

Report of the 2015 Academic Audit of The Auckland University of Technology – Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau

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

March 2016

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

AQA

Academic
QualityAgency
For New Zealand Universities

**Report of the 2015 Academic Audit of
The Auckland University of Technology – Te
Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau**

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

2016

Postal address
P O Box 5787
Lambton Quay
Wellington 6145
New Zealand

Location
Level 9
142 Lambton Quay
Wellington 6011
New Zealand

Website
www.aqa.ac.nz

ISBN 978-0-9922528-6-1

© 2016 Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities
Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa

Foreword

The 2015 audit of the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) is the fourth academic audit of the University carried out by the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA).¹ The University was last audited in 2011, 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.²

The current (fifth) audit cycle focuses on teaching and learning and student support, including postgraduate.

The methodology adopted for the 2015 audit of the Auckland University of Technology is that used for all New Zealand universities in this cycle of audits. 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).

AQA academic audits draw on a 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, where appropriate, external stakeholders. The Auckland University of Technology submitted its Self-review Portfolio, including a report and key supporting documentation in both print and electronic form, in early August 2015. The Self-review Report included links to documents organised by the University in an electronic depository for the purpose of the audit. Further documents were provided on request as needed, some being tabled at the time of the site visit.

These various sources and resources enabled 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 [2012-2016] Strategic Plan and associated documents to provide the context for this audit.

The Chair of the audit Panel and the AQA Director visited the University for a pre-audit planning meeting in September 2015, when they met with the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and other staff.

The full Panel of five auditors, including an international auditor, came together in Auckland on 16 November 2015 for the site visit on 17-19 November. In total, during the site visit the Panel spoke

¹ The audits of Cycle 1 in 1995-1998 took place before the Auckland University of Technology became a university. Hence, the Auckland University of Technology's first academic audit as a university was during Cycle 2.

² The New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit changed its name to the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities from 1 January 2013.

with 100 staff and 28 students from the City, North and South Campuses, as well as five members of the University Council.

This report presents the Panel's findings, based on the evidence it has considered. The AQA's conclusions are phrased as recommendations, affirmations and commendations, defined as follows:

Recommendations - refer to areas where the audit Panel believes the University would benefit from making some improvements or changes. Recommendations alert the University to what the Panel believes needs to be addressed, not to how this is done. The Panel may indicate some priority for recommendations by noting a need for action as urgent.

Affirmations - refer to areas which the University has already identified for itself in its Self-review Report or during the site visit as requiring attention, and about which the University has already taken action but does not yet have sufficient outcome to evaluate impact. Affirmations are in effect a validation by the audit Panel that something needs to be done and that the approach taken is likely to be effective.

Commendations - refer to examples of exceptionally good practice, or to examples of effective innovative practice, in areas which have or should result in enhancements to academic quality or to processes underpinning academic quality and which should produce positive impacts on teaching, learning and student experience.

The report is released under the authorisation of the AQA Board.

Dr Jan Cameron

Director

Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

March 2016

Executive Summary

Established in 2000, the Auckland University of Technology operates from a campus in central Auckland City, with campuses elsewhere in Auckland: the South Campus (Manukau), the North Campus (Akoranga North Shore) and the AUT Millennium (an institute for Sport and Health at Albany). The Auckland University of Technology also has a small site dedicated to refugee education at the Mangere Refugee Reception Centre in South Auckland.

In 2014 the University had a total enrolment of 28,314 students (19,582 EFTS) and 2,204 full-time equivalent staff. Overall, the Auckland University of Technology's academic offerings span a wide range of programmes from pre-degree to doctoral level.

The University was audited by the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA) in 2015. The 2015 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. The AQA audit methodology incorporates a framework of 40 Guideline Statements which articulate the qualities or standards which a contemporary university of good international standing might be expected to demonstrate.

Prior to 2015, the Auckland University of Technology was most recently audited by AQA (as the then New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit) in 2011. 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 2011 recommendations.

From the Panel's assessment, the Auckland University of Technology is characterised by a philosophy which is widely understood by staff and is directly translated into practice. In particular, it is collegial, inclusive, focused on providing opportunity and is genuinely centred on teaching, learning and student engagement. The Panel found many examples of activity and approaches to decision-making which reflected a respect for diversity and a desire to be responsive to variations in need by discipline, location or learning and teaching practices.

A risk management issue emanating from the above approach, identified by the Panel, is a need to ensure that coherence and consistency are not compromised for activities which are institution-wide, but possibly administered at school or campus level. With respect to this risk, the Panel has recommended that the University review its processes for providing academic advice by faculty; for communicating processes for managing academic appeals and grievances; for ensuring induction of new staff is appropriate; and for coordinating the professional development and sharing of good practice for teachers.

The Panel was impressed by the extent to which activity at the Auckland University of Technology across a wide spectrum of areas is evidence-based and data-driven. Adoption of a series of dashboards and the School Scorecard enables staff at all levels to access data appropriate to their areas of responsibility, from individual course evaluation to aggregate data on such topics as student achievement by specific socio-cultural group. Use of data to inform planning and decision-making was evident.

The University has received several commendations which reflect its core focus on student learning and student engagement. The Panel has commended its systematic, internationally benchmarked approach to learning space design; the success of its commitment to work-integrated learning; its comprehensive and coordinated approach to addressing education about and management of academic integrity; its proactive and evidence-based approaches to enhancing student engagement; and its initiatives in meeting the technological needs of students. The Panel affirms the University's introduction of an institutional graduate profile and its participation in international benchmarking initiatives related to assessment and learning outcomes.

The University is urged to develop its risk management portfolio to identify risk events which might impede teaching, learning, research and associated academic activities over an extended period and to ensure that plans and procedures are in place to expedite business continuity in the event of such a disruption.

The Auckland University of Technology promotes opportunity, inclusiveness and equity in ways which the Panel assessed as commendable. In addition to the range of support services provided for Māori, Pasifika, disabled and international students, the University specifically identifies and provides for the obligations of Māori and Pasifika staff within its workload models; its marae is widely used by staff and students of any identity; it has a Chinese Centre and an Arabic-speaking academic adviser; the new South Campus at Manukau and University transport provision to the City Campus has enabled increased numbers of Māori and Pasifika students to attend university; and targeted Vice-Chancellor's Doctoral Scholarships encourage high-achieving Māori and Pasifika students to embark on an academic career. The Auckland University of Technology is also a recipient of the national "Rainbow Tick" for supporting LGBTI people.³

The University has very good processes and procedures for management of postgraduate research, from admission to final examination and has good support for postgraduate students. It has robust processes in place to ensure that postgraduate research students are supervised by staff who are well prepared through supervisory training, monitoring, mentoring and workload management and by careful appointment of supervision teams. However, while acknowledging that significant progress had been made since the Cycle 4 audit, the Cycle 5 Panel nevertheless reiterated the Cycle 4 audit concerns about the need to develop the research capacity of staff. In particular, the Cycle 5 Panel assessed the unevenness of research experience as potentially resulting in uneven supervision workloads, which is undesirable for staff and also could potentially constrain supervision access for students.

