Provost position is to be supported by a Vice-Provost (Academic and Equity), a Vice-Provost (Research) and a Vice-Provost (International Affairs).

The evaluative discussion in this audit report is based on the structure at the time of the self-review and site visit. However actions to be taken by the University in the future will need to fit in with the new responsibilities and roles.

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### 1.1 Delegations

Universities should have clear delegations for decision-making related to teaching and learning quality and research supervision, and for accountability for quality assurance of programmes and courses.

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The academic structure of the University to some extent defines the delegations for decision-making. The Academic Board Statute states that the "functions and powers delegated to the Board by the Council and the Vice-Chancellor from time to time shall be notified to the Board and are available from the Convenor of the Board and published on the University's website."[20] The delegated functions appear to be limited to advice to Council on academic matters, rather than including the authority to make decisions. However the Self-review Report states that "in some cases" the Academic Committee and the University Entry Committee of the Board may make decisions on behalf of the Board.[21]

Each faculty has a Faculty Board convened by the relevant Dean and comprising all academic staff teaching in the Faculty as well as student representatives. The Faculty Boards are committees of the Academic Board and deal with all matters concerning the maintenance of academic quality and any other academic matters at a Faculty level. Faculty Deans have delegated authority to make certain academic decisions, as do associate deans, heads of school and programme directors. Such authorities are defined in relevant academic statutes, for example the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the PhD Statute, and individual Qualifications Statutes. The responsibilities for exercising such authority are embedded in role descriptions. For other academic decisions, in particular those

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[20] Clause 4.5(c). www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/governance/academic-board-statute.pdf accessed 15.09.14.

[21] SR, s1.1.2, p 13.

related to academic approvals, reviews and assessment-related decisions, the responsibilities are outlined in the various relevant handbooks. The Academic Office and Student Academic Services provide advice on the appropriate authorities for such decisions.

The University considers this "authorities-based" framework based on a "high-trust, high integrity principle" to be effective.[22] The Panel gained no evidence that it is not, but nevertheless believes that having authority embedded in individuals' role descriptions does not make it clear to other staff, or to students, where responsibility does or does not lie. The Panel therefore suggests that a formal delegations schedule would be helpful in that it would have, in one place, the hierarchy of delegated authorities which would assist all staff, but particularly new staff, in understanding where responsibility and authority lies.

> *Recommendation:* The Panel **recommends** that the University develops a formal delegations schedule to identify where specific authorities for academic decisions lie and ensures that this schedule is accessible to all staff.

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**1.2      Strategic and operational planning**
Universities should have appropriate strategic and operational planning documents which include objectives related to student achievement and teaching quality, with key performance indicators which inform academic quality assurance processes.

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Victoria's high-level Strategic Plan (outlined in the Preface to this report) is supported by the biennial Investment Plan, an Annual Plan and a suite of strategy documents. The Investment Plan includes an Outcomes Framework with targets for key performance indicators. The Panel suggests that the KPIs might be more extensive and include an indication against five-year objectives, such that a reporting matrix can be developed. It heard from Council that a more detailed set of KPIs is likely to be developed to accompany the new Strategic Plan. Council members are also mindful that the integrity of institutional reporting is dependent, at least in part, on the integrity of reporting against underpinning plans and strategies.

The key strategic documents to guide the University's activities relevant to this audit are:
- The Learning and Teaching Strategy 2010–2014
- The Equity and Diversity Strategy
- The Student Experience Strategy.

Subsidiary Action Plans provide guidance to staff on how objectives in the Strategies might be met. Action plans relevant to the above Strategies which were reviewed by the audit Panel are:
- Disability Action Plan 2012–2014
- Framework and Plan for Students from Socio-economically Disadvantaged Background
- Pasifika Student Success Plan 2011–2015
- Strategic Enrolment Plan
- Student Mentoring Framework

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[22] SR, pp 13–14.

- Victoria Student Retention Plan
- Vision and Strategy for Digital Learning and Teaching at Victoria.

Detail of the Pasifika Student Success Plan and the commitments to Māori and Pasifika in the Strategic Plan and the Equity and Diversity Strategy 2010–2014 are discussed in relevant sections of this report. The Panel noted its overall positive impression of the University's focus on these two groups both as students and staff and also at community level. It noted the clarity of vision in the Strategic Plan with respect to Treaty commitments to Māori and the objectives for Māori and Pacific development in the Equity and Diversity Strategy and the Pasifika Student Success Plan. In later parts of this report reference is made to a number of initiatives which support these objectives. As stated in the Preface, the senior management structure of the University includes positions of responsibility for Māori and Pasifika (the DVC(Māori) and the AVC(Pasifika)). The virtual faculty Toihuarewa provides an academic forum for Māori and a home from which Māori students may graduate.[23] It was apparent to the Panel that endeavours have been made to ensure the academic and management structure and leadership are appropriate to implement the University's plans for Māori and Pacific students and staff. A real strength is the recognition, in structures and activities, that Māori and Pacific people differ in many aspects from each other and that the University makes every effort possible to respond appropriately.

The Learning and Teaching Strategy includes an Action Plan comprising a series of Goals, Objectives and Actions related to:
- Strengthening a high quality research-led learning and teaching environment and rewarding and celebrating teaching excellence
- Fostering, supporting and rewarding good practice in learning and teaching
- High quality academic programmes and teaching delivery
- Good leadership and evidence-based decision-making in learning and teaching
- Valuing and integration of cultural diversity of students and staff.[24]

The Learning and Teaching Strategy connects to the Strategic Plan, the Research Strategy (with respect to research-led teaching), the Pathways to Success review of the curriculum and to the 2009–2014 Māori Recruitment, Retention and Achievement Strategy. Overall, the Panel was impressed by the clarity, comprehensiveness and connectedness of the University's Plans and strategies, including action plans and follow-up reports for a number of them.[25]

The University's Self-review Report depicts clearly the relationship between the high level strategies, and the underlying plans, such as those referred to above.[26] These Plans and the policies and guiding documents flowing from them are discussed in relevant sections of this report. The University participates in UniForum benchmarking of service operations and also takes part in the Association of Commonwealth Universities Strategic Management Programme which provides benchmarking data.

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[23] See n 8.
[24] Learning and Teaching Strategy 2010–2014, pp 7–11.
[25] For example, the 2012 and 2013 reports on Equity and Diversity, Learning and Teaching, and Student Experience.
[26] SR, p 15.

The Panel reviewed the 2012 and 2013 Reports on Equity and Diversity, Learning and Teaching and Student Experience.[27] The Reports document a wide range of activities which align with objectives in the respective Plans and include the kinds of trend data which might be expected to populate the institution's report against its Strategic Plan. The Panel was of the view that reporting at institutional level could be further enhanced by more sophisticated interrogation of the data which do exist. This has been acknowledged by the University: while it currently produces reports on academic performance within courses it proposes to investigate development of an analytical suite using the existing student management system software to enable it to measure the impact of interventions in improving academic outcomes for equity groups (Enhancement Initiative No. 1).[28] The Panel endorses this proposal.

At the time of the site visit a new Strategic Plan was undergoing consultation, with implementation to start in 2015. While the audit refers to the current (2009–2014) Plan, the Panel also received a copy of the current draft of the new 2015–2035 Strategic Plan for the 2015–2019 period and examined the development processes for the new Plan.[29] It heard of the extensive consultation undertaken with external stakeholders to determine what is expected of the University, given its location in the capital city, civic responsibility and objective of global connectedness. The development had also included significant consultation with staff and alumni, and a number of workshops with Council members. The Panel also heard of the expectations of Council regarding KPIs and reporting and feedback which will address omissions in the current planning and implementation process.

A major initiative which spans the scope of this audit is the Learning Partnership project, initiated in 2012. To date the project has included a review of undergraduate education and a revised graduate profile, in keeping with the University's argument that graduate attributes are "at the core" of the learning partnership approach.[30] A number of the other initiatives described by the University in its Self-review Portfolio have arisen out of the Learning Partnership project, including the Digital Technology Strategy, a revised Student Charter and a suite of handbooks to guide curriculum planning, programme approval, reviews and assessment. Many of the activities emanating from the Learning Partnership approach are argued to support and enhance student engagement.[31] The Panel found the philosophy underpinning learning partnerships is becoming well embedded through the implementation of activities and policies across a wide range of teaching and learning and student support areas.

In addition to reviewing the strategic and operational planning, the Panel considered the University's overall academic quality management processes. At the highest level the Academic Quality Statute sets out institutional requirements for academic approvals, assessment, evaluation and review. A more detailed "Quality and management framework for student learning" covers all aspects of the student learning experience, within the context of the University's strategic objectives and external

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[27] Dated May 2013.

[28] SR, p 16.

[29] The draft plan covers twenty years 2015– 2035. It is to be reviewed annually for the first five years 2015–2019 and thereafter every five years.

[30] SR, p 6.

[31] Report on Equity and Diversity, Learning and Teaching, and Student Experience 2012, p 5.

requirements.[32] This framework documents quality support and enhancement responsibilities, as well as quality assurance arrangements. The Panel was impressed by the coherence of the various institutional quality management processes and associated documentation developed in recent years. It did, however, discern a disjunction with respect to quality assurance of programmes delivered overseas which needs to be addressed (see Chapter 3).

The self-review process appeared to have been very thorough and inclusive.[33] The portfolio demonstrated meticulous attention to detail and a clear and succinct approach to the audit framework. From its self-review the University has proposed eight Enhancement Initiatives. It also reported on responses to the seven recommendations which were made by the Cycle 4 Audit Panel. The Cycle 5 Panel supports the 2014 Enhancement Initiatives and was satisfied that appropriate action has been taken to address the 2009 concerns.

> *Commendation:* The Panel **commends** the University on its strong strategic planning process and the extent of stakeholder consultation for its new Strategic Plan. The Panel endorses the development of appropriate KPIs and reporting processes which will enable the University to measure progress and the Council, in particular, to satisfy itself of the quality and relevance of the University's activities.

> *Commendation:* The Panel **commends** the University on its coherent and coordinated suite of Strategies, Action Plans and Frameworks to guide its teaching, learning and student support, including the specific requirements related to equity objectives and to student retention and achievement.

> *Commendation:* The Panel **commends** the University on the clarity of its commitment to Māori in the Strategic Plan and with respect to Māori and Pacific development in the Equity and Diversity Strategy 2010–2014; on the endeavours made to ensure management and academic structure and leadership are appropriate to give effect to the University's plans for Māori and Pasifika students and staff; and on the manner in which provision is made in many parts of the University to try and ensure distinctive learning styles are recognised and specific needs are met.

> *Commendation:* The Panel **commends** the University's Learning Partnership initiative, noting the wide-ranging and comprehensive plans, guidelines, resources and activities which support the philosophy of learner-centred academic processes within a co-ordinated framework.

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[32] *viz* The Treaty of Waitangi and the Tertiary Education Strategy.
[33] SR, p 70.

> **1.3    Student input**
> Universities should facilitate student input to planning, policy development and monitoring of key academic activities.

Victoria's Student Charter emphasises a commitment to student representation and to teaching and learning being a partnership between students and the University. The University provides various opportunities for students to have input to governance, policy formulation and review processes. In addition to student representation on Council (the President of VUWSA plus one elected student member) the Academic Board and key academic committees include student members. The Panel notes the University Council's commitment to retain student membership even if overall membership size is reduced as a consequence of anticipated legislative changes.

Students routinely provide input to programme reviews and Graduating Year Reviews (GYRs) for new programmes. The Education Officer of VUWSA plays an important role in assisting students to contribute well to these committees and to reviews where student comment is sought. Students also reported on mechanisms provided by VUWSA to train and support faculty delegates.

The Class Representative Policy advises that all undergraduate classes are expected to have at least one class representative whose key role is to assist communication between students and staff. The Policy is monitored via the VUWSA Representation Report which records, *inter alia,* the number of representatives who attend training as well as faculty delegate attendance at board and committee meetings. VUWSA provided the Panel with an account of the selection, training, support and management of the class representatives by their organisation.[34] The VUWSA Education Organiser and the Student Advocate assist class representatives if they encounter difficult issues. Students who met with the Panel gave mixed assessments of the Class Representative system, some indicating that it is unevenly implemented and that not all staff respond constructively to their input. It is noted that Victoria's class representation system was identified as a model of good practice in a 2013 Ako Aotearoa Report on student voice.[35]

Other forms of input via various surveys are discussed in Chapter 3. The Panel is satisfied that the University provides well for student input. It alerts the University to student comment that apart from being included (by VUWSA) in the Class Representative handbook, the Student Charter is not well known and could be promoted more widely.

> **1.4    Infrastructure**
> Universities should have strategies and/or use processes for ensuring that their teaching and learning spaces and facilities are appropriate for their teaching and learning needs.

Victoria aims to provide facilities of international standard, which support "leading-edge" teaching, learning and research, and which create an environment which provides a high quality student experience. It also aims to create an environment which will foster engagement with the external

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[34] VUWSA submission to the 2014 academic audit.
[35] akoaotearoa.ac.nz/projects/student-voice-effective-representation-and-quality accessed 15.09.14.

community. The University aims to "align spatial responses with educational drivers".[36] The Strategic Asset Management Plan 2012–2031 (SAMP) and the Campus Development Plan (CDP) articulate a 20-year facilities planning framework that flows through into the Capital Plan. The SAMP includes key drivers for infrastructure, of which eight are directly related to teaching and learning and student experience. The CDP sets out the strategies for ensuring facilities are fit for purpose, are flexible, connected, attractive, welcoming, safe and environmentally responsible. [37]

The Panel heard of some of the activities which support the objectives of the Campus Development Plan. The Panel was pleased to read a post-implementation evaluation of the new Student Hub and considered the Hub to be evidence of the University's commitment and effectiveness in designing to meet student need. It learned that refurbishment and new infrastructure initiatives are informed by consultation with external stakeholders, the Centre for Academic Development (CAD), VUWSA members and academics who were seen as leaders in pedagogical application. Student survey data are also fed into infrastructure planning and reviews.

The Panel explored whether issues arise from the dispersed nature of the University across four sites in Wellington. It was told of plans for overall development and of the need to balance the disadvantages of secondary locations with the advantages of proximity to core stakeholders and relevant professions. It was reported that there have been discussions between Facilities Management and faculties regarding facilities on satellite sites and, in particular, the need to ensure students on these sites are not disadvantaged. The success of the Kelburn Hub was being assessed to inform plans for other sites. Regard for the student experience was also evident in discussions about the location of residential halls, these being such that could easily connect students with the campus and the city, which is consistent with the University's desire to provide a "civic" experience.

The Panel was convinced that the University has strong processes in place for endeavouring to ensure the design of spaces for teaching, learning and student informal use are informed by user experience and that they allow for potential pedagogical developments.

> *Affirmation:* The Panel **affirms** the University's efforts to improve integration of the four Wellington sites in terms of providing physical environments and facilities which are comparable but also address discipline-specific needs.

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**1.5     Information resources**
Universities should use processes for ensuring that their information resources are appropriate and sufficient for research-informed teaching and learning.

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Provision of information resources to support research, teaching and learning is overseen mainly by Information Technology Services (ITS) and the Library. The services provided by ITS are described in the Services Catalogue and include access to collaborative and high performance computing, file-

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[36] Campus Development Plan to 2030, p 6. Victoria University of Wellington: 2013.
[37] Campus Development Plan to 2030, pp 5–11. Victoria University of Wellington: 2013.

sharing and data storage, survey tools and video conferencing.[38] ITS is responsible for provision of appropriate technology in teaching rooms. The Panel heard of developments in storage and use of data for planning and monitoring, noting that the University is yet to make optimum use of the opportunities facilitated by its data warehouse. Staff on all sites are able to access student information on line and a course analysis suite is in development. A current challenge is the limited ability to link different disparate information systems together. University staff recognise that the University's reporting will continue to be constrained until such data issues are resolved.

The University uses Blackboard as its learning management system, augmented by a range of tools associated with Blackboard (for example, Turnitin, Voice tools). Other technologies, such as podcasts and wikis, are also supported. The University is aware that there is scope for staff to extend their use of Blackboard beyond mainly the provision of information.[39]

Recognising that digital technologies were underused at Victoria, despite significant investment in infrastructure, the University has produced a "Vision and Strategy for Digital Learning and Teaching at Victoria 2012–2017".[40] This Vision statement noted four main reasons for limited impact of technologies on learning and teaching: lack of clarity of purpose; lack of staff support; inadequate access to tools to support activities; and perceived poor reliability of infrastructure. The Vision notes a tension between ensuring students are supported in their engagement with learning in appropriate ways, on the one hand, and academic freedom of staff to reflect disciplinary differences and innovation on the other.[41] It was not clear to the Panel whether, or how, this tension was being resolved. It is a tension which most universities experience.

The Centre for Academic Development (CAD) and Information Technology Services (ITS) collaborate on development of the University's teaching and learning technologies as part of the work programme emanating from the action plan which is incorporated in the Vision and Strategy for Digital Learning and Teaching.[42] The action plan includes a proposal for a technology platform which supports a range of services from Microsoft applications to Blackboard, Turnitin, timetabling (such as Syllabus Plus), Mahara, etc. The Vision document sets out a comprehensive approach to future planning of information technologies. The Panel suggests that the University now needs to move beyond the initial stages of implementing the Action Plan.

The Panel learned that the Digital Learning and Teaching Innovation Incubator provides a cloud infrastructure to support online teaching and learning, in particular to support innovative projects and establish a community of practice (see Chapter 6). The University reports that this infrastructure is cost-effective and secure.[43] Contacts for academic technologies (CATs) are employed by CAD to provide support for staff in using digital technologies, with CATs' activities informed by a needs analysis carried out at the start of 2013. (See also section 6.4 of this Report.)

[38] www.victoria.ac.nz/its/staff-services/research-services-catalogue accessed 27.08.14.

[39] CAD 2013 Annual Report, p 18.

[40] The report of the working party on digital technologies noted that use of technologies by staff and students was "ad hoc" and a "bottom-up process". Vision and Strategy for Digital Learning and Teaching at Victoria 2012–2017, p 3.

[41] Vision and Strategy for Digital Learning and Teaching at Victoria 2012–2017, p 8.

[42] Vision and Strategy for Digital Learning and Teaching at Victoria 2012– 2017, pp 10–13.

[43] CAD 2013 Annual Report, p 17.

Despite the concerns mentioned above, the Panel heard no dissatisfaction from the staff it interviewed with respect to information technology at Victoria. Those staff who did discuss limitations (regarding information technology and other facilities) understood these to be a reflection of the financial constraints experienced by the University.

The University has five libraries on four sites, with the main library located within the new Hub at Kelburn. Following a review in 2011,[44] the Library has adopted a Learning and Teaching Support Strategy aimed at ensuring its services are aligned more closely with the needs of its users, can enrich student experience and can contribute to student achievement of the University's graduate attributes. The Strategy seeks to extend successful models of collaboration and partnership with academics and other staff, such as those employed by Subject Librarians, to "offer a holistic student centred learning experience" for other activities.[45] Contribution to research skills development is one area of focus for development. The Library intends to harness digital technologies, *inter alia,* to encourage independent autonomous learning. The Panel was told that the Library is now more responsive to client need and provides more open access, rather than service points. The Strategy also states that the Library aims to facilitate equity by recognising and providing for different approaches to learning. The Panel was told of the separate designated areas for Māori and for Pasifika students provided in the Kelburn Library and also of a separate reading space for postgraduate students and academic staff. If the latter is successful then it could become a model for libraries on other sites. (See also sections 5.2 and 7.2 of this Report.)

Alignment of collection resources with academic requirements is facilitated by liaison between Subject Librarians and academic staff. A client-driven model of acquiring e-books is being trialled. Assessment of Library effectiveness is undertaken through satisfaction surveys and Library support is considered during programme reviews and the approval process for new programmes. As well, the Library hosts or participates in a wide range of University groups and committees covering teaching and learning, research, student experience and infrastructure development.[46]

It was apparent to the Panel that the Library had been undergoing significant development in recent years and that sound processes are in place to ensure it is fit-for-purpose and provides a good quality service to staff and students. The Library's Learning and Teaching Support Strategy notes that feedback on its services had "generally been very positive" and that the Library "consistently rates highly in student satisfaction surveys".[47] Students responding to the 2011, 2012 and 2013 Student Experience Improvement Surveys rated the Library and Library services most highly, with 87-90% stating these are good or very good.[48] Students who met the Panel spoke enthusiastically about Library services and staff.

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[44] Library Services for the Future: The way forward. Report of the Library services review.
[45] Learning and Teaching Support Strategy for the Library 2012–2015, p 5.
[46] See SR, 1.5.9, p 20.
[47] Learning and Teaching Support Strategy for the Library 2012–2015, p 2.
[48] Student Experience Improvement Survey 2013 feedback to Students, p 36.

*Recommendation:* The Panel **recommends** that the University gives priority to the systematic implementation of the Action Plan within its Vision and Strategy for Digital Learning and Teaching at Victoria 2012–2017, including development of feasible timelines, responsibilities and target objectives or stages.

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**1.6     Risk management**

Universities should have recovery plans and procedures which are designed to facilitate continuity of teaching and learning in instances of infrastructure system failure.

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The University's Business Continuity Management Policy defines the risk management framework for mitigation, contingency planning and recovery for "threats that may terminate or significantly disrupt core business".[49] Underpinning the policy is a suite of tools including the Capability Strategy, the Risk Management Policy, the Emergency Response Plan and Crisis Management Framework, a Risk Register, and Health and Safety Policy. The Business Continuity Management Policy also refers to "special event" focussed plans, e.g. for a pandemic. Strategies and policies are given effect by the Senior Management Team and, in the case of disruption, by the Incident Management Team and/or Crisis Management team. In addition, the Self-review Report states that each school, faculty and service unit is expected to have a business continuity plan, emergency response plan, risk register and health and safety development plan, which are reviewed and updated annually. The Panel was told that "most" schools have some form of business continuity plan or process in place and that the University was now endeavouring to build those plans to faculty level; it viewed the plan of one faculty which itemised the recovery requirements for teaching and learning and related support services.[50] Facilities Management and ITS have detailed plans to manage infrastructure failure and restore business continuity. The Panel is aware that ITS recovery processes have been externally reviewed.[51]

The Panel explored aspects of disaster preparedness and recovery, and continuity of teaching and learning and research, with a range of staff from different parts of the University. It was satisfied that senior managers had clear understandings of the likely impacts, consequences and recovery needs for major interruptions of normal business. It learned, for example, of the off-site "QuakeSurfer" platform which supports the back-up data centre; building strengthening; purchase of satellite phones; of documented recovery processes for key applications; of testing procedures and training with different emergency or disaster scenarios. It also heard of individual staff initiatives to learn from the experiences of other universities and Victoria had experienced live testing of systems with the 2013 Wellington (Seddon) earthquakes. While the Self-review Report argued that the depth of risk-management thinking across the University is a particular strength,[52] and there was evidence that staff are aware of the potential disruption from a significant earthquake, the Panel was less confident that academic staff, in particular, are prepared to address the different kinds of systemic interruptions to teaching and learning and research which could occur. The Panel also heard that staff on satellite sites might not feel sufficiently connected to experiences and

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[49] Business Continuity Management Policy, p 1.
[50] Karori Campus Faculty of Education Business Continuity Plan, May 2013.
[51] IT Disaster Recovery Planning Review: Internal Audit Report, PwC, October 2012.
[52] SR, s1.6.11, p 22.

developments on the Kelburn site. The Panel encourages the University to extend its internal promotion of its preparation, testing and training to ensure all staff are aware of the actions they should take to address continuity of teaching, learning and research activity in the event of infrastructure or systems failure.

> ***Affirmation:*** The Panel **affirms** the University's work in preparing for the management of a significant disruption to its activities, and for steps taken to facilitate business continuity. It endorses the maintenance of an off-site back-up data centre.

## 2.    Student Profile: Access, Transition and Admission Processes

Victoria's student profile in 2013 was: [53]

| | All students * | % |
|---|---|---|
| | Headcount | |
| **Total students** | 21,151 | |
| | | |
| Domestic students | 18,215 | 86% |
| International students | 2,936 | 14% |
| | | |
| Full-time students | 13,537 | 64% |
| Part-time students | 7,614 | 36% |
| | | |
| **Total students (by ethnicity)\*\*** | **Headcount** | |
| Pākehā/European students | 15,076 | 64% |
| Māori students | 1,853 | 8% |
| Pasifika students | 1,078 | 5% |
| Asian students | 4,137 | 18% |
| Other students | 1,317 | 6% |
| | | |
| **Total students** | **EFTS** | |
| | 16,855 | |
| Undergraduate students | 14,075 | 83% |
| Taught Postgraduate students | 1,681 | 10% |
| Research Postgraduate students | 1,099 | 7% |

\* Excludes Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music.

\*\* Students are permitted to select more than one ethnicity. The table incorporates all choices that students have made, and therefore the total will exceed the total enrolment numbers.

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**2.1    Admission and selection**

Universities' admission and selection policies and practices should be clear and publicly available to students.

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The Self-review Report records the University's admission and selection practices in some detail. The criteria for eligibility for admission to Victoria are set out in the Admission Statute with specific criteria relating to programmes in the relevant statutes for those programmes. The requirements along with information about the enrolment process, fees, etc., are expressed in more user-friendly text in the Guide to Undergraduate Study and on the Admissions website. [54]

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[53] Data from SR, p 10; AR, p 17. Full-time/part-time data provided by the University on request.

[54] www.victoria.ac.nz/about/publications/guide-to-undergraduate-study.pdf and
www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/limited-entry/selection-criteria accessed 02.09.14.

In order to manage enrolments within capped enrolment targets, Victoria operates a Guaranteed Entry Score (GES) system based on NCEA or other qualification results, together with a wait-listing procedure, for students applying for admission with University Entrance. GES requirements are listed on the admissions website. Māori and Pasifika students with University Entrance are admitted whether or not they meet the GES.[55] Those who do not meet the GES are required to participate in either the Tapuwae Tahi or the Ave Mamao support programme, as appropriate (see section 2.2 below).[56]

Doctoral admission requirements and enrolment processes are outlined in the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Statute, on the website for the FGR and in the Application Guide.[57]

Students indicated that the University's free-phone service is appreciated for advice on any issue, including admission and selection matters.

Appeals against selection decisions are dealt with on a case-by-case basis by a senior academic as appropriate to the nature of the programme. The University reports that recent improvements in the formulation of selection criteria and processes for making selection decisions have reduced the number of appeals. The University is confident that its selection practices conform to its policies[58] and the Panel heard of no evidence otherwise.

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**2.2     Access and Transition**
Universities should use policies and/or procedures which are designed to assist the access and transition of equity groups or other priority groups.

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Victoria's objectives related to equity are articulated in the Strategic Plan ("Our commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi" and Goal 8, Equity to "provide an inclusive and representative environment for staff and students that is conducive to equity of opportunity for participation and success").[59] These objectives are developed further, and an action plan presented, in the Equity and Diversity Strategy 2010–2014.

The main equity or priority groups identified by the University for specific assistance are Māori, Pasifika, students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and students with a disability. The University's Framework and Plan for Students from Socio-economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds notes an intention to try and avoid conflating "low-decile" with "socio-economically disadvantaged" since the former is restricted to school leavers, but at the same time it acknowledges privacy issues in identifying the latter. The Panel recognises that many students within the "equity" groups which are targeted for support will fall into more than one equity category. The

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[55] In this audit report the term "Pasifika" is used to refer to students or potential students, as is the University's practice. However the term "Pacific" is used to refer to general groups or geographic areas, as in "Pacific people" or "Pacific nations".

[56] SR, s2.1.5, p 25.

[57] www.victoria.ac.nz/fgr/prospective-phds/publications/Guide-to-Application.pdf accessed 08.09.14.

[58] SR, s2.1.11; 2.1.12, p 25.

[59] SP, pp 5; 13.

Equity and Diversity Strategy 2010–2014 also refers to men or women in professions or disciplines where they are under-represented in that profession or area of study.

The University is trialling a project to provide specific assistance to students from low-decile schools. Consideration is also being given to students who would be first-in-family to attend university.[60] The Panel supports the University's Planning framework proposal for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds, and its Enhancement Initiative (No. 2) aimed at piloting a support package for students from decile 1–3 schools and/or for non-Māori, non-Pasifika undergraduate students admitted below the GES.[61]

For the purposes of this audit, the Panel also considered international students to be a group for special consideration with respect to access and transition. Victoria International is responsible for the recruitment and support of international students, working with Student Academic Services to ensure welfare support. The Guide to Undergraduate Study includes information specific to international students. The International Student Handbook is a comprehensive compendium covering academic, personal and socio-cultural matters.[62] The Victoria International Buddy Programme (VIBS) is designed to help new students settle into Wellington.[63]

Victoria's Foundation Studies programme provides an opportunity for international students to achieve standards in English, academic and study skills which should enable them to reach admission standard and succeed at undergraduate level. This programme is not exclusive to international students but caters also for others who are not native-English speakers. Numbers are relatively small and teaching is done in a classroom-type environment. The Panel was told that the Foundation Studies programme has a fulltime guidance counsellor and that the Director of the programme meets with every student individually. The Panel concluded that Victoria International does monitor the academic performance of international students in the Foundation Programme quite closely; Victoria International also encourages one-on-one advice for students at risk of not achieving.

Students with disabilities are one of the equity categories eligible for Victoria Achiever scholarships. A Guide outlines the services available to assist students with a disability.[64]

The 2009 Cycle 4 academic audit recommended that Māori and Pacific people be differentiated within the University's strategic documents, in particular with regard to student and staff support.[65] Since that audit the University has developed its Equity and Diversity Strategy which differentiates leadership strategies, retention and achievement targets and support needs for Māori and Pasifika students as well as targets and support applying to equity groups generally.[66] Objectives specific to Māori emanate from the University's commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi.[67] Since 2009 the University has also appointed an AVC (Pasifika) and developed a Pasifika Student Success Plan.

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[60] Report on Equity and Diversity, Learning and Teaching, and Student Experience 2013, pp 22–23.
[61] SR, p 27; SD: Framework and Plan for Students from Socio-economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds.
[62] www.victoria.ac.nz/international/offers/downloads/International-Student-Handbook.pdf accessed 03.09.14.
[63] internationalstudenthome.victoria.ac.nz/2014/05/international-buddy-programme-3/ accessed 03.09.14.
[64] www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability/publications/ accessed 03.09.14.
[65] Cycle 4, audit report, R3 pxii; p 7.
[66] Equity and Diversity Strategy 2010–2014.
[67] SP, p 5.

The support programmes provided by Victoria for both Māori and Pasifika students are extensive. Many of the programmes aimed at fostering academic success (also discussed in Chapter 4) might also assist with transition to university study, in particular in providing a culturally appropriate environment for students to whom a conventional university environment might be unfamiliar.

The University's community outreach programmes include a focus on encouraging progression from secondary school to tertiary study. A community project with Pasifika school children led by the AVC (Pasifika) aims to target families from the time children are of preschool age, to encourage a perception by families that tertiary study is a possibility for them.[68] The Panel heard high praise from several interviewees for this initiative which it considers to be original and relevant and should produce robust, long-term benefits for the Pasifika community and for the University.