The University identified 13 enhancements, a number of which the Panel specifically endorsed. A number of major developments in progress were also noted. The audit Panel has made 11 commendations, 3 affirmations and 6 recommendations.

³ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex.

Contents

Foreword.....	i
Executive Summary.....	iii
Contents.....	v
List of Key Terms and Acronyms.....	vi
Preface.....	1
University Profile.....	1
Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan.....	3
1. Leadership and Management of Teaching and Learning.....	5
2. Student Profile: Access, Transition and Admission Processes.....	14
3. Curriculum and Assessment.....	20
4. Student Engagement and Achievement.....	33
5. Student Feedback and Support.....	38
6. Teaching Quality.....	46
7. Supervision of Research Students.....	54
Conclusion.....	62
Commendations.....	62
Affirmations.....	64
Recommendations.....	64
Acknowledgments.....	66
Audit Panel.....	66
The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities.....	67
Cycle 5 Academic Audit Process.....	67
Cycle 5 Academic Audit Framework.....	68

List of Key Terms and Acronyms

AQA	Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities
AR	The University's most recent (2014) Annual Report
ARION	Administration and Registry Information On-Line student management system
AuSM	Auckland Student Movement @AUT
AUSSE	Australasian Survey of Student Engagement
CfLAT	Centre for Learning and Teaching
CUAP	Universities New Zealand Committee on University Academic Programmes
EFTS	Equivalent Full-Time Student(s)
EPI	Educational Performance Indicator
FTE	Full-time Equivalent (staff)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
Panel	Unless otherwise specified, "the Panel" refers to the Academic Audit Panel engaged by AQA to conduct the 2015 audit of the Auckland University of Technology
POSSE	Postgraduate Survey of Student Engagement
PVC	Pro-Vice-Chancellor
SD	Supporting document (forms part of the University's Self-review Portfolio)
SP	The University's Strategic Plan
SR	Self-review Report
SSP	Statement of Service Performance
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission

Preface

The Auckland University of Technology was established in 2000. Formerly the Auckland Institute of Technology, it has a history going back to 1895 when the original Auckland Technical School opened. The School was renamed Auckland Technical College in 1906.⁴ In 2015 the University operated from a campus in central Auckland City, with campuses elsewhere in Auckland: the South Campus (Manukau), the North Campus (Akoranga North Shore) and the AUT Millennium (an institute for Sport and Health at Albany). The University also has a small site dedicated to refugee education at the Mangere Refugee Reception Centre in South Auckland.

University Profile

In 2014 the University had a total enrolment of 28,314 students (19,582 EFTS) and 2,204 full-time equivalent staff, currently the second largest New Zealand university.⁵ The City Campus (19,000 students; 13,000 EFTS) and South Campus (approx. 2,000 students; 1,000 EFTS) offer a range of disciplines. The North Shore Campus (approx. 7,250 students; 4,500 EFTS) is focused primarily on health, sports science and education, while the Millennium Institute provides opportunities for postgraduate study alongside training, research and coaching activities.

Off shore, the Auckland University of Technology offers the first two years of its Bachelor of Computer and Information Sciences at the International University - National University in Vietnam. It also teaches some programmes in China and in the Cook Islands.

In New Zealand in 2014, 78% of AUT enrolments (14,506 EFTS) were in undergraduate degree-level programmes, approximately 7% in pre-degree programmes and 15% in postgraduate programmes. The majority (81%) of AUT students are domestic.⁶

Ten percent of domestic students identified as Māori and 13% identified as Pacific students. More than this number - 5,104 students or 24% of total enrolment - identified as Asian. Of international students, the largest group comes from China (48%), followed by India (10%). The Auckland University of Technology has 50% more female than male students (12,758 female; 8,234 male). Just under a third of students (30%) study part-time.

Of the 2,204 staff (FTE) reported in 2014, half (1,083 or 49%) were teaching and research staff.⁷

In 2014 5.4% (59 FTE) of academic staff and 6.9% (77 FTE) of allied staff identified as Māori and 3.1% (34 FTE) of academic staff and 8% (90 FTE) of allied staff identified as Pacific.⁸ However the University's KPI for Māori and Pacific staff refers only to senior appointments. It reported a small

⁴ www.aut.ac.nz/about-aut/aut-timeline accessed 30.11.15.

⁵ Self-review Report p85; Annual Report p17 (henceforth referred to as SR and AR).

⁶ Percentages calculated from AR, p13-14. Total students for EFTS by qualification is 18,595.

⁷ AR, p17.

⁸ Data provided by the University on request 08.01.16.

increase in the number of senior Pacific staff from two in 2013 to four in 2014. The number of senior Māori staff declined from 13 in 2013 to 10 in 2014.⁹

The University's academic offerings span a wide range of programmes from pre-degree to doctoral level.

The Auckland University of Technology is structured academically as five faculties, each headed by a Dean (all of whom are also Pro-Vice-Chancellors with a specific University-wide responsibility):

- Faculty of Business and Law
- Faculty of Culture and Society
- Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences
- Faculty of Design and Creative Technologies
- Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Development (Te Ara Poutama).

The management team reporting to the Vice-Chancellor comprises the:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor
- Dean of Business and Law who is also the Pro-Vice-Chancellor AUT South
- Dean of Culture and Society who is also the Pro-Vice-Chancellor International
- Dean of Health and Environmental Sciences who is also the Pro-Vice-Chancellor AUT North
- Dean of Design and Creative Technologies who is also the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Student Success
- Tumuaki, Māori and Indigenous Development (Te Ara Poutama) who is also the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Māori Advancement and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation
- Head of Finance and Infrastructure
- Head of Corporate Governance and Development
- Head of Strategy, Students and Marketing.

The Dean of Postgraduate Studies, Academic Director, Librarian and Head of Pacific Advancement report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

The academic committee structure which flows from Academic Board comprises:

- Programme Approval and Review Committee
- Learning and Teaching Committee
- Research Committee
- Scholarships and Awards Committee
- University Postgraduate Board
- Library Advisory Committee
- International Committee
- Faculty Boards.

Academic Board has authority to establish and disestablish committees and boards as it sees fit.¹⁰ In addition, the AUT Ethics Committee, which reports to Council, oversees all research and student research projects which involve human participants. This committee is accredited by the Health Research Council of New Zealand.

⁹ AR, p41.

¹⁰ Terms of Reference, Academic Board.

Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan

The Auckland University of Technology relates its contemporary mission to its heritage as a provider of vocational education relevant to the needs of its region. Its values are integrity, respect and compassion and its motto *Tāwhaitia te ara o te tika, te pono me te aroha, kia piki ki te taumata tiketike, Follow the path of integrity, respect, and compassion; scale the heights of achievement* reflects these values.¹¹ In addition to fostering learning and discovery, the University aims to promote the wellbeing of people and their environments, and provide them with opportunities to expand and achieve their aspirations. This intention permeates the objectives and strategies of the Strategic Plan.

In its Strategic Plan the Auckland University of Technology describes itself as a university for the changing world. The Strategic Plan emphasises a collegial, diverse, inclusive institution which is engaged with issues of national and international importance. The University's strategic aims are to provide a high quality learning experience, inspired by innovative teaching that promotes both educational and career success, and which is stimulated by research that advances intellectual debate, discovery and change. The Strategic Plan refers to the University's "active relationships" externally, the qualities of its graduates and staff, and a culture which "is inclusive, collegial and challenging".¹²

The major project in train at the time of the audit was the continued development of the South Campus at Manukau. At the time of the previous audit this campus had been in operation only a year (it opened in 2010). The initial development responded to the challenges of an area that at the time was reported to have the lowest university participation rates in New Zealand.¹³ In 2011, 50% of the 500 students were Pacific people and 15% Māori. In 2014 the campus hosted over 2,000 students (1,300 EFTS) and provided courses from all faculties.¹⁴

The Auckland University of Technology is very clear that its primary focus is the education of its students, their learning experience and their success.¹⁵ The objectives of the Strategic Plan fall under five headings, which might be summarised as follows.

Learning and Teaching:

- to provide an enriched and rewarding student experience;
- to provide a relevant, high quality curriculum;
- to advance educational opportunities and success in the diverse communities of Auckland and New Zealand;
- to grow postgraduate programmes.

Research and Scholarship:

- to create a vibrant academic learning community;
- to grow national and international research impact.

¹¹ AR p10; Strategic Plan 2012-2016, p1 (henceforth referred to as SP).

¹² SP, p1.

¹³ Cycle 4 Academic Audit Report, p13.

¹⁴ SR, p3.

¹⁵ SP, p3.

Staff:

- to ensure the University is a vibrant, achievement-oriented and rewarding place to work;
- to grow the University's capability and performance.

Engagement with Communities:

- to contribute to the social, cultural, environmental and economic wellbeing and development of Auckland and New Zealand;
- to promote individual and community transformation through education;
- to promote Māori potential and educational success;
- to promote the advancement of Pacific peoples.

Continuous Development:

- to ensure the University's enduring viability;
- to ensure the University's facilities, technology and infrastructure create a vibrant environment for teaching, learning, research and administration;
- to build the University's reputation for the benefit of students, staff and the community.

The Strategic Plan represents the connections between objectives, strategy and vision diagrammatically, all leading towards a vision of:

- excellent scholars and sought-after graduates;
- wider participation and success in education;
- a stronger reputation of the University;
- educated citizens igniting change in their communities;
- research that inspires curiosity, advances knowledge and benefits communities.

In addition to outlining the strategies whereby the University will work towards its objectives, the Strategic Plan also identifies 29 "levers for change" which will drive success. Those relevant to the focus of this academic audit are referred to in later sections of this report.

1. Leadership and Management of Teaching and Learning

As described in the Preface, the Auckland University of Technology's leadership and management structure is similar to that found in other New Zealand universities, with the exception that the five faculty deans also hold Pro-Vice-Chancellor pan-institutional portfolio responsibilities. The Panel was told that this decision was explicitly to ensure deans function with a pan-university perspective, mitigating any risk of faculty-confined interests. If there are tensions these are seen as constructive tensions. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor convenes a PVC group to assist with coordination of academic activity and address pan-university academic issues.

The Panel explored the effectiveness of the dual-role model, both with the Deans themselves and with other staff. Responses were consistently reassuring that the two roles were compatible, that any conflict between roles was minimal or non-existent and was not an issue, and that the University had appropriate support structures in place to manage and support the dual workloads.

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.

Key academic decisions are made by committees or designated roles and executive portfolio holders. For committees, the delegated responsibilities are stated clearly within the committee terms of reference. In some cases the committee's authority is limited to recommendations to Academic Board, which is the institutional decision-maker on academic matters. In other cases, for example the Examination Boards, faculty appeals committees and the University Postgraduate Board, the committee itself has decision-making authority. The overarching framework for academic committees and regulations is articulated in the General Academic Regulations.¹⁶

The Panel was told that decision-making practice at the Auckland University of Technology endeavours to retain central authority for activities which must be institutionally consistent and coherent, with devolved or delegated decision-making to areas or roles where particularities must be reflected. The Panel was told that within the dispersed model, if inappropriate inconsistencies emerge these are quickly identified via the DVC/PVC group or central committees. This emphasis on decision-making based on a shared understanding of the principles underlying a decision while also facilitating flexibility and responsiveness was described by a number of staff as reflecting an ethos of "unity not uniformity" and "standards not standardisation".

The Panel noted a 2012 internal audit of financial and employment-related delegations which observed the following strengths:

- authority is given to a position, not a person;
- levels of delegation are set to allow staff to engage in their daily routine operations;
- channels of escalation in the event of non-compliance are understood.¹⁷

¹⁶ 2015 Calendar p88ff.

¹⁷ SR, p8.

The University also notes that the student management system, Administration and Registry Information On-Line (ARION), has inbuilt controls such that a decision may be signed off only by staff with the appropriate authority to do so. ARION also facilitates an audit trail of any legitimate decisions which override regulation requirements. ARION is thus a very helpful form of risk management.

At faculty level delegation schedules exist within the overall responsibilities of a faculty. Where a final authority rests with the Faculty Board or a Board of Studies the faculty schedules make clear which actions may or may not be delegated.¹⁸

However, notwithstanding the above systems and initiatives, the Panel still did not gain a clear view of where decision-making authority actually resided for all academic actions at an institutional level. The University acknowledged this in its Self-review Report, proposing an enhancement to “improve the recording of delegations for academic decision-making and the accessibility to this information”.¹⁹ The Panel agrees. The table produced for the audit will be a useful start to this exercise.²⁰

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.

The Auckland University of Technology does not have a plethora of planning documents. Rather, the Strategic Plan is considered to provide over-arching direction. It is supported by the Investment Plan 2015-2017 and is given effect by operational and business plans of operational units, committees and specific roles. The staff who were questioned about planning were clear about the purpose of the over-arching plan, and demonstrated a clear understanding of the University’s core objectives. Associate Deans Postgraduate from the faculties recounted how their collective discussions assisted with planning, policy deliberations and other pan-university activity related to their portfolios. The devolution of detailed planning is consistent with the University’s ethos of “unity not uniformity” and its desire to be flexible and sufficiently nimble to innovate and respond readily to change. However it is apparent that opportunities exist to consider the whole, and the Panel perceived that wide consultation is normal in planning development. This includes staff from all campuses.