Designated spaces are available on Kelburn campus for both groups (Pasifika Haos, Te Herenga Waka marae) as well as separate designated spaces for Māori and for Pasifika students in faculties and several of the University libraries, including Ako Pai marae (on the Karori campus). Students told the Panel of the value of the Pasifika Haos in providing a culturally sensitive environment for events and as a place for contact with the Pacific Students' Council.

The websites Māori@Victoria and Pasifika@Victoria outline services and cultural activities for each group.[69] Faculties run separate clubs or societies for Māori and Pasifika students and provide a number of different initiatives. These and the range of services provided by Te Pūtahi Atawhai student services centre for Māori and Pasifika students all contribute to the University's mission to enhance the transition, retention and achievement of students from these groups.[70] Students described Te Pūtahi Atawhai as critical to the success of Māori first year students.

The Tapuwae Tahi and Ave Mamao support "packages" which are available for Māori and Pasifika students admitted below the GES score involve such students making a commitment to attend orientation events and to be involved in learning support programmes. The Panel also became aware of the University's embedded use of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in its communications and processes where appropriate. It was clear that the initiatives in place for Māori and Pasifika students are evidence-based and are monitored well, with trend data available to faculty level. Further initiatives to assist students once enrolled are discussed in Chapter 4.

The Panel was pleased to note that since the 2009 Cycle 4 audit the University has made considerable progress in its provision for Māori and Pasifika students. The Panel encourages the University to maximise new opportunities to further enhance engagement with Māori and Pasifika communities in ways which will support the recruitment, retention and achievement of their students.

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[68] The Wainuiomata Pasifika Education Success Initiative.
[69] www.victoria.ac.nz/maori-at-victoria; www.victoria.ac.nz/study/pasifika accessed 03.09.14.
[70] Report on Equity and Diversity, Learning and Teaching, and Student Experience 2013, pp 25–26.

*Commendation:* The Panel **commends** the University on the translation of the University's commitment to its Treaty obligations into actions which support its equity objectives with respect to Māori, and on the embeddedness of mechanisms and activities to support Māori student recruitment, retention and achievement.

*Commendation:* The Panel **commends** the University on its commitment to Pasifika student recruitment, retention and achievement, and in particular on the Wainuiomata Pasifika Education Success Initiative and the introduction of distinctive spaces, services and programmes to support Pasifika students once enrolled.

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**2.3     Academic advice**

Universities should use processes for providing academic advice and course information to both new and continuing students.

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Victoria uses multiple channels to provide academic advice to prospective and current students, including the University website, publications, newsletters, an Open Day, Facebook pages, and school visits. International students receive advice at the programme level, via the same processes as domestic students. Victoria students responding to the 2011, 2012 and 2013 Student Experience Improvement Surveys indicated that the University website received the highest rating for usefulness of the information sources available to them.[71]

Student Recruitment, Admission and Orientation Advisers have the main responsibility for advice on admission procedures and courses of study. Faculty academic and administrative staff provide advice on students' ongoing study. Course-level advice is normally given by the course coordinator. The University has an online tool for recording advice which has been given. It also audits any reported instances of incorrect advice and subsequent resolution to help avoid such mistakes in the future. The Self-review Report documents strategies for ensuring updated information is communicated well to those who might give academic advice. The Student Administration Manual covers key administrative processes.[72]

Despite the University's efforts to provide reliable information, students reported to the Panel a concern about inconsistent academic advice relating to relatively complex issues. This was a particular concern when a student operates between two faculties (e.g. when studying for a conjoint degree). The University observed that the satisfaction rate with academic advice in student surveys had increased slightly in recent years but was still only 70% in 2013.[73] Some staff also told the Panel about challenges in ensuring the advice they gave was current.

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[71] Student Experience Improvement Survey 2013 Feedback to Students, p25. Note this rating of 73–75% is not limited to information about academic advice.

[72] SR, p 29. For example, Academic Transcript Policy: "Procedures for issuing these documents are to be found in the Student Administration Manual", www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/academic/archive/archived-academic-transcripts-policy-20091101.pdf accessed 03.09.14.

[73] SR, s2.3.10, p 29.

The University has recognised this as an area of risk (see Enhancement No. 3) but was uncertain whether the issue was a general problem or one specific to certain programmes.[74] The Panel also gained the impression that provision and/or quality of academic advice was uneven across the University but noted that the University is addressing the issue. At the time of the audit it was engaged in the first phase of a Course Information Project which involved the creation of fields within Banner to store key information about each course. The Panel read the terms of reference for the review of academic advising, and while these did not extend beyond Phase 1 of the overall Course Information Project, the Panel considers these steps in improving the quality and consistency of advice to be essential steps towards a full, comprehensive, centrally controlled advice system.

*Recommendation:* The Panel **recommends** the University give priority to completing the Course Information Project and the review of academic advice in order to enhance the quality, reliability and consistency of academic advising across the University.

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[74] SR, p 29.

# 3.    Curriculum and Assessment

> **3.1    Programme approval**
> The University should have consistent and robust internal course and programme approval processes which meet any national and professional expectations and which include opportunity for input from stakeholders where appropriate.

Victoria's processes for the approval of new courses and programmes and amendments to existing courses and programmes are detailed in the Academic Approval Handbook. The Programme and Course Design Handbook provides guidance on course and programme design.

The Academic Approval Handbook sets out where decisions for different kinds of approval are made, for example:

- for a minor change to a course the final decision is made by the faculty;
- for cancellation of a programme intake the final decision is made by DVCA.

The Handbook also defines criteria for decisions (e.g. for cancellation of a course); the sequence of decision-making; communication channels after a decision has been made; the role of internal bodies such as the Centre for Academic Development, the Library, Senior Management Team; requirements for consultation with Toihuarewa[75]. The Handbook includes templates, timelines and examples. The Panel considered that it is a thorough and clear guide through all course and programme approval processes.

Approval processes require a statement of relevance to the University's Strategic Plan and Investment Plan. Proposers of new proposals must also indicate any stakeholder contribution and how the University's graduate profile will be manifest in the proposed programme.[76] Where they exist, Advisory Boards provide an avenue for stakeholder input.

The Academic Approvals Handbook includes guidance on the Universities New Zealand Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) approval processes.

While Academic Board has key responsibility for approval of significant changes, and for approving proposals to be submitted to CUAP, the Academic Committee (of the Board) undertakes the overall scrutiny of proposals on its behalf. Students indicated that their representation on Faculty Boards and Academic Board and Committee gave them opportunity to contribute to the examination of proposals. They cited an example where student views on a proposal were contributed via a survey.

The Panel heard of a perception that decisions about academic proposals at Academic Committee and faculty level might lack adequate input from a business management perspective. However the Panel understands from the Academic Approvals Handbook that preliminary proposals for new qualifications must be submitted to the Proposals Review Committee (PRC) of the Senior

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[75] See n 8.
[76] SR, s3.1.2; s3.1.4, p 30.

Management Team. PRC must also approve full CUAP proposals.[77] Such scrutiny should ensure that strategic and financial aspects of proposals are considered adequately.

The Panel noted 52 CUAP proposals (including deletions) in the period 2011–2013. It found no evidence that the approval processes are not working well. The Academic Approvals Handbook and the Programme and Course Design Handbook are excellent resources to guide staff (see below).

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**3.2     Graduate attributes**
Universities should have clearly-defined intended graduate outcomes (graduate attributes) which are publically available and are accessible to students and staff.

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References in various documents indicate the kind of graduates Victoria aims to produce. For example, on the University's website the Panel read that Victoria aims to produce graduates "whose learning has been developed inside and outside the classroom, experientially and informed by a global perspective".[78] At the time of the audit a new Graduate Profile had recently been introduced, an outcome of the review undertaken in 2013 as part of the Learning Partnership project. The Profile had been subject to considerable discussion in the two years prior to the audit. It was approved by Council in June 2013.

 The current Graduate Profile developed out of the Learning Partnership Project includes five "scholarly attributes" which are assessable and are expected to inform curriculum development, and four personal qualities which are to be "fostered" as part of the Victoria student experience:

Graduates will be scholars who
- Have a specialised understanding of their chosen field(s) of study
- Exhibit well-developed skills in critical and creative thinking
- Communicate complex ideas effectively and accurately in a range of contexts
- Demonstrate intellectual autonomy through independence of thought, openness to ideas and information, and a capacity to manage their own learning
- Demonstrate intellectual integrity and understand the ethics of scholarship.

Victoria graduates will have personal qualities that will reflect them being active and engaged global citizens who
- Demonstrate international perspectives
- Can engage constructively with their local and international communities
- Are able to work both independently and collaboratively with others
- Know how to set and achieve personal and professional goals for themselves.[79]

Research programmes use the attributes specified in the CUAP Guidelines for these degrees.

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[77] Academic Approvals Handbook, p 4.
[78] www.victoria.ac.nz/about/global-engagement/national accessed 15.09.14.
[79] SR, pp 31–32.

From 2014 all new qualification proposals must incorporate the attributes in the graduate profile. The Graduate Profile is publicly accessible.[80]

The University in its Self-review Report notes a challenge to communicate the Graduate Profile to students. It has noted that in the past students were not very aware of the graduate attributes the University espoused. The Panel learned that students were consulted during the development of the new attributes, via an online survey and through class representatives.

The University advised the Panel of its intention to develop an overarching framework that defines co-curricular programmes and criteria, how they are linked to the Graduate Profile and how achievement of the Profile will be monitored (Enhancement Initiative No. 5).[81] The Panel supports this initiative but at the same time observes that the University has already made considerable progress on the implementation of its new Profile. The Panel commends the University on the work which has been achieved to date (see below).

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**3.3      Graduate outcomes**

Universities should have processes for ensuring students have the opportunity to meet the intended graduate outcomes (graduate attributes) during their period of study.

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It was clear to the Panel that the University is paying close attention to the ways in which students might acquire the attributes included in the Graduate Profile.

From its interviews, the Panel deduced that a staged approach was being taken with regard to curriculum mapping which followed on from (or underpinned) the adoption of the Graduate Profile across programmes. Staff who were interviewed appeared to be well versed, in principle, in the expectations pertaining to the use of graduate attributes and the cascading effect of these down to course level; the Panel heard of staff meetings and student consultation within schools and also of the institution-wide learning and teaching forum on the issue. While the Panel was alerted to a concern voiced by some staff that strict conformity to teaching to graduate attributes impinged on academic autonomy, it gained the impression that, overall, staff appreciated the purpose of graduate attributes and in most cases were incorporating these into their courses or programmes.

A new (June 2014) Programme and Course Design Handbook, developed by the Centre for Academic Development, provides a framework for teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks to ensure there is alignment between assessments and course learning objectives which support the graduate profile *for the programme*.[82] Beyond the programme, the Handbook provides examples of the kinds of evidence which might demonstrate that a student possesses the attributes specified in the University Graduate Profile.[83] The Panel heard that the latest graduate attributes are being incorporated into new programme developments and revisions.

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[80] www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile accessed 15.08.14.
[81] SR, p 33.
[82] Programme and Course Design Handbook, pp 11–17.
[83] Programme and Course Design Handbook, pp 23–25.

The Panel explored with a range of staff how students were, or might be, provided with opportunities to acquire the non-discipline-specific or co-curricular attributes. Most staff were able to discuss initiatives or practices within their disciplines whereby attributes such as critical thinking, communication or collaborative work could be demonstrated. Some observed that students were not always told when a particular attribute was being developed or assessed. The Panel was convinced that the concept of providing opportunities for students to meet the attributes of the Graduate Profile was fairly well understood by staff.

The Panel also concluded that at an institutional level the University is making significant effort to offer experiences of which students might avail themselves to enhance the personal qualities of a Victoria graduate. For example, the Graduate Profile states that Victoria's students "will graduate from a university in which the opportunities for local and global engagement are a dominant feature of the student experience." [84] The University promotes its Victoria International Leadership Programme (VILP), Victoria Overseas Exchange and its Victoria Plus service and leadership programme.[85] The Victoria Plus Award and Victoria Plus Certificate involve students in extracurricular activities which usually have a strong element of social responsibility, promote leadership skills and include both personal and professional development. Victoria Overseas Exchange and the Victoria International Leadership Programme focus on intercultural understanding and global connectedness and, for the VILP, on leadership and sustainability. Students who were familiar with the Victoria Plus programme were enthusiastic about it. Activities such as study abroad, internships and placements, and volunteering programmes all contribute to potential experiences which might lead to outcomes consistent with the Graduate Profile.

A current impediment to using such non-academic experiences to support the achievement of graduate outcomes appears to be linked, in part, to issues of how to record co-curricular activity or achievement on transcripts. The University is working on this.

The Panel was impressed with reports of the e-portfolios the University has introduced to enable students to record their own experiences for themselves. The e-portfolio tool is accessed via the Career Hub website. Initially used mainly by Victoria Plus participants, uptake of this facility appears to be growing.[86] The Panel heard of two programmes which were using it as part of their teaching and learning repertoire and learned that CAD is working with schools to show how the e-portfolio might be used to document achievement of graduate attributes. Some staff wished to promote e-portfolios as a tool to be used post-graduation, for example for professional development and career planning.

The University has good mechanisms in place to assist with its monitoring of graduate outcomes for those who have graduated. Past University Graduate Destination Surveys have asked graduates specifically how Victoria's graduate attributes have helped towards their employment. Since 2007 the University has included in its standard teaching and course evaluation surveys three items intended to directly elicit students' perceptions of the contribution of coursework to the development of the University's graduate attributes. Until 2013 these were critical thinking, creative

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[84] www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile accessed 15.09.14.
[85] www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/careers/career_development/index.aspx accessed 15.09.14.
[86] Over 750 users at the time the Self-review Report was written; 892 quoted at the time of the site visit.

thinking and communication skills. Average scores for these three items have been in the range 1.6 to 2.1 over the last five years, consistent with the scores for overall course quality during this period.[87] The Panel encourages the University's stated intention to incorporate the new attributes in future teaching and course surveys.

> *Commendation:* The Panel **commends** the University's work in developing its new Graduate Profile, the consultation with both staff and students which underpins the development, the manner in which the connections between the Profile, graduate attributes and graduate outcomes are being mapped from course level to institutional level and the opportunities which are being provided to enable students to acquire co-curricular attributes.

> *Affirmation:* The Panel **affirms** the University's development of e-portfolios as a tool for students to record and evaluate their own progress towards acquiring graduate attributes, and supports the University's efforts to encourage academic staff to incorporate use of e-portfolios into their teaching and learning approaches.

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**3.4    Programme review**

Universities should have regular reviews of programmes and courses, including external accreditation reviews, which include input from students and other stakeholders and which are used to ensure curriculum quality.

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Victoria's course and programme review policy and procedures are documented in the Evaluation and Review Handbook. Like the other handbooks referred to in 3.1 and 3.3 above, this is carefully detailed in setting out scope, purpose, responsibilities of particular roles and actual processes for the reviews.

Academic programme reviews (i.e. qualification reviews, both undergraduate and postgraduate) are normally on a seven-year cycle and involve self-review and a visit by a panel which includes two external members (one usually from Australia). The procedures provide for inclusion of a person with Māori or Pasifika expertise if appropriate. Terms of reference for programme reviews include reference to the University's Treaty of Waitangi goals and provide for stakeholder input to the review process, usually via written submissions. Student input is facilitated, most commonly in the form of online survey data produced by VUWSA. Students reported that their Education Organiser might also sometimes present student views to the review panel. Students appeared satisfied with the opportunities provided to them to contribute to reviews.

The Panel was provided with the 2011–2013 schedule of programme reviews. It also read an example of a programme review report and subsequent implementation plans. These were comprehensive and included attention to such matters as differentiating recommendations which the programme review panel considered urgent from those it considered less urgent. While this was

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[87] CAD Annual Report 2013, pp 15–16. A scale of 1–5 for responses, with 1 being the positive end of the range and 5 the negative.

a single example, it demonstrated the systematic, robust approach which is signalled in the Handbook.

Victoria has a number of professionally-accredited programmes. The Panel viewed the current schedule which specified renewal dates and dates for accreditations. The Evaluation and Review Handbook also outlines internal processes to be used in preparing Graduating Year Reviews for CUAP. The Panel was told that the regular schedule of programme reviews does not preclude staff from undertaking additional discipline-specific curriculum reviews as appropriate. Staff who were asked about this felt that given the amount of work required for a programme review the current seven-year schedule is adequate, especially if a programme also has accreditation reviews.

For individual courses, student feedback must be sought:
> (i) in the first year that a new or substantially revised course is offered, including a change in teaching mode (e.g. to on-line teaching);
> (ii) at least once in every three offerings of a course and not less frequently than once in four years;
> (iii) each time a new 'Special Topic' course is offered.[88]

Staff and students may access the most recent summary of feedback for individual courses via the CAD website. (See section 5.5, Chapter 5.)

The Panel considered the recent review of undergraduate education which led to the revised Graduate Profile and which underpins the Victoria Learning Partnership. This extensive review process involved five working parties which addressed such aspects as the integration of teaching, learning and research; the balance between specialised and general education; opportunities to gain co-curricular experience; appropriate assessment and feedback for deep learning.[89] The Panel considered the exercise to have been an excellent initiative to address the overall purpose and distinctiveness of a Victoria undergraduate education.

From its reading and discussion with staff the Panel was confident the University's review processes for programmes and courses are robust, systematic and are followed up to ensure good outcomes for the programme.

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**3.5    Benchmarking programmes**
Universities should use processes for benchmarking curriculum and assessment standards to ensure they are internationally appropriate. (See also 7.4 re thesis assessment)

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Outside of scheduled programme reviews and accreditation reviews, Victoria relies on the initiative of staff delivering programmes to benchmark these for curriculum appropriateness and assessment quality. Staff told the Panel about a range of experiences which they argued facilitated benchmarking. Some of these, namely international accreditation exercises or routine external

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[88] www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/academic/student-feedback-on-teaching-and-courses-policy.pdf accessed 12.08.14.
[89] Quality and Management Framework for Student Learning, p 29.

moderation of postgraduate programmes, are systematic and provide robust benchmarks. Others, such as reliance on experience of teaching at overseas universities or of sitting on external review panels or participation in international meetings are more idiosyncratic.

The Panel considered that opportunities taken by the Academic Office to analyse recurrent themes from programme reviews, and to seek benchmarking information from other universities where relevant, are appropriate.

From its interviews the Panel deduced that staff are well aware of the objectives of benchmarking and in many cases endeavour to do this in an *ad hoc* way. The Panel was told that Victoria had no one obvious comparator institution that it might benchmark against, and therefore considers that benchmarking at the programme level is more appropriate than at institutional level. The Panel, however, believes the University should explore whether there are universities which might provide relevant benchmarking opportunities at institutional level. It also believes the University would benefit from a more explicit policy or strategy on benchmarking for the guidance of staff.

> *Recommendation:* The Panel **recommends** that the University develops a high-level benchmarking statement which sets out the objectives and potential strategies whereby staff might assure themselves that programmes, curricula and assessment are benchmarked to prevailing national and international standards.

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**3.6     Assessment**
Universities should use documented procedures for monitoring and moderating assessment processes and standards. (See also 7.4 re thesis assessment)

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Procedures for the design, implementation and moderation of assessment are set out in some detail in the Assessment Handbook. The Handbook stipulates the University's expectation that assessment is valid, reliable, fair and inclusive; contributes to learning; is manageable and is transparent. It must not only foster student learning and assess student achievement but also provide evidence of the quality of the programme.[90] The Handbook outlines detailed requirements for different types of assessment, including group work, peer assessment and self-assessment. Guidelines are provided regarding the timing of assessment, extenuating circumstances, the grading system, feedback, reconsideration and appeals.

The Assessment Handbook advises on the proportion of assessment which might be given to particular tasks and on grade moderation once marking has been completed.[91] Faculty Teaching and Learning Committees undertake assessment (i.e. grade) moderation on behalf of Academic Board. External moderation is required for postgraduate programmes and also for some professional programmes.

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[90] Assessment Handbook, pp 1–2.
[91] Assessment Handbook, pp 19–20.

The Panel was impressed by the widespread awareness of the Assessment Handbook among staff to whom it spoke. The Panel was also impressed by the processes that ensured students were kept informed through the Handbook development and notes these processes have been appreciated by students. Students commented very favourably on the value of the Handbook. Students cautioned, however, of the need to ensure there is consistency of understanding across the University of the expectations articulated in the Handbook, especially regarding grading.

Missing from the above overview is any indication of how assessment tasks might be monitored and moderated before the point of final grade allocation. Staff told the Panel of individual efforts, for example the use of grade descriptors and discussions about equitable forms of assessment for Māori and Pasifika students. Staff also commented that assistance from CAD was available to develop assessment tasks. The University reported that one school has introduced marking rubrics and that the incidence of student requests for re-marking of assignments had subsequently declined significantly. The Panel supports the University's intention to explore whether this approach might be extended more widely across the University. The University also comments that the proposed review of the role of the Academic Committee, which will include oversight of moderation (Enhancement Initiative No. 4), will help address current gaps.[92]

> *Recommendation:* The Panel **recommends** that the University reviews the mechanisms used by staff to moderate undergraduate assessment tasks, expectations and standards with an objective of identifying, developing and sharing good practice and formulating some principles for moderation.

> *Commendation:* The Panel **commends** the University on its suite of academic handbooks which comprehensively and clearly set out expectations and requirements for programme development, approval and review and for assessment, thereby forming a set of guidelines for all staff. This commendation refers to the Programme and Course Design Handbook, the Academic Approvals Handbook, the Evaluation and Review Handbook, the Assessment Handbook and the Quality and Management Framework for Student Learning which provides the overarching approach to ensuring academic quality.

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**3.7     Equivalence of learning outcomes**
Universities should have formal mechanisms to ensure that learning outcomes of students in programmes taught on other campuses and/or with partner institutions, including those which are in other countries, meet the standards expected by the university on its home campus.

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Victoria's current international partnerships are governed by memoranda of understanding framed within CUAP requirements to provide courses in China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Australia. In addition there are partnerships with local tertiary institutions.

The University describes its overseas teaching as "small scale". Models are of two types: (1) all teaching is by Victoria staff at the overseas location; (2) initial (foundation and year 1) teaching is overseas, based on Victoria material, with later years done in New Zealand. The University states

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[92] SR, p 37.

that programmes taught solely overseas all involved moderation of assessment by Victoria (i.e. New Zealand) staff.[93]

The University has indicated it has systems in place to try to ensure outcomes for students taught overseas are of an acceptable standard. However, while the Panel was told that programmes delivered overseas are subject to the same processes as are local programmes *at programme level*, it was the Panel's view that the responsibility for oversight at *institutional* level needs to be the same as exists for local programmes. This would help ensure equivalence of processes while at the same time paying attention to the particularities of teaching and learning in another jurisdiction and culture.

Victoria has three collaborative arrangements with other New Zealand institutions. Boards of Studies oversee co-taught programmes, which rely on the quality assurance processes of both institutions.

> *Recommendation:* The Panel **recommends** the responsibility for overall quality assurance of programmes offered overseas, including teaching quality and learning outcomes, is part of the quality assurance portfolio of the DVC (Academic) (or successor role) in order to ensure oversight of the processes used to achieve equivalence as well as to ensure cultural needs and constraints are provided for.

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**3.8     Academic misconduct**
Universities should use procedures for addressing academic misconduct, including plagiarism and other forms of cheating.

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The new Graduate Profile indicates that graduates will "demonstrate intellectual integrity and understand the ethics of scholarship" as one of the graduate attributes.[94] The University makes it clear that all staff have a responsibility for ensuring students are aware of what constitutes academic misconduct.

CAD and the Student Learning Support Service (SLSS) provide assistance in training staff, through the faculty and via induction activities. SLSS also assists with preparing students. Courses must include a link to the academic integrity and plagiarism webpage, from which students might also access resources from other University sites.[95] The International Student Handbook includes a simple, plain-language explanation of plagiarism.[96] For staff a dedicated CAD webpage provides links to a range of resources which include educative material, information about detection of plagiarism and the use of Turnitin, guidelines for thesis supervisors, etc.[97] The Assessment Handbook alerts staff to the role of good assessment design in helping minimise opportunity for plagiarism.[98] The Panel explored academic integrity with staff. It heard of the close attention staff pay to communicating with

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[93] SR, pp 65 –66.
[94] www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile accessed 04.11.14.
[95] www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism accessed 08.09.14.
[96] www.victoria.ac.nz/international/offers/downloads/International-Student-Handbook.pdf, p 27, accessed 03.09.14.
[97] www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Plagiarism accessed 08.09.14.
[98] Assessment Handbook, p 7.

students about this, and of the processes staff use to manage low-level infringements. The Panel also heard about a committee being formed to oversee management of academic integrity at postgraduate level (including such issues as ethical approval, misrepresentation etc.). In the Panel's view this is a good initiative.

The new Student Disciplinary Procedure: Academic Misconduct outlines procedures for reporting and recording academic integrity issues in coursework. The procedures for academic misconduct allow for a remedial approach to low-level plagiarism which reflects learning needs rather than dishonest intent. Cautionary procedures might include a plan for skill development. For more serious cases various options are presented, including seeking specialist comment for alleged thesis violations. Cases of suspected plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct are dealt with under the Student Conduct Statute. This Statute was reviewed in 2014. It includes an appeal provision. Among other outcomes of the 2014 review was the separation of procedures for academic misconduct from procedures for other general misconduct. VUWSA provides an advocacy service to provide advice and support to students accused of misconduct but students told the Panel this service needed to be better promoted.

The University has a misconduct register for cases which have been investigated. An annual report on cases enables the University to identify any patterns in cases and might inform analysis of prevention and detection approaches.

Notwithstanding the above, the University remains concerned that not all students fully understand the nature, risks and penalties for academic misconduct. It notes that one school is trialling an online plagiarism educative module which, if successful, could be introduced more widely. The Panel encourages this intention. It also endorses Enhancement Initiative No. 7 since it complements the work already undertaken to develop other quality assurance processes (see below).

> *Recommendation:* The Panel **recommends** that the University gives priority to its Enhancement Initiative No. 7, to develop an academic integrity strategy which addresses, in a systematic way, prevention, detection and management of academic misconduct and which includes the development of good practice examples of academic integrity education and identification of good assessment practices which minimise opportunity for plagiarism.

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### 3.9    Assessment in te reo Māori
Universities should have and, where appropriate, use procedures to facilitate assessment in te reo Māori.

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In keeping with its commitment to meeting its obligations to Māori, as defined in its Treaty of Waitangi Statute, the University provides opportunity for students to submit and be assessed in te reo Māori. The Assessment Handbook makes reference to the option of assessment in te reo Māori and refers readers to the Use of Te Reo Māori for Assessment Policy which sets out the conditions (e.g. regarding level of proficiency of the student) and approvals needed. Thesis students intending to submit their research in te reo Māori are expected to advise the University of this at the time they submit their research proposal.

The University indicated that the provision is not well known and the Panel understands that no thesis has yet been assessed in te reo Māori (at one interview the Panel was told that a current prospective candidate would be the first), and that assessment in te reo Māori at undergraduate level is infrequent. That being the case, the Panel understands that the work of the working party set up recently to develop operational protocols is not considered urgent. The Panel endorses the University's intention to consult with other New Zealand universities about how best to operationalise existing policy.

When operational protocols are developed it would be appropriate to include these in the Assessment Handbook. The information might thereby reach a wider audience than is currently the case. Similarly, a standard clause in course outlines, as suggested by the Self-review Report, should facilitate wider awareness among students.[99]

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[99] SR, p 39.

# 4. Student Engagement and Achievement

Victoria's vision is "to offer its students a challenging and stimulating educational experience" and to "offer a wide range of opportunities for student engagement and interaction".[100] The Strategic Plan states that the University intends to "engage students as active and lifelong members of an inclusive and supportive community of higher learning ...." [101] Objectives of the Strategic Plan with respect to student engagement are supported by the Learning and Teaching Strategy and the Equity and Diversity Strategy. The Student Retention Plan reiterates that student engagement is critical to retention. It notes areas where students had indicated there was room for improvement to assist their engagement with study and proposed a list of initiatives to address these.[102]

The Student Experience Strategy provides a framework for the enhancement of student engagement by focussing on student services, environment and education. It points out that student experience includes both learning and living experiences, and places an emphasis on first year experience as critical to student success. The principles on which the Student Experience Strategy is based include the intention to be inclusive, holistic, celebratory and participatory, as well as providing services which are evidence-based.[103] These dimensions are explored in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 of this audit report.

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**4.1    Student engagement**
Universities should use processes for monitoring and enhancing students' engagement with their study and learning.

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The University's strategies to foster student engagement in their learning include development and use of both electronic media and physical spaces. Staff reported that the Campus Hub and Library upgrade at Kelburn and planned improvements on other sites are designed with this aim. The University provides some evidence to support the view that use of the Blackboard learning management system assists in the engagement of students with their learning. Analyses have been undertaken of staff and student activities using Blackboard which were related to communication, collaboration, assessment and feedback. CAD staff intend to promote staff teaching practices identified as involving or leading to high levels of student engagement in specific aspects of learning.[104] Similarly, CAD also supports strategies for staff to use digital technologies to engage students in their learning.

The Strategic Plan 2010–2014 lists "internationally benchmarked instruments (e.g. AUSSE)" and "continuing growth in mutually supportive alumni activity" as indicators of successful student engagement.[105] Following a 2011 review of the utility of the AUSSE survey, the University's Student Experience Improvement Survey (SEIS) has replaced the AUSSE as the main tool used to monitor

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[100] Student Experience Strategy 2010-2014, p 2.

[101] SP, Goal 3, p 11.

[102] Victoria Student Retention Plan.

[103] Student Experience Strategy 2010-2014, p 3; Quality and Management Framework for Student Learning, p 15.

[104] SR, s 4.1.3; s4.1.4, p 40.

[105] SP, p 11.

student engagement with academic activity. The SEIS includes both currently enrolled students and students who have recently withdrawn from study. Data from the SEIS are analysed by a range of staff appropriate to different aspects of student experience. The resultant reports are publicly available and are comprehensive (the 2013 report is 75 pages). In addition to summarising results of the most recent survey these reports indicate areas of significant change from previous surveys as well as areas needing improvement.[106] The Panel heard that in addition to the generic report the University produces specific reports for Māori, Pasifika and international student responses and that the time series now emerging from the SEIS enabled staff to analyse data more deeply to determine with more confidence what activities and strategies are working effectively.

Response rates for recent SEIS are relatively low (around 26% though slightly higher for some subgroups). Given the effort which is evident in the analysis the Panel encourages the University to explore whether more effective communication with students might improve their participation in the survey. The Panel considered that the University has sound processes in place to monitor student engagement, and good processes for analysing and sharing evidence.

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**4.2    Retention and completion**
Universities should use processes for assisting the retention, academic success and completion rates for particular groups, including Māori and international students.