Performance measures for the Strategic Plan are the “levers for change” listed in support of the objectives. Each lever has one or more Key Performance Indicators, which are aligned with the Tertiary Education Strategy and are detailed in the Statement of Service Performance.²¹ While all objectives in the Strategic Plan function in a coherent way to support teaching and learning, as the core mission of the University, the main performance indicators proposed as levers for change related to teaching and learning have been specified as:

¹⁸ Delegation schedules, individual faculties; sample Dean’s delegated authority schedule.

¹⁹ SR, p18.

²⁰ SR, pp9-10.

²¹ AR, p23ff.

- build a diverse student profile;
- improve the University's performance in the national Educational Performance Indicator (EPI) results;
- significantly invest in the physical and virtual infrastructure supporting teaching and learning;
- enhance support services and resources for students;
- enhance engagement and satisfaction of students;
- increase South Campus to more than 4,000 EFTS by 2020 (subject to funding);
- continue to build Māori and Pacific participation;
- improve the EPI results for Māori and Pacific students; and
- strengthen and benchmark the University's international reputation in teaching and research.²²

The University's current Strategic Plan 2012-2016 is due to be reviewed and revised in late 2015-2016.

The University claims that monitoring of performance is "fully embedded" in internal and external reporting practice. To assist with this, the University has invested significantly in information systems and data collection. As will emerge during later chapters of this audit report, the Panel heard about the use of data related to performance objectives from a number of staff in different roles in the University. The Panel believes the University's claim is justified. The Panel also received a demonstration of the School Scorecard dashboard derived from information held in the data warehouse system. The data warehouse system facilitates a progressive build of data, inclusion of data from other sources (the Panel was told there are currently 51 sources of data) and several levels of aggregation or disaggregation. It is also designed to operate in real time and to be accessible and transparent to any staff in the University in ways which are directly relevant to their areas of interest (for example, distribution of survey scores at course level; or educational performance by priority student group by programme). Development of a mobile app for phones is being explored. Staff talked about the confidence they have in knowing data are up-to-date and relevant. In the Panel's view the extent to which planning, decision-making, monitoring activity and subsequent action across the academic and administrative spectrum is data-driven at the Auckland University of Technology is impressive.

Also impressive was the way in which staff from the Vice-Chancellor down, as well as Council members, gave consistent accounts of the University's objectives, strategies and strengths including, in particular, the need and capacity to be flexible and innovative in responding both to challenges and to opportunities, and also to the priority placed on being student-focused, prioritising excellent teaching and enhancing student opportunity and success.

Commendation: The Panel *commends* the University on its data-driven approach to planning, decision-making, monitoring, analysis and reporting across the spectrum of its academic and administrative activities and on the widespread use made of the Scorecard Dashboard.

²² SR, p11.

1.3 Student input

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

The majority of University committees or boards, including Council, include one or more student members. Usually these are appointed as nominees of the Auckland Student Movement@AUT (AuSM). AuSM may appoint one of its paid staff members to sit on committees. The University relies on AuSM to represent the interests of all students. At faculty, school and programme level students have input via committees, boards or informal consultation (for example, meetings with the Dean) and students also meet with the Vice-Chancellor and the senior leadership team. The Panel also heard about consultation with students specific to plans or initiatives the University was considering – for example, consultation with Māori students regarding spaces in the Library; consultation with students about development of learning spaces; involvement in ICT planning (see section 1.5).

The University indicates that it is sometimes difficult gaining adequate student participation by students on boards and committees, due to their competing commitments. The Auckland University of Technology would not be alone in experiencing this challenge. To address it, the University is considering finding ways of formally recognising student participation (Enhancement 1.2).²³ The Panel endorses this proposal.

Notwithstanding the difficulty noted by the University, the Panel was very impressed by the number and contribution of students, both undergraduate and postgraduate, who attended the interview sessions during the site visit. This was considered even more remarkable given that for most of them the academic year had already finished.

Feedback by students is also considered in section 5.5.

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.

The Auckland University of Technology is predominantly a campus-based institution with teaching and learning supported by flexible and collaborative spaces and a digital infrastructure. The Strategic Plan places a major emphasis on the provision of a safe, attractive, effective learning and teaching environment and on the provision of appropriate technology and infrastructure. In recent years the University has given effect to its objectives, paying considerable attention to the physical learning environment and seeking to ensure it is sufficiently flexible and future-proofed to cope with changing needs, expectations and teaching approaches.

Student input to infrastructure planning was sought in the 2012 Campus Asset Management Plan development process. The capital asset management procedures were externally audited in 2013, resulting in further policies and procedures around asset management. Consultation on building

²³ SR, p18.

projects is wide-ranging and an Academic Spaces Standing Group has been established to provide guidance on building projects. This group comprises the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (or delegate), Director of Learning and Teaching, Director of Space Management, ICT Client Services Director, Director Asset Development, a delegate from Academic Staff and other academic staff, architects and technical experts as necessary. The group has a mandate to:

- create a framework for academic space development that is aligned with University directions;
- establish teaching and learning space standards based on sound pedagogical and technical principles;
- identify teaching, learning and research space needs at the University;
- establish priorities for upgrading and repairing academic spaces that can be funded;
- ensure that existing and new teaching and learning spaces respect the standards;
- investigate and assess new teaching and learning technologies (together with the Centre for Learning and Teaching);
- set priorities for the development of new academic spaces;
- set priorities for the upgrade of existing academic spaces;
- commission consultation exercises in relation to the objectives, and specific developments;
- recommend funding for the creation, upgrading and maintaining of academic spaces and installing equipment and technology;
- ensure sufficient operating funding to maintain the equipment and technology being installed.²⁴

Once completed, feedback on effectiveness of spaces is sought from students and staff through surveys, student representatives and informal staff report. These processes are all directed at ensuring building developments are appropriate for teaching and learning needs.

The University's major new building development on the City Campus (the Sir Paul Reeves Building) was the outcome of extensive research internationally. A recognition that students would benefit by having more inclusive and coordinated service provision, and that space use would be rationalised if services were brought together into a Student Hub in this building has created interest in reproducing the design principles on both the North and the South Campuses. Staff who are located on those campuses were enthusiastic in their appreciation of this intention.²⁵ The Panel was told by students that the new city building had made a big impact on student experience, enhancing open access to learning spaces, with different types of spaces available and opening hours responsive to student needs. Staff indicated their appreciation of specific space developments related to their discipline areas and of the consultation which had been involved.

Like the Academic Spaces Standing Group, the ICT Strategic Steering Committee also involves senior academics along with senior management staff to provide guidance around ICT developments. The University is in the process of introducing very high bandwidth connectivity for staff engaged in big data research. In addition to streamlining timetabling of classes and exams, introduction of

²⁴ SR, p15. Terms of Reference of Academic Spaces Standing Group.

²⁵ See Student Hub concept paper, May 2015.

SyllabusPlus has enabled staff to identify room types and use space more effectively.²⁶ The Panel was told that by minimising clashes SyllabusPlus had assisted with improving overall student experience. The Panel also heard about initiatives to assist students with technology, such as the laptop dispensing system and the 24/7 accessibility of computer labs.