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The Student Retention Plan draws on contemporary research to provide an overarching framework for the University's approach to assisting with retention of all students. It is also intended to address the University's Investment Plan targets pertaining to, in particular, Māori and Pasifika students.[107]

The University noted increased enrolments and improved retention and course completion for Māori and Pasifika students from 2009 to 2011 but these rates appear to have stabilised in 2012 and 2013.[108]

The Student Retention Plan includes a section specific to Māori (Aro Taumata), but not for Pasifika students. However the Equity and Diversity Strategy extends its purview to all equity groups under its first Objective related to improvement of recruitment, retention and success. There is thus coherence across the University's high level strategic documents on these matters, reinforcing the importance the University places on them.

A number of the services and facilities designed to assist transition of equity groups, referred to in Chapter 2, might also be expected to enhance retention and academic success. Among the services not referred to previously, the University highlights Te Pūtahi Atawhai undergraduate peer mentoring programme for Māori and Pasifika students as particularly effective. "Success" was measured by student evaluation and by pass rates of mentees. The University states that location of the Te Pūtahi Atawhai support team in the new Hub space, in closer proximity to other student

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[106] SD: SEIS 2013 Feedback from Students.
[107] Investment Plan, pp 13–14.
[108] Investment Plan, p 5; Report on Equity and Diversity, Learning and Teaching, and Student Experience 2013, pp 27–31.

services, has resulted in increased engagement of Māori and Pasifika students.[109] In the 2013 SEIS nearly three-quarters (74%) of students who had used Te Pūtahi Atawhai responded that it had contributed to their success as a student either "a great amount" or "a very great amount".[110] Students who were interviewed also spoke very appreciatively of the support of Te Pūtahi Atawhai. Others told the Panel that support for Pasifika students at Victoria is very good. The 2013 SEIS indicates that there remains room for increasing awareness of Te Pūtahi Atawhai.[111]

Other services intended to improve retention and academic success of Māori and Pasifika students include study groups and dedicated learning spaces. Study skills tools are available for Māori students in both print form and online. The University notes that inclusion of Māori content and/or perspectives in courses, and wider use of te reo Māori, should assist with engaging Māori students in their study, and has developed resources to encourage this.[112]

A range of different faculty initiatives are cited. The University acknowledges that a challenge created by this array of activities is a requirement for careful management to avoid creating overlap and confusion for students.[113]

The University provides a variety of support services for international students and for students with disabilities.[114] For students with disabilities it reports a particular focus on technological assistance, "part of a transition from human support to technology support". The University has made significant improvements to campus accessibility through the combined approach of Facilities Management and Disability Services. [115]

The 2014 Report of the Student Retention Implementation Plan on initiatives proposed in the Student Retention Plan undertaken to date lists academic, administrative, personal and pastoral activities among those which had been introduced to aid retention, supporting the University's claim that the commitment to student engagement and retention is University-wide.[116] In addition to some of the activities referred to above, the Student Retention Implementation Plan mentions its mentoring programmes (in general). It refers to the Victoria Student Mentoring Framework which is intended to assist in developing mentoring standards, includes useful resources and identifies key factors for successful mentoring programmes. Like the Student Retention Plan, the Mentoring Framework is well grounded in research evidence.[117]

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[109] SD: Report on Equity and Diversity, Learning and Teaching, and Student Experience 2013, p 33.

[110] SD: SEIS 2013 Feedback from Students, p 72.

[111] SD: SEIS 2013 Feedback from Students, p 70, indicated only 60% of Māori and Pasifika students surveyed were aware of the service.

[112] A Guide to Teaching Māori Content in University Courses; Te Reo Maori at Victoria; Tikanga and Te Reo Māori course www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/images/1/1c/teachingm%C4%81oricontentbooklet.pdf; www.victoria.ac.nz/maori-at-victoria/ako/te-reo-at-victoria; ped.victoria.ac.nz/courses/356-tikanga-and-te-reo-maori accessed 08.09.14.

[113] SR, s4.2.11, p 43.

[114] www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/slss/infofor/internationalstudents.aspx accessed 15.09.14.

[115] Report on Equity and Diversity, Learning and Teaching, and Student Experience 2013, p 33.

[116] Student Retention Plan, p 1.

[117] SD: Victoria Student Mentoring Framework, 2014.

*Commendation:* The Panel **commends** the University on the development of the Student Mentoring Framework, and in particular on the introduction of Te Pūtahi Atawhai peer mentoring programme across the University and for the success which is evident for students who use this service.

*Affirmation:* The Panel **affirms** the University on the development of its overarching Student Retention Plan and Student Retention Implementation Plan, and on the systematic reporting of achievements related to equity groups targeted by the Plans.

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**4.3    Feedback to students**

Universities should use processes for providing feedback to students on their academic progress (see also 7.3 re thesis students).

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University staff provide routine feedback to students on their learning via assessment. The Assessment Handbook advises that feedback on learning should be provided to students "as soon as possible" but normally within three weeks of the submission date. The Handbook also advises on the timing of assessment and the manner in which feedback is provided to ensure privacy is maintained for individual students.[118] Students told the Panel that these guidelines on feedback were welcomed by them. They did not report any significant issues regarding assessment feedback.

Individual students may check their progress towards degree completion via the MyQual tool which is used for degree planning. Faculties also undertake degree audits to identify students who might have issues related to progress towards completion (e.g. are missing points). The University is aware from VUWSA feedback and from its SEIS results that students are seeking early feedback on their academic progress. The SEIS results for 2013 indicated an improvement since 2012 on the provision of timely feedback to new students. This has been addressed in Enhancement Initiative No. 3 (see Chapter 2).

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**4.4    Under-achieving students**

Universities should use processes for identifying and assisting students at risk of under-achieving.

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Referring to the introduction of the Student Retention Plan, the Investment Plan gives high priority to the need to provide faculties with more course-level information to target interventions and the development of processes to identify and support at-risk students as early as possible.[119]

The University Academic Progress Statute defines non-engagement and unsatisfactory progress and their consequences.

The University cites several mechanisms for identifying students at risk of under-achieving, including the initiative of individual academic staff and schools who might monitor participation or, in some

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[118] Assessment Handbook, pp 10–11; 16; 18.
[119] Investment Plan, p 14.

cases, undertake diagnostic testing to identify such students. A guide for staff includes advice on such matters as supporting students the staff member is concerned about, signs that a student is struggling and the support services available for referrals.[120] The Panel explored strategies used in different faculties with staff who were interviewed and heard about systems for both identifying students at risk and for assisting them. It was noted that it is easier to track students enrolled in compulsory courses or in courses where there is direct contact between students and the course coordinators. Some faculties rely on collated data (from Blackboard). From its interviews, the Panel gained the impression that faculties pay close attention to helping at-risk students to succeed.

At the time of the audit Victoria was evaluating an early alerts ("Course Signals") pilot designed to enable students to assess their progress in a course. This software uses predictive modelling based on course grades (performance), Blackboard activity (effort), academic preparation and demographic information to identify students at risk of failure. The Course Signals system works on a traffic light system, sending students a signal through Blackboard, advising them whether they are likely to succeed in the course (green tick); have potential problems if progress does not improve (yellow triangle); and are likely to fail if progress does not improve (red cross). Staff associated with the course are expected to send a follow-up email to the student advising them of options for gaining help if they are considered to be at academic risk. An advisor role within the system provides opportunity for non-academic staff to assist students.[121] The Course Signals evaluation includes determining whether the system-generated signals are valid. If the trial is successful the University intends to extend use of the system.

> *Affirmation:* The Panel **affirms** the University's introduction of the Course Signals system and encourages a systematic evaluation of its effectiveness from the perspective of both the University and its students.

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### 4.5 High-achieving students
Universities should use processes for identifying and supporting high-achieving, and/or potentially high-achieving, students.

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Processes and activities for acknowledging or rewarding high-performing students include a range of scholarships (admission; graduate, master's and doctoral awards; international undergraduate tuition scholarships and various discipline-specific awards); specific Māori and Pasifika Awards for academic excellence;[122] and awards for academic excellence in specific courses or subjects. The University publishes an annual "Dean's List" of high-achieving undergraduate students. Individual faculties and schools may send congratulatory messages to their high-achieving students.

High-achieving students are offered the opportunity to serve as mentors and might be approached to participate in University promotion events, publications and other initiatives.

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[120] www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/counselling/resources/just-doing-our-job.pdf accessed 08.09.14.
[121] Early Alerts (Course Signals) Pilot project, Guide for Student Services and Support Staff, 2014.
[122] www.victoria.ac.nz/fad/awhina/scholarships-and-awards#awards accessed 15.09.14.

The University thus provides a typical spectrum of acknowledgments. It states students appreciate this recognition.[123] The Panel did not identify any significant gaps or concerns.

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[123] SR, s 4.5.10, p 46.

# 5.    Student Feedback and Support

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**5.1    Academic appeals and grievances**
Universities must have policies and/or procedures which they use to address academic appeals and grievances.

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The majority of the University's academic policies and statutes include appeal provisions.

The Academic Grievance Policy outlines the procedures a student may use to address a grievance about a perceived academic disadvantage related to staff advice or a decision made by a staff member, teaching, assessment, administration or change in University policies or Statutes.[124] The Policy describes both informal and formal procedures and provides for appeals against a decision. Formal academic grievances are seen as a "last resort" after all other attempts to resolve a grievance have been unsuccessful. The Self-review Report sets out the steps in appeals and grievance processes for different academic processes (e.g. for aegrotat decisions; special pass decisions; findings of academic misconduct).[125]

An Academic Grievances document is also available for students. This includes advice about accessing class representatives or the VUWSA advocate or the University's Student Interest and Dispute Resolution Adviser for assistance in the first instance.[126] The Panel heard that although VUWSA provides the services of an advocate for students involved in an appeal, the service is not as well-known as VUWSA would wish.

The University describes its processes as being community processes, rather than judicial.[127] In keeping with this description it offers a marae-based tikanga Māori conciliation process for students involved in misconduct cases although the Panel understands this process has not been used in recent years.[128]

The Panel is satisfied the University's academic appeals and grievance processes are robust.

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**5.2    Learning support**
Universities should provide opportunity for all students to access appropriate learning support services, including specialised learning support services for international students and others with particular needs. (See also 4.2 and 5.4)

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Goal 8 of the University's Strategic Plan is to "provide an inclusive and representative environment for staff and students that is conducive to equity of opportunity for participation and success". A fundamental action supporting this goal was to develop a "coherent university-wide equity strategy".

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[124] www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/academic/academic-grievance-policy.pdf accessed 09.09.14.
[125] SR, pp 47–48.
[126] www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/documents/grievances.pdf accessed 09.09.14.
[127] SR, s5.1.9, p 48.
[128] SR, s3.8.6, p 37.

The University states that its approach to learning support is informed by both sector research and institution-specific data.[129] Student Learning Support Services (SLSS) provides services, both directly for students and also for staff wishing to support students. Services for students listed on the SLSS webpage include upcoming workshops (e.g. maths drop in; postgrad writing), peer assisted study support (PASS), a wide range of written resources (e.g. on study skills, academic writing; English for Speakers of other Languages), as well as opportunities for individual appointments.[130] Specific assistance to Māori and Pasifika students has been outlined in previous chapters (Chapter 2; Chapter 4). SLSS also offers tailored assistance to international students, distance students and new students. The Panel was told that nearly half (45%) of the clientele of SLSS are international students, and "have language issues", though this figure appears to refer only to face-to-face clients whose identity is known.

Individual faculties and schools also provide various forms of learning support and some have learning support plans. Faculties and schools might be assisted by SLSS or other units (such as the Library; Victoria International). The Panel considered several of the faculty initiatives to reflect good practice which might be shared.[131]

Nearly 80% of the 2013 SEIS respondents reported that learning support services were good or very good.[132] Staff who were interviewed acknowledged it is often difficult to know whether a particular service has been effective in improving academic performance, given the difficulty of differentiating the range of influences. The Panel heard that a Student Experience group involving student administration, student services and faculty staff meets regularly to discuss service provision and to share good practice. The group also meets with VUWSA and different student groups. It is responsible for the SEIS and also has input to the advisory group on the student levy. The Panel was told that this group triangulates results across different surveys.

The University has used AUSSE and the International Student Barometer (ISB) with its on-shore international students. The Panel heard that Victoria's services rate highly on ISB surveys but major reliance appears to be on the SEIS. Victoria is part of the UniForum benchmarking group for support services and academic services. The Panel considers there would be value in benchmarking relevant course and teaching survey data with institutions that are comparable.

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**5.3    Personal support and safety**
Universities must provide safe and inclusive campus environments and should provide opportunity for all students to access appropriate pastoral and social support services.

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The University states that it takes an "holistic" view of student support, providing targeted as well as general support.[133] It states that all staff, as appropriate to their roles and abilities, are expected to take some responsibility for supporting students.[134]

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[129] SR, s5.2.1, p 48.
[130] www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/slss/whatweoffer/index.aspx accessed 09.09.14.
[131] SR, pp 48–49.
[132] SD, SEIS 2013 Feedback for Students, p 36.
[133] SR, s5.3.2, p 49.

Services listed in the Self-review Report span those normally offered in New Zealand universities.[135] A Student Wellbeing Group comprised of key student service staff and VUWSA representatives prioritises and plans health promotion activities (including activities specific to students with specific needs, such as refugees or students with impairments). The University also has a Safe and Healthy Community Framework which focuses on mental health, safety, emergency management and crime prevention. A Risk Assessment Advisory Committee monitors and coordinates responses to situations which might pose risk of harm to students or staff (e.g. stalking; harassment). VUWSA reported that its interactions with the University are constructive with respect to the services provided within the provisions of the Student Services Levy.

Various web pages provide information about the personal services available to help students.[136] A dedicated web page for international students includes advice about events (such as orientation) and local services, such as banking, driving in New Zealand, visas, etc. [137] The "Welcome to Wellington" Handbook also includes a wide range of information designed to help international students settle in.[138]

Victoria Info Ihonui (VicInfo) is a facility available online from sites around the University (e.g. the libraries) which provides connection to a range of information, mostly related to student support.[139] Students appreciate this service; some suggested it would be useful to have it available at more sites than currently. The Panel was told of some of the work done by Student Academic Services to explore the support needed by different equity groups. Although the Panel heard from some students that there were delays in getting an appointment with a counsellor, it heard from staff that the length of time taken for an appointment with a counsellor had been addressed and that a triage counsellor helped ensure appropriate follow-up. The Panel also learned of intentions to undertake an evidence-based review of the careers service and graduate employability across the University. The Panel supports the ongoing work to ensure services are fit for purpose and the needs of specific groups are met.

The Panel was satisfied the University has good processes in place to monitor use, acceptability and effectiveness of its services, including service providers' self-reviews, reports on service use, incident reporting and a safety audit conducted by VUWSA with the assistance of campus services. In the 2013 SEIS 90% of all respondents rated all services as good or very good and over 80% agreed that Victoria provides a safe and vibrant environment.[140] Rates were similar in the three previous years. The SEIS provides satisfaction data for all key services individually. Several students who were interviewed by the Panel volunteered that the support provided by Victoria is good and that staff are caring.

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[134] SR, s5.3.10, p 51.

[135] SR, pp 49–50.

[136] www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support accessed 11.09.14.

[137] http://internationalstudenthome.victoria.ac.nz/ accessed 03.09.14.

[138] www.victoria.ac.nz/international/offers/downloads/vi-kia-ora-2014-web.pdf accessed 03.09.14.

[139] www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support/ihonui accessed 03.09.14. Some of the sites also have staff available to assist students.

[140] SEIS 2013 Feedback for Students, pp 4; 17.

The University cites WGTN Hall as an initiative which was a response to student feedback. This virtual hall provides activities for Wellington-based students and, in particular, provides an opportunity for first year local students to interact. The Panel considers it to be a good initiative.

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**5.4 Support on other campuses**

Universities should have formal mechanisms to ensure appropriate learning and pastoral support is provided for students in programmes taught on other campuses and/or with partner institutions, including those which are in other countries.

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Given their close proximity and the very similar nature of the student experience, the four sites of Victoria in Wellington are treated, by both the University and the Panel, as a single campus for purposes of most service provision. Where the student experience differs between locations such that some students might be disadvantaged, the University is striving to introduce comparability, for example in library services.[141] (See also section 1.4 of this Report)

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**5.5 Feedback from students**

Universities should use processes for gaining feedback on student satisfaction with teaching, courses and student services and should be able to demonstrate that feedback is used to inform improvement initiatives. (See also 7.5 re thesis students)

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In addition to undergraduate student feedback which is also collected through the system of class representatives (see Chapter 1), feedback on teaching and courses is gathered mainly through routine course and teaching surveys. The Student Feedback on Teaching and Courses Policy (introduced in 2010) sets out the conditions and frequency with which courses and lecturers, including new lecturers and tutors, are expected to be subject to student evaluation. The process of gathering, analysing and reporting on results is managed by CAD which also informs Heads of School which courses and lecturers are due to be evaluated in a given year.

CAD provides a summary of feedback on course quality and on teaching quality to course coordinators and lecturers respectively. In instances where lecturers' median score is deemed unsatisfactory, they are invited to discuss their results with CAD, an offer taken up each year by a small number of lecturers. The relevant PVCs/Deans also receive summary reports on course and teaching quality with an expectation that there will be follow-up in the schools with the individuals, and with course coordinators or school learning and teaching committees where systemic issues emerge. The 2013 CAD Annual Report provides University medians for standard questions on the course feedback form over five years. It shows an improvement in postgraduate scores from 1.7 in 2009 to 1.4 in 2013 but no explanation is offered for this shift in results.[142]

Response rates to the evaluations are reported to be similar to those for other New Zealand and overseas universities. CAD survey data indicated that PVCs, Deans, Associate Deans and Heads of

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[141] SR, s8.0.3, p 65.

[142] SD: Centre for Academic Development Annual Report 2013 Table 5, p 15. . A scale of 1–5 for responses, with 1 being the positive end of the range and 5 the negative.

School use the result summaries for monitoring, particularly for identifying areas that need improvement. Course feedback results and commentary are placed on the CAD website and attract a high number of hits each month. CAD also publishes University medians in its annual report. The Panel learned of plans to maximise data use through enhanced use of the data warehouse, which would involve staff being able to access reports that would link course evaluation data and student performance. Course coordinators are expected to summarise key points from student feedback on courses.

Notwithstanding the above efforts, the University reported that it has had no formal system or process for informing students of the outcomes of their survey responses.[143] Students commented that although CAD publishes numerical evaluations from course surveys on its website, it is difficult to find any reference to changes made on the basis of student feedback. However the Panel was also told that staff are expected to document changes made as a result of the course feedback and since 2014 ensure that these are included in subsequent versions of course outlines. The University is seeking to apply this policy in a more rigorous way and is in the process of reviewing its policy framework for student feedback generally, with a view to utilising feedback more effectively and improving data collection and reporting.[144] The Panel supports these efforts and encourages the communication back to students of survey outcomes.

> *Recommendation:* The Panel **recommends** that the University gives urgent attention to implementation of the system initiated in 2014 to require course outlines to include feedback to students regarding the outcomes and actions taken as a consequence of responses from course evaluations.

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**5.6      Feedback from graduates**
Universities should use processes for gaining feedback from graduates regarding their satisfaction with their university experience and learning outcomes and should be able to demonstrate that this feedback is used.

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The University's principal method of surveying graduates is the Graduate Destination Survey (GDS). This includes questions about employment status and/or engagement in further study, as well as graduate perceptions of how well they have developed the University's graduate attributes and the importance they attach to those attributes. Response rates for 2011–2012 were 43%. Results are used for accreditation, recruitment and programme reviews and summaries of employment outcomes are posted on the Career Development and Employment website.

The University intends to explore the possibility of a two-part undergraduate exit survey, the second part of which would focus on the qualification taken by the graduand. The goal would be to maintain contact with graduates so that after a period in employment they could be asked to reflect on the skills they acquired through their studies and the extent to which these provided an

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[143] SR, s5.5.5, p 52.
[144] SR, s5.5.8, p 53.

adequate launch pad for their careers. The Panel supports this proposal (Enhancement Initiative No. 8.)[145]

Other sources of data about Victoria graduates come through professional bodies. Faculties and some schools (such as the Victoria Business School (VBS)) maintain contact with alumni through programme advisory boards and requirements of external accreditation processes which involve targeted surveys of graduates. More informal sources of feedback from graduates are collected by different schools through social media and alumni evenings. The national Graduate Longitudinal Study New Zealand survey has provided some baseline data from late 2011.[146] The University reported that data "provided some insights" about the lifestyles, employment and career development and the health and wellbeing of graduates.

The University's strategy for maintaining links with alumni involves the Development Office; its database (Raisers Edge) has been expanded in recent years. A successful pilot alumni-student mentoring project was carried out in 2013 by staff from Student Academic Services, the Career Development and Employment team and the Development Office (including Alumni Relations).

The Panel considers the University's existing and proposed graduate surveys should provide appropriate data to inform academic and pastoral evaluations when required and to assist with guiding continuous improvement.

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[145] SR, p 54.
[146] SD: Quality and Management Framework for Student Learning, pp25-26.The Graduate Longitudinal Survey New Zealand (GLSNZ) is conducted across the eight New Zealand universities, to gather data on the university experience and future plans of a cohort of students. The 2011 baseline survey included 13,343 potential graduates. The survey had a 65% response rate. The rate for Victoria was 64%.

# 6.    Teaching Quality

In 2013 Victoria reported a staff profile as (FTE):[147]

| | |
|---|---|
| Academic | 860 |
| Professional service staff | 1,025 |
| Total staff | 1,885 |

The Learning and Teaching Strategy 2010–2014 addresses issues related to teaching quality, including an intention to establish benchmarks and key performance indicators and a schedule for reviews by management and governance committees against the indicators.[148] The University's Strategic Plan includes a commitment to build Māori staff capability and the capability of all staff to engage with Māori interests.[149] A new Pasifika Staff Success Plan aims to build capability of Pacific staff.[150] In 2013 the University reported the following proportions of Māori and Pacific staff[151]:

| | |
|---|---|
| Māori academic staff, as proportion of all academic staff | 2.4% |
| Māori general staff, as proportion of all general staff | 4.1% |
| Pacific academic staff, as proportion of all academic staff | 0.8% |
| Pacific general staff, as proportion of all general staff | 2.4% |

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**6.1    Staff recruitment and induction**

Universities' processes for recruitment and induction should ensure that all teaching staff are appropriately qualified, according to the level(s) at which they will be teaching (i.e. degree level; postgraduate; sub-degree) and that all teaching staff receive assistance to become familiar with their university's academic expectations.

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The University has a suite of policies specifying role descriptions and minimum qualifications for academic staff (normally a PhD).[152] The appointment of tutors and other teaching and research staff is also covered by policy, as is the appointment of adjunct and visiting staff. Individual agreements are approved by a PVC with support for recruitment and selection provided by HR.

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[147] Annual Report 2013, p 16.
[148] Learning and Teaching Action Plan, Objective 4, p10 of the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2010-2014.
[149] SP, p 5.
[150] AR, pp 56; 72.
[151] AR, pp 72–73.
[152] A 2013 report by Zinzley, Snell and Hallows for Universities New Zealand reported that 66.5% of Victoria's academic staff held a doctoral degree, compared with a New Zealand university average of 58.4%. SR, p 56.

An online recruitment module reinforces the University's recruitment and selection process requirements. Verification of qualifications and resumé details is the responsibility of the recruiting manager using a document setting out the minimum standards for the procedure.[153]

The Panel heard that induction of new staff commences from the time appointment is confirmed. The letter of offer advises that the recruit is expected to complete a "Welcome to Victoria" e-learning module before arriving at the University. This is followed by a series of self-paced e-learning modules, some of which have tests associated with them. In the Panel's view, such early induction is a positive feature.

New staff members are required to attend an induction programme organised by HR with managers responsible for local orientation. The Panel was told that while the expectation of mandatory participation in induction activities is difficult to enforce, Heads of School do report on which staff attend these. HR also facilitates regular orientation sessions during the year and has developed e-learning modules on areas such as health and safety. Induction to academic work has been developed in association with CAD with contributions from SLSS. Attendance requirements are based on the level of experience of new academic recruits although all new staff must attend a two-day Orientation to Academic Life programme provided by CAD. New academics are entitled to have a mentor for the first three years of their employment.

New tutors attend a tailored CAD/SLSS three-hour compulsory orientation programme, with schools providing discipline-specific training. Demonstrator training was introduced in 2012. Doctoral scholarship recipients are required to contribute 150 hours to the University with recommended activities including tutoring or tutor training.

Resources derived from an Ako Aotearoa project led by Victoria staff, on the experiences of early-career academics, have been used as an accompaniment to the Performance Development and Career Planning (PDCP) process in several schools and guide managers on questions they should ask new academic staff in their first few weeks on the job.[154]

The University's Capability Strategy/Te Rautaki Kaiaka identifies an intention to review recruitment, selection and orientation processes to identify and remove any barriers to the recruitment and engagement of staff from priority or under-represented groups. The Panel supports this review.

> *Affirmation:* The Panel **affirms** the University's approach to staff induction, including the pre-arrival advice and online modules and the use of evidence-based resources for new academic staff.

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[153] Minimum Standards for Pre-employment Verification policy, cited SR, s6.1.3, p 55.
[154] SR, s6.1.6, p 55.

> **6.2 Research-active staff**
>
> Universities' workload management processes should ensure that degree-level students are taught mainly by staff who are research-active.

The University's emphasis over a number of years on improving research capability has led to a high proportion of staff being confirmed as research-active. [155] Most non-research-active staff are sessional staff and include those employed to provide industry or profession-based contributions rather than scholarly perspectives through their teaching.

The challenge in assessing the extent to which teaching is carried out by research-active staff is a function of the management and record-keeping occurring at school level. Heads of School are responsible for implementing the University's Staff Workload Policy, which outlines a principles-based approach to ensure that each staff member "has an equitable, reasonable and safe workload". [156] From its interviews, the Panel deduced that a 40/40/20 teaching/research/ administration allocation was the most common base model. In addition to recognising diverse forms of teaching as well as research and administration, the policy stipulates that the additional responsibilities of Māori staff must be recognised in allocation or assessment of workload.

The Panel was told that University staff had, from time to time, discussed the possibility of a single institutional workload model. The lack of such a model is not currently seen as an issue by staff who in interviews appeared to accept that variation in how the policy is applied is justifiable. The variation was seen as reflecting different scholarship cultures; devolution of responsibility for workload management to schools acknowledges the variation in practices across disciplines. As a consequence there is currently no central analysis of workloads. However the Planning and Management Information Unit (PAMI) has begun to assess the way in which the University's Staff Workload Policy is implemented at school level and to develop a method through which the workload of all staff teaching all or part of a course may be recorded centrally in Banner to give an accurate picture across the University.

The Panel heard from a number of staff how the University had significantly improved staff research output in recent years while at the same time ensuring that a focus on teaching has not diminished. The Panel considers the University's success in keeping teaching in the foreground to be a significant achievement. However the Panel also draws the University's attention to a continuing perception among some staff that for senior promotion research excellence is privileged over teaching excellence, a perception which potentially undermines the significant gains made by the University in enhancing the focus given to teaching capability (See also section 6.6).

> *Commendation:* The Panel **commends** the University on its success in raising the profile and valuing of excellence in teaching during a period of significant focus on improving institutional research output.

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[155] The Self-review Report cites 673 out of 715 permanent academic staff as at July 2013. SR, s6.2.2, p 56.
[156] www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/staff-workload-policy.pdf accessed 02.09.14.

**6.3     Teaching quality**
Universities should use processes for assessing teaching quality and for monitoring and
enhancing individual teaching capability of all teaching staff.  (See also 6.5, and 7.1 re thesis
supervision).

The main method of assessing teaching quality is via student evaluations of courses and teaching
and it is necessary to submit a Teaching Performance Profile (TPP) based on these data in
applications for promotion, though the University recognises that student survey data do not
provide a complete picture. CAD guides on Improving Teaching and Learning provide guidance on
peer review but use of peer review appears to be discretionary.

Student feedback on teaching via surveys must be completed in the first trimester of a staff
member's teaching at the University and where a staff member has not sought feedback for the
previous two full teaching years but may also be requested by staff at other times.[157] Response rates
have been consistently around 61–66% for undergraduate courses over the last five years, but have
been less than 30% for the subset of courses taught online. For taught postgraduate courses the
response rates have been more variable, ranging from 53% (2010) to 85% (2012).[158]

Annual summaries of responses to the core feedback questions on teaching are provided to the
relevant Head of School and to the relevant PVC. The Head of School is responsible for reviewing the
feedback results and identifying with the staff member any action that needs to be taken in the light
of the student feedback. If there are concerns about a staff member's teaching performance then
this is managed by the Head of School. CAD might provide appropriate support.

Participation in the University's Performance Development and Career Planning (PDCP) process is
mandatory. Consideration of teaching performance is a part of the normal PDCP process and some
Heads seek input from class representatives as needed. The Panel heard of various approaches to
PDCP used by Heads and was told that for most staff it is seen as a constructive process. Consistently
poor performance is dealt with in the framework of the Staff Conduct Policy which specifies
remedial disciplinary processes and penalties for failure to improve. Heads can refer staff members
who need to improve their teaching to CAD for confidential, supportive assistance. The possibility of
peer assistance is suggested but there is as yet no process of incorporating that strategy in the
management of teaching performance. The Staff Conduct Policy and associated Guidelines include
provision of a tikanga Māori process for assisting with resolution.[159]

The Panel learned that there is no centralised reporting on the PDCP process, other than via a Head
of School ensuring the process is carried out. The Panel was told that the University intends to carry
out an internal audit of its academic staff performance and reporting processes in 2014. The
objective is to evaluate the robustness of the systems, processes and reporting that the University

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[157] www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/academic/student-feedback-on-teaching-and-courses-policy.pdf
accessed 12.08.14.

[158] Centre for Academic Development Annual Report 2013, p 15.

[159] www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/conduct-policy.pdf;
www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/conduct-policy-guidelines.pdf accessed 02.09.14.

relies on to ensure academic staff are performing in line with expectations. The Panel supports this review.

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**6.4     Teaching development**

Universities should provide opportunities for staff to develop their teaching practice, including application of contemporary pedagogical research, use of learning management systems and use of new technologies.

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The University's Capability Strategy/Te Rautaki Kaiaka provides an integrated framework for the development of staff capability. The intention is that this high-level institutional strategy will be used by faculties, schools and administrative and service units in developing their own action plans, as appropriate, to help staff realise their potential. The strategy highlights the University's commitment to building capability of Māori staff, building capability of all staff to engage with Māori, and the contribution of te reo Māori and tikanga Māori in the University workplace.[160]

The Capability Strategy/Te Rautaki Kaiaka provides an action plan for performance development which includes skills needs analysis, appropriate training, mentoring and exchange opportunities, co-ordination of organisational and individual staff development initiatives and development of principles to underpin development of equitable academic workloads.