Commendation: The Panel *commends* the University on its systematic, evidence-based, internationally benchmarked approach to learning space design, on its consultative processes, on its identification and replication of effective space utilisation and design principles and for its initiatives to assist students with technological needs.

1.5 Information resources

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

The Auckland University of Technology has a physical library on each of its three teaching campuses. These are open for 86 hours a week, with increased hours during the last four weeks of each semester. Increasingly library resources and services are accessed online. The University reports a number of processes which underpin library resource and service planning. Library impact assessments are required for all new programme proposals.

Library staff are alert to pedagogical developments. It is noted that most of the 13 academic liaison librarians have teaching qualifications (in addition to Librarian qualifications). Library staff are also members of a number of key academic committees. Ongoing evaluation of library resources and services occurs via several means, including surveys, feedback, workshops, trials of new online resources and monitoring resource requests by staff and students. The Panel heard about the Library of the Future Project which is aimed at ensuring library staff continue to be responsive and change-ready.

Library resources for individual papers are accessible through the AUTonline (Blackboard) learning management system. The University requires all papers to have a Blackboard presence and has guidelines on what should be included within the minimum threshold. Library staff provide workshops on information literacy, targeting specific groups up to doctoral level students. Information skills training is also provided by the Library as part of a number of first year papers.

The Library is externally benchmarked through, *inter alia*, the LATN e-Client Services Survey, the Ithaka S+R Local Faculty Survey and membership of the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL), the Council of New Zealand University Librarians (CONZUL) and the Austech network.²⁷ Such evaluations have resulted in new library initiatives, including enhanced online services and Library

²⁶ SR, p14.

²⁷ An Australian technology discussion forum www.austech.info/

social media channels.²⁸ The Panel was informed of consultation with students regarding the design of Library space.

The ICT Strategic Steering Committee, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, includes deans, representatives from the heads of school and the PVC Learning and Teaching. As noted above, this group facilitates feedback between users and ICT staff. Longer term planning is guided by the five-year Information and Communications Technology Plan 2015-2020, which in turn informs the Capital Asset Management planning process.

ICT staff have close working relationships with academic staff. In particular ICT staff work with staff from the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CfLAT) and are also involved in such pedagogically-focused organisations as Educause and CAUDIT. The Panel was told that an annual planning day which involves academic staff, students and technical partners is valued by ICT staff as a forum to explore how technology is used.

The Panel heard how IT developments, including initiatives in resource and service provision, had enhanced usability for students. Surveys of both staff and students are benchmarked against other New Zealand and Australian universities. In 2014 the Auckland University of Technology ranked top for student satisfaction and second top for staff satisfaction across these universities; a substantial improvement in student satisfaction was recorded between 2012 and 2014.²⁹

The Panel was satisfied that the Auckland University of Technology has good processes in place for ensuring consistent Library and ICT services of high standard, and for ensuring these are informed by academic and pedagogical expectations.

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.

In response to a recommendation from the Cycle 4 audit, the Auckland University of Technology has formulated a Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Procedures.³⁰ These have been in place only a short time. Similarly, the Emergency Management Plan has recently been amended following advice on the previous plan from consultants in 2014.³¹

The Policy is intended to ensure that risk management is part of the University's internal decision-making processes and governance. It outlines the scope and defines responsibilities for risk management. The Procedures focus on identifying categories of risk, their likelihood and consequent impacts. The Procedures stipulate that every staff member is responsible for the identification and

²⁸ SR, pp15-16.

²⁹ SR, p16.

³⁰ Cycle 4 Academic Audit Report, pp20-21.

³¹ Risk Management Policy; Risk Management Procedures; Emergency Management Plan.

escalation of risks as part of their role. The Group Director - Risk and Assurance is responsible for providing risk management support and guidance to other staff, maintaining the strategic risk register and providing risk reporting to the Vice-Chancellor and Council Finance and Audit Committee.

The Emergency Management Plan documents in some detail activities intended to mitigate or manage the effects of risk events. The Plan involves teams with designated responsibilities. Within the teams, responsibilities of individual members (roles) are succinct. A one-page Activation Process flow chart indicates immediate actions required from the point of a trigger event to activation of the crisis control centre. This summary also includes an activation checklist (people/roles) and an incident management response action checklist.

The Auckland University of Technology has a designated crisis control centre and an alternate venue. These designations were prompted by actual events in 2013 (IT outages). Learning from these events, the University has subsequently improved its communications systems to staff (via text messaging) and its lines of communications within different emergency management teams. The 2013 events showed that the University's security systems worked well. The University conducts annual emergency exercises, facilitated by an external consultant, to test its emergency management and business recovery plans.

The Risk Management Policy and Plan and Emergency Management Procedures appear appropriate to the kinds of risk the Auckland University of Technology is most likely to experience. The University has four sites within the Auckland area, which provide alternative venues should one become incapacitated. IT has a secondary data centre. The Panel also heard how the new scorecard technology enables the University to identify how many students are on campus at any given time. On the other hand though, from the information available to it, it was not easy for the Panel to assess how the University would respond to events such as a pandemic, or a major disruption to examinations.

The University has itself identified weaknesses in the business continuity and recovery plans which flow on from emergency management. Staff told the Panel about contact trees in all areas of the University and the identification of critical processes necessary to resumption of normal business. However development beyond that appeared uneven. Staff did not appear confident about their ability to continue or resume teaching and learning expeditiously after an emergency or risk event. A number of actions are in place or in development to address business continuity. Targeted testing of business continuity plans will be included in the next annual emergency planning exercise. The Panel agrees with the University's proposed enhancement to ensure that business continuity plans are in place for all critical groups.³² The Panel believes these must apply to all areas of the University, in particular to ensure that teaching and learning can be resumed effectively and that both staff and student research is protected. To this end the University is encouraged to avail itself of the experience of other universities who have managed such disruption over extended periods.

³² SR, p18.

Recommendation: The Panel *recommends* that the University gives priority to the identification of risk events which might impede teaching, learning, research and associated academic activities over an extended period and ensures that plans are in place, and procedures in place or available, to expedite business continuity of all core activities.

2. Student Profile: Access, Transition and Admission Processes

The Auckland University of Technology student profile in 2014 was:³³

	All students	%
Total students, Headcount	28,314	
Total students, EFTS	19,582	
Total students	Headcount	
Domestic students	81	%
International students	19	%
Total students (by ethnicity)	Headcount	
Pakeha/European students	35	%
Māori students	8	%
Pasifika students	10	%
Asian students	24	%
Other or non-declared students	23	%
Total students (by qualification enrolment)	EFTS	
Pre-degree students	8	%
Undergraduate students	77	%
Taught Postgraduate students	12	%
Research Postgraduate students	3	%

The majority (86%) of the Auckland University of Technology's domestic students come from the Auckland region. Less than half (43%) of domestic students describe themselves as Pakeha/European – 24% are Asian, 13% Pacific and 10% Māori. International students are characterised by diversity, coming from 90 different countries.³⁴

2.1 Admission and selection

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

The Auckland University of Technology's admission and selection priorities are guided directly by its strategic objectives and the University has appropriate targets and KPIs to track these. In particular, the University has targets for:

- the proportion of EFTS in degree level and postgraduate qualifications;
- the number of research EFTS and doctoral students;
- the proportion of Māori degree level and postgraduate students;
- the proportion of Pacific degree level and postgraduate students;
- the proportion of international degree level and postgraduate students;
- the proportion of international research EFTS.