The Centre for Academic Development (CAD) leads the University's endeavours in teaching development, providing a range of activities and services in support of its commitment to academic staff development, teaching feedback and digital technologies for learning and teaching.[161] The Centre's activities are guided by the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy and fall under five headings:
- Academic staff development
- Teaching feedback services
- Digital technology for learning and teaching
- Learning and teaching advice and policy development
- Research-led learning and teaching.[162]

CAD offers the orientation to academic work for new academics, tutor training (nearly 400 tutors received training in 2013) and an on-going programme of workshops with visiting specialists. Feedback data from workshops show high levels of satisfaction although the unit would prefer higher attendance levels at events such as the mandatory orientation for new academics. Advice and consultation opportunities are also available on request.

Workshops targeted to supporting Māori and Pacific staff, and to understanding issues related to teaching and learning by Māori and Pacific staff and students, are a feature of CAD's offerings. The

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[160] Capability Strategy Te Rautaki Kaiaka 2013–2017.
[161] Centre for Academic Development Annual Report 2013.
[162] Quality and Management Framework for Student Learning, 2013, pp 19–21.

Associate Dean Learning and Teaching for Toihuarewa is a CAD staff member. The Pasifika Staff Capability Plan addresses recruitment and retention of Pasifika staff.[163]

CAD is the business "owner" of Blackboard, the learning management system. It supports the increasing use of Blackboard through strategies such as workshops for staff, individual advice and through support for the lecture-capture system, VStream. CAD assists with projects that contribute to the University's digital learning and teaching strategy. It facilitates the Contacts for Academic Technology (CATs) and the Innovation Incubator (see Chapter 1, section 1.5). Online modules in Blackboard are available to support new and existing tutors.

CAD also provides advice on issues and policy related to teaching and learning. It has a liaison person for each faculty, who attends faculty learning and teaching committee meetings and supports faculty initiatives (see below). CAD runs an annual learning and teaching conference, Ako Victoria (the Panel was told the conference was held twice in 2013). Focused projects managed by CAD have included the Scholarly Habits programme for early career academic staff that has been completed by over 50 Humanities and Social Sciences staff and an Ako Aotearoa-funded project for early career academics.

A Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education Learning and Teaching was introduced in 2013, extending the existing postgraduate certificate in the same subject. Four students completed the certificate in 2013 and another three upgraded their 2013 enrolment to the diploma.[164]

In addition to the services provided by CAD the Panel heard of other activities led by academic staff. At a pan-institutional level, VicTeach is a community-led group of staff interested in developing and sharing best practice in teaching and learning and digital technology and meets monthly. VicTeach is supported by CAD and by ITS and evolved out of a Learning and Teaching grant project. Meetings are recorded via VStream for accessibility by people on other sites and text-chat is facilitated during the meetings. The Panel heard of the wide range of topics which had been the focus of VicTeach meetings. The Panel also learned of initiatives in individual faculties to share teaching experiences.[165] These initiatives are indicative of the commitment of academic staff to enhancing their own teaching and that of colleagues. The Panel heard many favourable comments about the work of CAD in supporting staff to enhance their teaching.

> *Commendation:*  The Panel **commends** the University for its strong commitment to the development of teaching excellence. In particular, the Panel commends the work of the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) and the ways in which CAD involves teaching staff in its activities, and for its support of projects to embed new technologies for teaching and learning and to communicate good teaching practice, including support of projects to develop teaching capability, the Ako Victoria conference days and the staff-led VicTeach initiative.

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[163] Report on Equity and Diversity, Learning and Teaching, and Student Experience 2013, p 34.

[164] Centre for Academic Development Annual Report 2013, p 9.

[165] For example, the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Learning and Teaching Seminar Series. www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/about/committees-boards/attachments/learning-and-teaching-matters-vol3-issue4-2014.pdf accessed 02.09.14.

### 6.5 Teaching support on other campuses
Universities should have formal mechanisms to ensure appropriate
teaching support is provided for staff in programmes taught on other campuses and/or
with partner institutions, including those which are overseas.

As noted in Chapter 4, the four main teaching locations (campuses) in Wellington are viewed as one entity given their close proximity to the main Kelburn site. CAD is available to staff from those sites.

In the case of off-shore delivery of courses and the teaching model being used, arrangements for support of teaching staff vary according to which is the employing institution. Where the staff are employed by partners they are supported by their primary institution but also receive collegial support from staff of Victoria. In some cases staff teaching off-shore are given the opportunity to undertake professional development visits to the main campus in Wellington. For example, the Panel was told that a visit from four staff of the Institut Perguruan Sultan Abdul Halim in Malaysia in 2012 focused around auditing lectures, attending workshops, meeting local school staff as well as interaction with Faculty of Education staff.[166]

In cases of partnerships between the University and other local institutions, each partner is responsible for support of their own staff.

### 6.6 Teaching recognition
Universities' reward processes (promotion; special awards) should recognize teaching capability.

The Learning and Teaching Strategy includes an objective to "Foster, support and reward good practice in learning and teaching" with an action plan setting out goals around, for example, funding of leadership development; a review of promotion criteria; support for teaching awards, fellowships and grants and support of early career academics.[167]

The University states that good teaching performance is essential in promotion. Guidance on what constitutes evidence is included in both the Academic Promotion Booklet and the Collective Agreement for Academic Staff. The University cites cases of strong researchers being denied promotion in cases of weak teaching.[168] However, in light of some staff perceptions about privileging of research (see section 6.2), the Panel believes that the University needs to look closely at the balance of criteria for promotion to senior positions to reassure itself that there is appropriate weighting given to teaching excellence vis-à-vis research excellence, such that advancement primarily on the basis of outstanding performance in teaching along with satisfactory performance in research might be recognised as equivalent to advancement primarily on the basis of outstanding performance in research along with satisfactory performance in teaching.

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[166] Report on 2012 benchmark visit to Victoria by staff from Institut Perguruan Sultan Abdul Halim.
[167] Learning and Teaching Action Plan, Objective 2, p 8 of the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2010–2014.
[168] SR, s6.3.4, p 57.

The Victoria Teaching Excellence Award has been awarded on an annual basis for several years. The background of winners covers a wide spectrum of the disciplines at the University.[169] The University reported that its Teaching Excellence Award was under review in 2014 with consideration of processes, rewards and categories as well as the definition of 'excellence' in teaching and learning.

The various activities of CAD provide opportunities for teaching staff to be recognised for good practice and initiatives. The Panel also notes favourably the University's Equity and Diversity Staff Award for significant contributions to realising the University's equity goals.

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[169] SD: List of Excellence in Teaching Award Winners.

# 7.    Supervision of Research Students

In 2013 Victoria recorded the following profile of postgraduate students:

Taught postgraduate          1,681 ETFS
Research postgraduate          1,099 EFTS[170]

Of research postgraduate students,

| Master's | 848 (headcount) |
| PhD | 993 (headcount)[171] |

This chapter focuses only on research students, i.e. master's thesis and doctoral students. Responses from taught master's and honours students who were interviewed have been incorporated into previous sections.

Administration of processes for thesis research is managed by the FGR (Faculty of Graduate Research). The FGR and the Dean of Graduate Research role were established in 2009 to address perceived issues regarding oversight of doctoral research which were outlined in the 2008 "One Cohesive Entity" proposal.[172] The Board of FGR is expected to "ensure the maintenance of high standards in the University's research degrees through reviewing and monitoring completion times, quality of supervision and the quality of research outcomes and to provide strategic overview of postgraduate research candidature".[173] While the administration of master's research is the responsibility of individual faculties and schools, the FGR does determine University-wide policy for master's theses.

From what it read and heard, the Panel deduced that the University has been successful in addressing the issues it had identified earlier. In particular, an objective of FGR was to overcome apparent inconsistency across the University in a number of practices related to the PhD experience. This chapter refers to several of the processes now in place as a result of the 2008 "One Cohesive Entity" proposal.

Most requirements relating to doctoral study are documented in the Doctoral Policy and University-wide requirements for master's research are documented in the Master's Thesis Policy.[174] These documents are comprehensive and clear. Information for students or potential students regarding all aspects of doctoral research is available on the dedicated FGR website.[175] Information pertaining

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[170] AR, p 17.

[171] AR, p 16.

[172] SD: "One Cohesive Entity" A Proposal to Establish a Faculty of Graduate Research at Victoria University of Wellington, November 2008.

[173] Clauses 4, 5 Board of the Faculty of Graduate Research Statute, www.victoria.ac.nz/fgr/about/faculty-graduate-research-board accessed 12.09.14.

[174] SD: Doctoral Policy for PhD and other Doctorates with Theses; Master's Thesis Policy.

[175] www.victoria.ac.nz/fgr accessed 12.09.14.

to master's research can be found on individual faculty web pages, but a link to these is also provided from a collective webpage for master's study.[176]

> *Commendation:* The Panel **commends** the University on the establishment of the Faculty of Graduate Research and on the progress which has been made in addressing the issues identified in 2008. In particular, the Panel commends the Doctoral Policy and the Master's Thesis Policy as examples of good practice in documenting relevant requirements comprehensively and clearly in a single location.

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**7.1     Qualification of supervisors**

Universities should use documented processes for ensuring staff supervising research students are appropriately trained and experienced as supervisors, including processes to enable new or inexperienced staff to gain experience as supervisors.

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Supervisors of PhD students are approved by the Associate Dean, Postgraduate Students (or equivalent), on behalf of the Dean, FGR. The supervision team for a PhD comprises an administrative supervisor and at least two academic supervisors, one of whom is identified as the designated Victoria supervisor who is responsible for the overall academic development of the student. The administrative supervisor (usually the Head of School or his/her nominee) is responsible for overseeing administrative aspects, including resourcing of the research. Academic supervisors must have a PhD and/or an established research record and must have completed a Victoria supervisor training session. The Doctoral Policy sets out procedures to protect against conflict of interest, to manage changes to the supervision team and issues related to third party involvement in the research.

Master's supervisors are appointed by the Head of School or Department. The Master's Thesis Policy does not specify how many supervisors are expected, but states that "at least one" will be a professor or lecturer of Victoria. Primary supervisors of master's thesis research must have a master's thesis degree or doctorate and/or an established research record and they must have "appropriate experience or training". Staff are advised to complete a professional development programme for supervisors.

While the Policy for doctoral supervision is unambiguous, the requirements for master's thesis supervision appear to rely more on the discretion of the Head of School. Supervisor training is provided by the FGR and Heads of School are responsible for ensuring staff who are to supervise theses attend. The Panel heard appreciation from staff for the input of overseas expertise to orientations and workshops for supervisors. External supervisors (honorary research associates) are not obliged to attend supervision training, though they may do so.

Other opportunities for staff to learn how to supervise effectively include school and faculty mentoring schemes and the practice of new supervisors being assigned junior roles in a supervision team. A programme of informal support sessions, "Discussing Supervision @ Vic" was introduced in

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[176] www.victoria.ac.nz/study/programmes-courses/postgraduates/masters/masters-theses accessed 12.09.14.

2013 as a mechanism for sharing good practice and building support networks among current supervisors. However the University notes that it currently has no means of evaluating the effectiveness of the training provided, and also notes that experienced supervisors, as well as new supervisors, need to be apprised of changes to policies and procedures when these occur.[177]

The Panel supports the initiative of the FGR to establish a working party to consider good practice in supervision.[178] It encourages the working party to include consideration of how performance development and review processes might include thesis supervision as part of the review of teaching. The Panel suggests the FGR might extend its monitoring processes to include aspects of master's supervision.

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**7.2     Resourcing of research students**
Universities should use documented processes for ensuring research students are appropriately resourced to do their research.

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Victoria offers scholarships and other forms of financial support (such as for attendance at conferences) for doctoral and master's thesis students. However the Self-review Report notes that criteria for contestable funding are not consistent across the University.[179] Staff noted that while more scholarships would be ideal they considered the University was "doing what it can" within limited financial constraints. It was suggested to the Panel that the University could benefit from having more targeted scholarships, in particular for Māori and Pasifika students, although the Panel notes there are several established scholarships allocated to Māori postgraduate students and scholarships for Pasifika students have been introduced recently.[180]

The Panel was pleased to note that the University's Minimum Resources Agreement applies to all students carrying out a degree by research, whether doctoral or master's, and extends to students in the process of revising a thesis after it has been examined. The Policy is clear. It refers to physical resources, "people relevant to their work", student services, orientation by FGR and the arrangements provided for use of IT, Library, consumables, kitchen facilities, phone etc. The Policy alerts students to health and safety expectations and includes a protocol whereby students should address any concerns they have related to the Policy's provisions.[181] However students commented that the minimum resource expectations are not always met. The Panel urges the University to undertake a stocktake or broader survey to explore inconsistencies and what might be done to address any issues identified.

Students commented very positively on the workshops run by the Student Learning Support Service and FGR on topics such as writing for academic development. They appreciated that workshops and programmes focus on personal development and need rather than being limited to generic workshops.

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[177] SR, s7.1.8; 7.1.9; 7.1.10, pp 61–62.
[178] SR, s7.1.11, p 62.
[179] SR, s7.2.4, p 62.
[180] SD: Faculty of Graduate Research, Report to Academic Board 2012.
[181] SD: Minimum Resources Agreement (MRA) for Thesis Students.

The Panel learned that in addition to workshops for students, FGR facilitates sessions for students with their supervisors on topics such as (in 2012) time management, and defeating "self-sabotage" and (2013) "shameless self promotion". Good use appears to have been made of visiting experts from at least one Australian university.[182] Students commented on excellent support networks for Māori and Pasifika postgraduate students but also observed that international postgraduate students sometimes experienced additional stress because of limited personal support outside the University. The Panel notes that the University has a compulsory half-day orientation for all international PhD students.[183]

The Library reported that it undertakes surveys and group interviews to determine the needs of all researchers, from PhD students to professors. It endeavours to ensure services are aligned with those needs. The Library has designated reading room space for postgraduate students and staff; if the space at Kelburn is successful the facility will be reproduced where possible in libraries on other sites. The Library contributes to FGR workshops, for example on e-research.

Other support available to postgraduate students includes social and pastoral support. For example, the role of the Postgraduate Students' Association (PGSA) has been enhanced by support from FGR to encourage it to be more than a club and to be able to engage effectively with the Faculty. This endeavour is assisted by such activities as the 3-minute thesis competitions, various awards and active soliciting of a student voice on FGR issues. Faculty research committees normally include representatives of PGSA.

The University's Capability Strategy/Te Rautaki Kaiaka identifies an intention to include postgraduate students in plans to develop entry-level career pathways by facilitating initial postgraduate employment appropriate to beginning an academic career.[184]

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**7.3    Research supervision**
Universities should use documented processes for ensuring supervision of research students is effective and that student progress and support are appropriately monitored.

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The Panel was told that the University has no institutional policy or guideline regarding the maximum number of students a staff member may supervise at any one time. However the Panel heard about policies and guidelines within individual schools and also of how workload models in different schools accounted for thesis supervision. The variability appeared appropriate to different disciplines and seemed acceptable to staff. In their discussion with the Panel, staff could not identify any correlation between supervision problems and the number of students supervised.

Victoria requires six-monthly progress reporting for doctoral students and three reports for master's students (at one month, three months and eight months). An online reporting system was introduced for 2013.[185] Processes for resolving issues related to supervision are outlined in the

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[182] SD: Faculty of Graduate Research, Report to Academic Board 2012; 2013.
[183] www.victoria.ac.nz/fgr/about/events/past-events accessed 12.09.14.
[184] SD: Capability Strategy/Te Rautaki Kaiaka, p 8.
[185] SD: Faculty of Graduate Research, Report to Academic Board 2012.

Doctoral Policy. The Master's Thesis Policy outlines what is expected of staff and students to monitor a master's student's progress. However, the annual reports of FGR do not refer to any monitoring of supervision reports or analyses of trends or recurring issues.

The Panel was told that the University operates on a "trust model" in assuming that if issues arise with supervision they will be monitored and if there are major concerns then the Head of School will advise the Associate Dean, Postgraduate Research and thereafter, if necessary, the Dean FGR. The Panel heard, though, that some Heads are reluctant to deal with issues that arise. The University acknowledges that although progress reports are reviewed and approved by Heads of School and Associate Deans, there are differing understandings of the purpose of the reports. The Panel heard that, as a result, staff who receive reports might not necessarily address problems that could exist.[186] There does not seem to be systematic oversight of this process but the Panel understands that a review of reporting processes is underway. It strongly supports this review and encourages the University to explore good practices in other universities as part of the input to the review.

> *Affirmation:* The Panel **affirms** the University's review of progress reporting of doctoral and master's research. It encourages the University to articulate its resultant expectations about acceptable procedure and use of reports within the Doctoral Policy and also encourages the University to incorporate institutional monitoring of potential trends and issues which might be systemic either within a school or faculty, or across the institution.

> *Recommendation:* The Panel **recommends** that the University develop a protocol within thesis progress reporting processes that ensures that individual issues are managed confidentially and effectively, but which also provides an avenue for centralised notification of issues which might be serious, systemic or point to problems with University processes.

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**7.4    Thesis examination**
Universities' thesis examination processes should ensure thesis standards are internationally benchmarked.

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Requirements for the examination of doctoral and master's theses are set out clearly in the Doctoral Policy and the Master's Thesis Policy.

The examination panel for a PhD thesis normally comprises an internal examiner (not one of the thesis supervisors), an external New Zealand examiner and an overseas examiner, all approved by the Dean, FGR. The oral defence is chaired by a person who is independent of the examiners. The Doctoral Policy explains the requirements of examiners (e.g. impartiality) and the stages of the examination process. The Policy also specifies certain powers of the Dean, FGR in the event where, for example, the examination process is compromised in some way. The Academic Grievance Policy applies if there is a claim of academic disadvantage.

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[186] SR, s7.3.3; 7.3.7, p 63.

The Master's Thesis Policy provides an overview of the normal examination process. Masters theses are examined by one internal and one external examiner. Supervisors may not be examiners of that thesis. Examiners are proposed by the Head of School for endorsement by the Associate Dean, Postgraduate Research.

The University provides for examination in te reo Māori (see Chapter 3, section 3.9).

The Panel is satisfied that the requirements for external scrutiny through the examination process of both doctoral and master's theses facilitate national benchmarking and, in the case of PhDs, international evaluation. It notes that the University provides regular briefings for oral examiners.[187]

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**7.5     Postgraduate student feedback**

Universities should use processes for gaining feedback on student satisfaction with supervision and support for postgraduate students and be able to demonstrate that feedback is used to inform improvement initiatives.

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The University has several avenues for obtaining feedback from postgraduate students (see sections 7.2 and 7.3 above).

The FGR administers an exit survey for all thesis students (doctoral and master's). However the Panel considered that the practice of releasing data only after ten questionnaires have been completed for any discipline (to protect confidentiality) was likely to limit the value that could be made of some data. It was not clear how FGR itself used the data which it gathered in a more timely fashion.

The online thesis progress report includes the facility for students (and staff) to append a confidential comment if appropriate. Other ways of gaining feedback tend to be informal.

While the Panel is satisfied that the University has adequate feedback mechanisms in place, it considers there is room for improvement in how the data are used to deal with concerns raised by students in a timely, confidential way. The Panel encourages the University to explore how this situation might be improved.

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[187] SD: Faculty of Graduate Research, Report to Academic Board 2012.

# Conclusion

During the site visit the Panel talked to four Council members, about 75 staff and about 40 students. It found staff and Council members to be well versed in their portfolio areas and prepared to engage well with the Panel. Students spoken to were articulate and frank; they appreciated the opportunities offered by Victoria University of Wellington.

The Panel had no issues of serious concern regarding conformity with the expectations expressed in the Cycle 5 Guideline Statements. The Guideline Statements were met, in some cases at a high standard. In other cases improvements would further enhance what the University is already achieving. The University had identified a number of these areas itself in its self-review. The Panel considered the structure and presentation of the Self-review Report to be exemplary.

The Panel has noted the significant work which has been completed recently in streamlining and communicating key academic policies, processes and guidelines. It also notes evidence of systematic monitoring in a number of areas. The establishment of the FGR since the last audit has been effective; it can do further work to enhance the quality of students' postgraduate research experience. The University's active commitment to Māori and to Pasifika students and their communities is impressive.

At the time of the site visit the University had recently appointed a new Vice-Chancellor and some structural changes were being discussed. A number of strategic documents were in the final year of their application. The recommendations the Panel has made are intended to assist the University as it moves forward with the development and implementation of its new Strategic Plan. The University identified eight Enhancement Initiatives which it intends to complete within the next audit cycle (by 2019). The Panel supports these enhancement initiatives and has emphasised some of them for prioritisation.

The University is expected to report on its response to the recommendations made by the Panel in twelve months' time (late in 2015) and again at the time of the next academic audit.


# Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations

## Commendations

GS1.2   C1      The Panel **commends** the University on its strong strategic planning process and the extent of stakeholder consultation for its new Strategic Plan. The Panel endorses the development of appropriate KPIs and reporting processes which will enable the University to measure progress and the Council, in particular, to satisfy itself of the quality and relevance of the University's activities.

GS1.2   C2      The Panel **commends** the University on its coherent and coordinated suite of Strategies, Action Plans and Frameworks to guide its teaching, learning and student support, including the specific requirements related to equity objectives and to student retention and achievement.

GS1.2  C3      The Panel **commends** the University on the clarity of its commitment to Māori in the Strategic Plan and with respect to Māori and Pacific development in the Equity and Diversity Strategy 2010-2014; on the endeavours made to ensure management and academic structure and leadership are appropriate to give effect to the University's plans for Māori and Pasifika students and staff; and on the manner in which provision is made in many parts of the University to try and ensure distinctive learning styles are recognised and specific needs are met.

GS1.2  C4      The Panel **commends** the University's Learning Partnership initiative, noting the wide-ranging and comprehensive plans, guidelines, resources and activities which support the philosophy of learner-centred academic processes within a co-ordinated framework.

GS2.2  C5      The Panel **commends** the University on the translation of the University's commitment to its Treaty obligations into actions which support its equity objectives with respect to Māori, and on the embeddedness of mechanisms and activities to support Māori student recruitment, retention and achievement.

GS2.2  C6      The Panel **commends** the University on its commitment to Pasifika student recruitment, retention and achievement, and in particular on the Wainuiomata Pasifika Education Success Initiative and the introduction of distinctive spaces, services and programmes to support Pasifika students once enrolled.

GS3.3  C7      The Panel **commends** the University's work in developing its new Graduate Profile, the consultation with both staff and students which underpins the development, the manner in which the connections between the Profile, graduate attributes and graduate outcomes are being mapped from course level to institutional level and the opportunities which are being provided to enable students to acquire co-curricular attributes.

GS3.6  C8      The Panel **commends** the University on its suite of academic handbooks which comprehensively and clearly set out expectations and requirements for programme development, approval and review and for assessment, thereby forming a set of guidelines for all staff. This commendation refers to the Programme and Course Design Handbook, the Academic Approvals Handbook, the Evaluation and Review Handbook, the Assessment Handbook and the Quality and Management Framework for Student Learning which provides the overarching approach to ensuring academic quality.

GS4.2  C9      The Panel **commends** the University on the development of the Student Mentoring Framework, and in particular on the introduction of Te Pūtahi Atawhai peer mentoring programme across the University and for the success which is evident for students who use this service.

GS6.2    C10      The Panel **commends** the University on its success in raising the profile and valuing of excellence in teaching during a period of significant focus on improving institutional research output.

GS6.4    C11      The Panel **commends** the University for its strong commitment to the development of teaching excellence. In particular, the Panel commends the work of the Centre for Academic Development (CAD) and the ways in which CAD involves teaching staff in its activities, and for its support of projects to embed new technologies for teaching and learning and to communicate good teaching practice, including support of projects to develop teaching capability, the Ako Victoria conference days and the staff-led VicTeach initiative.

GS7    C12      The Panel **commends** the University on the establishment of the Faculty of Graduate Research and on the progress which has been made in addressing the issues identified in 2008. In particular, the Panel commends the Doctoral Policy and the Master's Thesis Policy as examples of good practice in documenting relevant requirements comprehensively and clearly in a single location.

## Affirmations

GS1.4    A1      The Panel **affirms** the University's efforts to improve integration of the four Wellington sites in terms of providing physical environments and facilities which are comparable but also address discipline-specific needs.

GS1.6    A2      The Panel **affirms** the University's work in preparing for the management of a significant disruption to its activities, and for steps taken to facilitate business continuity. It endorses the maintenance of an off-site back-up data centre.

GS3.3    A3      The Panel **affirms** the University's development of e-portfolios as a tool for students to record and evaluate their own progress towards acquiring graduate attributes, and supports the University's efforts to encourage academic staff to incorporate use of e-portfolios into their teaching and learning approaches.

GS4.2    A4      The Panel **affirms** the University on the development of its overarching Student Retention Plan and Student Retention Implementation Plan, and on the systematic reporting of achievements related to equity groups targeted by the Plans.

GS4.4    A5      The Panel **affirms** the University's introduction of the Course Signals system and encourages a systematic evaluation of its effectiveness from the perspective of both the University and its students.

GS6.1    A6      The Panel **affirms** the University's approach to staff induction, including the pre-arrival advice and online modules and the use of evidence-based resources for new academic staff.

GS7.3   A7   The Panel **affirms** the University's review of progress reporting of doctoral and master's research. It encourages the University to articulate its resultant expectations about acceptable procedure and use of reports within the Doctoral Policy and also encourages the University to incorporate institutional monitoring of potential trends and issues which might be systemic either within a school or faculty, or across the institution.

## Recommendations

GS1.5   R1   The Panel **recommends** that the University gives priority to the systematic implementation of the Action Plan within its Vision and Strategy for Digital Learning and Teaching at Victoria 2012–2017, including development of feasible timelines, responsibilities and target objectives or stages.

GS2.3   R2   The Panel **recommends** the University give priority to completing the Course Information Project and the review of academic advice in order to enhance the quality, reliability and consistency of academic advising across the University.

GS3.5   R3   The Panel **recommends** that the University develops a high-level benchmarking statement which sets out the objectives and potential strategies whereby staff might assure themselves that programmes, curricula and assessment are benchmarked to prevailing national and international standards.

GS3.6   R4   The Panel **recommends** that the University reviews the mechanisms used by staff to moderate undergraduate assessment tasks, expectations and standards with an objective of identifying, developing and sharing good practice and formulating some principles for moderation.

GS3.7   R5   The Panel **recommends** the responsibility for overall quality assurance of programmes offered overseas, including teaching quality and learning outcomes, is part of the quality assurance portfolio of the DVC (Academic) (or successor role) in order to ensure oversight of the processes used to achieve equivalence as well as to ensure cultural needs and constraints are provided for.

GS3.8   R6   The Panel **recommends** that the University gives priority to its Enhancement Initiative No. 7, to develop an academic integrity strategy which addresses, in a systematic way, prevention, detection and management of academic misconduct and which includes the development of good practice examples of academic integrity education and identification of good assessment practices which minimise opportunity for plagiarism.

GS5.5   R7   The Panel **recommends** that the University gives urgent attention to implementation of the system initiated in 2014 to require course outlines to include feedback to students regarding the outcomes and actions taken as a consequence of responses from course evaluations.

GS7.3　R8　　　The Panel **recommends** that the University develop a protocol within thesis progress reporting processes that ensures that individual issues are managed confidentially and effectively, but which also provides an avenue for centralised notification of issues which might be serious, systemic or point to problems with University processes.

# Acknowledgments

The Panel thanks in particular Professor Grant Guilford, Vice-Chancellor of Victoria University of Wellington, for his warm welcome to the University. Appreciation is also extended to the Victoria staff who hosted the Panel.

The preparation and submission of the University's Self-review Portfolio was managed by Professor Penny Boumelha, Dr Leanne Ivil and Mr Martin Boswell. AQA is grateful for their assistance throughout the audit process. The effort of all those who contributed to the University's self-assessment process, preparation of the Self-review Report and the organisation associated with the site visit is appreciated.

The Panel is most grateful for the open interaction and frank comments and observations of all those staff, students, Council members and stakeholders who gave their time to appear before it during the site visit. The Panel also appreciated the access the University provided to discussion papers which were at an early stage of development and, as such, were as yet confidential to the University.

# Audit Panel

| | |
|---|---|
| Professor Robert Hannah<br>*Chair of the Panel* | University of Waikato |
| Emeritus Professor Mairéad Browne | Education Consultant, Australia |
| Associate Professor Lindsey Conner | University of Canterbury |
| Professor Marion Jones | AUT University |
| Professor Hirini Matunga | Lincoln University |

**Secretariat**

| | |
|---|---|
| Dr Jan Cameron | Director<br>Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities |
| Heather Kirkwood | Deputy Director (Finance and Communications)<br>Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities |

# The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA) was established by New Zealand universities in 1994, as the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit. It is an independent body whose purpose is to contribute to the advancement of 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.

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

The 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 has been assessed as adhering to the INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice in Quality Assurance.

Further information is available from the AQA website: www.aqa.ac.nz.

## Cycle 5 Academic Audit Process

Key principles underpinning academic audits carried out by AQA are:

- peer review
- evidence-based
- externally benchmarked
- enhancement-led.

Audits are carried out by panels of trained auditors who are selected from universities' senior academic staff and other professionals with knowledge of academic auditing and evaluation, and who have been approved by the AQA Board. Each panel includes at least one overseas external auditor. An audit begins with a process of self-review leading to an audit portfolio that the university uses to report on its progress towards achieving the goals and objectives related to the focus of the audit. The audit panel verifies the portfolio through documentary analysis, interviews and site visits.

Final audit reports of New Zealand universities are publicly available. Reports commend good practice and make recommendations intended to assist the university in its own programme of continuous improvement. For New Zealand universities, progress on the recommendations is submitted to the AQA Board in a follow-up report 12 months later. A further report on progress in

implementing the recommendations of the previous audit also forms part of the self-review process in the next audit round.

## Cycle 5 Academic Audit Framework

The Cycle 5 academic audit is framed around academic activities related to teaching and learning and student support. The key **Academic Activity Themes** which have been identified and which form the framework for both the self-review and the academic audit are:

1. Leadership and Management of Teaching and Learning
2. Student Profile: Access, Transition and Admission Processes
3. Curriculum and Assessment
4. Student Engagement and Achievement
5. Student Feedback and Support
6. Teaching Quality
7. Supervision of Research Students.

The audit framework covers activities and quality assurance processes which might be expected as fundamental in a contemporary university of good standing. The framework articulates these expectations in a series of Guideline Statements.

For each academic activity theme, universities are expected to address not just whether they do undertake the activities or processes identified in the Guideline Statements, but also evaluate how well they do so, and on what evidence they base their own self-evaluation. From their own self-evaluation, areas and strategies for improvement might be identified. The Cycle 5 Academic Audit Handbook provides more information on the kinds of evidence and indicators which may be appropriate for each expectation referred to in the Guideline Statements.

Throughout the academic activity areas identified in the framework, attention should be paid to such features as different modes of delivery and acknowledgement of learner diversity (e.g., international students; on-campus/off-campus). Unless otherwise stated, all activities and processes relate to postgraduate as well as undergraduate study. Where appropriate, specific attention might be paid to special student groups (e.g., Māori students, international students) but unless otherwise stated it is assumed processes discussed apply to all students similarly.

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