³³ Calculated from AR, pp13-14 and SR pp83-85.

³⁴ SR, p19.

Senior staff have role-related responsibility for pursuing the above objectives. Faculty admission targets are set annually, to align with budgets. All the above targets for 2014 had been met or exceeded except for the proportion of students who are Māori, which was just under target.³⁵

While the University places a priority on its philosophy of providing opportunities for all students, including people who might otherwise be educationally disadvantaged, staff made it clear to the Panel that the University does not support extending these opportunities to people who are very unlikely to succeed. In its self-review the University notes its obligations under the Human Rights Act 1993 and the Fair Trading Amendment Act 2013. It benchmarks its admission and entry criteria against those of other New Zealand universities.³⁶

Admission criteria are formalised in the Calendar. Admission requirements and processes are readily accessible to students via the website.³⁷ The University also provides an Undergraduate Prospectus and Postgraduate Handbook, as well as individual study guides for faculties and the South Campus.³⁸ The website advises that “all students enrolling at AUT University should consult its official document, the AUT University Calendar [link provided] to ensure that they are aware of, and comply with all regulations, requirements and policies.”³⁹ Some programmes have selection criteria in addition to the University’s admission requirements. These are set out in the Calendar and the study guides. The website refers students to the Calendar.⁴⁰ The University has identified a need for improved linkages between website pages.⁴¹

All sections of the Calendar pertaining to admission and selection are written in language which is clear and concise. For example, in the section on Recognition of Prior Learning definitions of types of credit and reassignment of credit are unambiguous.⁴² Appeals processes are also clear within the relevant regulation (see section 5.1).⁴³

The University has quota protocols to manage entry for Māori and Pacific students who meet minimum University admission criteria but where the programme has limited places.

Analysis of acceptance and conversion data are used internally to identify areas for improvement in the selection and admission processes. The Panel heard about a conversion project which explored strategies for engaging with students between an offer and acceptance. A governance and steering group has been established to oversee enhancement work. Supporting the Admissions Governance Group, the steering group is “to lead strategy, policy and practice for all of the processes of

³⁵ SR, pp19-20.

³⁶ SR, pp20; 21.

³⁷ www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/entry-requirements and www.aut.ac.nz/about-aut/university-publications/academic-calendar accessed 031215.

³⁸ www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/2016-study-guides accessed 031215.

³⁹ www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/2016-study-guides#post accessed 031215.

⁴⁰ www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/entry-requirements/admission-to-bachelors-degrees/additional-requirements-and-selection-criteria accessed 031215; 2015 Calendar p137ff.

⁴¹ SR, pp22; 25.

⁴² 2015 Calendar pp96-98.

⁴³ For example, 2015 Calendar p91 clause 3.3; p98 clause 7.3.

recruitment, application, admissions and enrolment. It is responsible to ensure that every prospective applicant to AUT has an exceptionally positive admissions experience that results in an enrolment.”⁴⁴ The University has also engaged an external company (Hobsons) to assist with follow-up of international student enquiries and offers.

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.

The Auckland University of Technology has a particular commitment to increasing the participation of Māori and Pacific students across all disciplines and all levels of qualification.⁴⁵ As indicated in section 1.2, the data warehouse and scorecard facility enable the University to monitor closely its success in meeting these objectives. The Panel was also told that the University’s data bank enables it to develop profiles of schools in its catchment area, so that academic staff can be aware of such things as a school’s sociodemographic profile when involved in outreach activities.

In keeping with the University’s objective of providing opportunity, it has a history of providing multiple access points to study. The Self-review Report describes two of these in particular: the ACG foundation certificate for international students and the free pre-semester courses for Māori and Pacific students. It is noted that some programmes include diagnostic elements to identify learning support needs of students.⁴⁶

The Self-review Report tabulates access and transition initiatives from recruitment, during orientation and during first semester transition to study, at institution, faculty and programme level. These initiatives are wide-ranging and coherent, including the UniPrep course, school and programme information evenings at recruitment stage; specific orientation activities for target groups such as tertiary readiness programmes for Māori, Pacific and Chinese students and StudySmart for both undergraduate and postgraduate students; information workshops for LGBTI⁴⁷, mature and part-time students and for student athletes; student learning mentors; learning support; readers/writers and sign language interpreters; peer assisted study sessions and academic language and skill development programmes within first year papers (see also section 5.2).

The University’s data-based approach to service provision is evidenced in its START programme, which uses a predictive risk analysis tool to assess incoming first-year students. Those considered to be high priority for assistance with university preparedness are assigned a dedicated adviser to provide advice and connect students with any specialised support needed. In 2014, 7.5% of new students were identified as high priority through the START programme and were assigned a dedicated learning adviser.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Admissions Steering Group Terms of Reference, Draft, May 2015.

⁴⁵ SP, p6.

⁴⁶ SR, p24.

⁴⁷ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex.

⁴⁸ Student Services and Administration Impact Report 2014, p3.

The 2014 Student Services and Administration Impact Report records participation in activities and notes improvements in service provision and student uptake between 2013 and 2014. Such analyses are important in ensuring the University's efforts are appropriately targeted and produce positive outcomes.⁴⁹ According to Educational Performance Indicators (EPIs), the academic performance of students in the Māori and Pacific priority groups improved between 2012 and 2014 across almost all measures.⁵⁰

Perhaps the most significant initiative undertaken by the Auckland University of Technology in support of its equity and opportunity objectives has been the establishment of the South Campus in Manukau, an area traditionally with low university-level participation (see Preface). Over a third of students on this campus are Pacific (compared to 10% on the City Campus); 13% are Māori (compared to 7% on the City Campus).⁵¹ Specific South Campus recruitment activities are held and a designated Study Guide is available. The University plans to increase scholarship support, targeting South Auckland schools and also first-in-family students. The campus provides pre-degree (foundation) certificates, zero-fees te reo Māori classes, full degree programmes and part-degree programmes which lead into final years at the City Campus and some postgraduate programmes.⁵² A shuttle bus runs to the North Campus and City Campus, ensuring that access to transport does not constrain South Auckland students from participation on other Auckland University of Technology campuses. The University also promotes its researchers working on Pacific issues at South Campus, as "Research that matters".⁵³ The Panel heard repeated enthusiastic appraisal of the South Campus initiative and is impressed at the evident success in enhancing participation, in particular for Pacific students.

The University has student ambassadors each of whom is assigned a group of 10 to 15 first year students at Orientation. During the semester new students can contact their student ambassador to ask questions, seek advice or find out information.⁵⁴ The Panel was told that prior to the start of the semester the Student Experience Team comprising senior students contacts every first year student as a courtesy call, to discuss any support they might need.

Commendation: The Panel *commends* the University for its South Campus initiative and, in particular, on the University's success in recruiting and supporting Pacific students and endeavouring to ensure that the opportunities available for Māori and Pacific students are not unfairly constrained by location, affordability or educational inexperience.

⁴⁹ Student Services and Administration Impact Report 2014.

⁵⁰ AR, p30.

⁵¹ AR, p86.

⁵² www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/campuses/south-campus accessed 031215.

⁵³ South Campus Study Guide, p3. www.aut.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/579686/2016-South-Campus-Study-Guide-Aug.pdf accessed 031215.

⁵⁴ www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/student-ambassadors accessed 10.12.15.

2.3 Academic advice

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

The Calendar, Handbooks and Study Guides referred to in section 2.1 are the official sources of academic information for new and continuing students. As noted, these are readily accessible from the University's webpage. Other sources of information for prospective students include the Contact Centre and the University recruitment team.

Information about courses and programmes is expected to be provided by each of the academic areas, whether in print form or in AUTonline, the University's learning management system. AUTonline is also the source of information about academic procedures such as reconsideration of grades, or applications for extensions. The Panel read comments from staff who recounted their use of the ARION student management system, for example to see advice history. The information in ARION was described as comprehensive and informative.⁵⁵ The Panel learned of intentions to develop a study plan facility within the ARION system, which would enable students to track their own progress and assist with their academic decision-making.

The University has identified access to and quality of academic-related information as an area needing enhancement.⁵⁶ The Panel noted the availability of information in the resources outlined above. It endeavoured to explore more closely whether access and quality of advice (as distinct from information) is an issue and received mixed views on this. Some students commented on having difficulty obtaining academic advice but others commented that because academic staff and student advisers are so accessible to students it is never an issue getting advice. Academic staff recounted different strategies for giving academic advice such as having half hour appointment slots on a designated day, or having an open door policy.

It appeared from the interviews that the term "advice" is understood or used by academic staff in a rather loose way. There did not appear to be a clear differentiation between "information" which a student might receive with no direction of how to use that information and "advice" which is intended to direct action. This distinction is important given that a student might act on "advice" in a way which becomes binding for the student or the University for an academic decision. "Advice" thus needs quality control to mitigate risk. It is difficult to see how academic advice at the University is quality-assured when it is sought or given beyond the official institutional channels, such as academic advisers or staff in the Postgraduate Centre. The University's Self-review Report refers mostly to "academic-related information" which also glosses over any distinction between advice and information.

The Panel therefore suggests that the University's proposed enhancement be extended to address issues around advice, as well as just information. The Panel concluded that the University would benefit from a more coherent institution-wide review of academic advising to identify how accuracy, timeliness and relevance might best be quality assured. This might include a policy on academic advising which sets out, for example, what constitutes "advice", who may give advice about what

⁵⁵ Supplementary document S-03, "Using ARION to improve advice to students" (not dated).

⁵⁶ SR, p25.

and what the avenues are to address inaccurate or inappropriate advice. This approach would be consistent with the University's own identified enhancement.⁵⁷

Recommendation: The Panel *recommends* that the University reviews its systems for giving, recording and reviewing academic advice to students; and that the University considers formulating a policy and procedures for academic advising which addresses responsibilities for giving advice, recording advice and follow-up of advice where relevant.

⁵⁷ SR, p25.

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.

The Auckland University of Technology's processes for approval and review of programmes include several steps which are outlined in the Programme Approval Policy, Procedures and Guidelines. The Procedures cover all aspects of new proposals, including minor changes (definitions are sourced in the link to "The Garden" repository for academic policies, procedures and guidelines).⁵⁸ The Programme Approval and Review Committee (PARC) is responsible to Academic Board for overseeing approval and review processes.

The Programme Approval Guidelines provide helpful prompts and advice to developers of programmes which will require Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) approval. For example, the Guidelines advise staff writing proposals to become familiar with similar qualifications elsewhere in New Zealand and overseas, as well as with other AUT proposals which have received approval. Also included in the Guidelines are templates for letters seeking stakeholder comment, the Library Impact Report, course descriptors, a sample graduate profile and matrix, and examples of other aspects of CUAP proposals.

PARC approval panels include external members in the process in a way which ensures both internal and external benchmarking and tests external acceptability. The composition of this panel is innovative, comprising:

- A member of PARC or an AUT staff member who is external to the Faculty which has developed the proposal as Chair;
- A senior academic staff member external to the discipline of the proposal;
- At least one academic representative external to the University who is actively engaged in the teaching of a programme in the same or a similar field of study. For a postgraduate qualification, panel members must be from a university and hold a doctoral qualification in a related field;
- At least one representative from industry, commerce, the profession or community where the graduates are likely to find employment.⁵⁹

PARC approval panels may stipulate requirements, recommendations or suggestions, related to the programme proposed and/or to the documentation, before the proposal proceeds to the Programme Approval and Review Committee and thence to Academic Board.

An Academic Planning Sub-Group also scrutinises proposals that faculties have under development. This sub-group aligns its activity with the University's investment planning process, reviewing initial concept proposals and reporting to both the Senior Leadership Team and to Academic Board.

⁵⁸ <https://thegarden.aut.ac.nz/plaqueDetails/Plaque16/Definitions.pdf> accessed 07.12.15.

⁵⁹ Programme Approval Procedures, pp4-5.

At the final point of scrutiny the processes followed by the Auckland University of Technology for the approval of new programmes, programme changes and deletions conform to those expected by CUAP.

In its Self-review Report the University states that its approval processes are well understood by staff. It also comments on the professional development opportunities offered staff who serve on PARC approval panels.

The Programme Approval and Review Committee which is responsible to Academic Board for overseeing approval and review processes includes a student member.⁶⁰ While this committee does not include any external stakeholders, the process followed by the University ensures stakeholders are included at earlier stages of programme development. The Programme Approval Policy states that programme developers will actively engage and consult with the communities served by the University.⁶¹ The 2014 the Auckland University of Technology Annual Report noted the “significant amount” of engagement between staff and external stakeholders with respect to programme development and teaching.⁶²

Commendation: The Panel *commends* the University on the clear, comprehensive and systematic programme approval process which ensures appropriate stakeholder input and external academic scrutiny as well as facilitating benchmarking and ensuring strategic alignment of new developments.

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.

The Curriculum Objectives articulated in the Auckland University of Technology’s Strategic Plan include an emphasis on:

- integration of placements and other forms of experiential learning;
- involvement of alumni, communities, businesses and the professions;
- advancing mātauranga Māori; and
- acknowledgment of both tangata whenua and New Zealand’s multicultural character “in the way the curriculum is developed and delivered”.⁶³

The Panel therefore anticipated that these attributes would translate into capabilities or attributes in the Graduate Profile. At the time of the audit the University had some individual programme profiles which pre-dated the introduction of an institutional Graduate Profile, and programme profiles which had been formulated or reformulated to align with the institutional profile.

⁶⁰ Programme Approval and Review Committee Terms of Reference.

⁶¹ Programme Approval Policy, p1.

⁶² AR, p7.

⁶³ SP, p29.

The University requires all proposals for new qualifications and majors to include a programme Graduate Profile. It is in the process of extending this to all existing programmes. Guidelines for developing programme graduate profiles explore different profile models and define categories of attributes. The guidelines also tabulate attributes and capabilities against key concepts and examples from existing New Zealand Qualifications Framework Level 7 (undergraduate) programme profiles. Sample profiles and analyses of profiles are included in the Guidelines.⁶⁴

The Panel reviewed graduate profiles for some programmes, noting the matrix approach which maps learning outcomes against individual papers in a programme.

The mapping activity which extends to individual paper learning outcomes was still a work in progress at the time of the audit. A central repository for programme graduate profiles had been created in AUTonline but, as at the time of the site visit, many profiles were still being formatted prior to uploading.⁶⁵

An analysis of existing programme or qualification graduate profiles underpinned the University's development of an institutional graduate profile, piloted in 2014 and approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee in 2015. The institutional Graduate Profile is presented in diagrammatic form, emphasising that the attribute domains are not discrete but are integrated.

The institutional Graduate Profile model reviewed by the Panel presents knowledge and skills within a frame of scholarship; continuous learning and reflection; and professional and societal contribution. It might imply the dimensions specified in the Strategic Plan (outlined above) but these are not explicit.

The Panel explored Graduate Attributes with several groups of staff and with students. Staff told the Panel about workshops and the work of programme leaders and teaching teams in developing the map of graduate attributes. Students who were interviewed said they were aware of what was in the graduate profile for their degree and what the learning outcomes are. Staff referred mainly to the outcomes for their own qualifications. These were clearly articulated and appeared well understood by academic staff as well as teaching and learning leaders. Staff also referred to "the C skills", a short-hand label used by the Vice-Chancellor for skills desired by employers which include creativity, curiosity, carefulness, collaboration, communication, critical reasoning, context awareness, cultural competence and coping with complexity.⁶⁶ A number of these "C skills" are stated or implied within the University Graduate Profile model. Some staff pointed out that the Auckland University of Technology graduate attributes could be a point of difference for programmes which also had to meet professional accreditation requirements.

The University identifies a need to make graduate profiles more consistently accessible to students as part of overall academic information. The Panel encourages the University to continue its

⁶⁴ Graduate Profiles: Guidelines, June 2014, updated June 2015.

⁶⁵ Supplementary document, Update on Graduate Profile Development and Publication, October 2015.

⁶⁶ www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/ninetoon/audio/201772358/why-new-zealand-needs-more-c-students-good-all-rounders RadioNZ broadcast 30 September 2015; accessed 01.12.15.

development of Graduate Profiles across the institution. It is suggested that the diagrammatic model could usefully be simplified for communication to students and external stakeholders.⁶⁷

Affirmation: The Panel *affirms* the University's development of an institutional Graduate Profile and encourages it to expedite the application of this model to all qualifications and majors in a manner which will be easily understood by students and stakeholders.

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.

The University expects learning outcomes for individual papers (including learning and teaching strategies and assessment) to be mapped to the qualification Graduate Profile. Boards of Studies have a responsibility to ensure that assessment is aligned to expected learning outcomes.⁶⁸

Staff were well aware of the intended outcomes for the programmes they taught, and the opportunities they provided for students to meet these. The objectives from the Strategic Plan (see section 3.2 above) did not appear to be embodied in formal graduate profiles, yet did appear to permeate much of the teaching and learning at the University. In particular, work-integrated learning and links to professional practice, which the University claims are a feature of AUT programmes, were discussed in some detail by a number of staff.⁶⁹ The Panel concluded that the claim is well justified. It was told that approximately 80% of students have some form of workplace experience. Papers intended to address students' cultural competence were also discussed by staff.

Students who were interviewed were informed about the learning outcomes of the courses they had done. Advice to students on the student learning support YouTube "Top 10 Study Tips" video reinforces the importance of learning outcomes.⁷⁰ Students volunteered how much they value the "hands-on" and internship experiences and the work-integrated learning and "co-ops" (cooperative education) that study at the Auckland University of Technology provides.

Some issues emerge from the University's emphasis on experiential learning in the workplace. For example, quality control of this might be an issue when for some international students workplace learning might occur in their home country. A different issue is the cost of such programmes for the University, given that they are funded as taught papers but in most cases supervision is one-on-one. Some programmes also require staff dedicated to management and oversight of placements. The Panel was told that current TEC funding formulae do not account for this resource-intensive style of learning which is particularly important for vocational and professional programmes with workplace training requirements. From its interviews, the Panel also recognised the significant amount of work undertaken by AUT staff in securing sufficient appropriate work experience opportunities for students.

⁶⁷ SR, p29; Graduate Profile Guidelines p5.

⁶⁸ Assessment Procedures, p6.

⁶⁹ Staff commonly referred to these activities as "co-ops".

⁷⁰ www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-undergraduates/academic-information/academic-and-study-support/student-learning accessed 10.12.15.

At an institutional level, the Panel notes the University's commitment to STEM subject development. The University's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Tertiary Education Centre (STEM-TEC) is intended to increase the number of STEM graduates and to improve teaching in these areas.⁷¹

Commendation: The Panel *commends* the University on the success of its determination to ensure a high proportion of students have the opportunity for work-integrated learning, on the commitment of staff to this and on the strong endorsement by students of its value to their learning.

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.

The University's Monitoring and Review of Programmes Policy requires that there will be regular reviews of courses and programmes with input from staff, students and external stakeholders. Such reviews are also expected to take into account the University's strategic objectives and its obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.⁷² The University provided the Panel with a schematic summary of review processes, covering curriculum information, data, stakeholder feedback and outcomes or actions and feedback loops. The model indicates the connections between review inputs, programme annual reports, graduating year reviews (GYRs), professional accreditations and periodic programme reviews, and the reporting of review outcomes and subsequent action. It also indicates which review reports inform management planning and which must be reported to an external body (professional body or CUAP).

All programmes are subject to annual monitoring which includes:

- feedback on papers in a programme from students and teaching staff; normally, a student evaluation of a paper must occur after the first offering and subsequently after every third offering of that paper;
- for programmes at Level 7 or above, some form of regular external evaluation or external feedback which may be by moderators, monitors, examiners or other appropriate form of external benchmarking;
- for all programmes of 60 points or more, an annual review through preparation of a Programme Annual Report.

The Programme Annual Report includes data on key aspects such as enrolments, student achievement, delivery options and graduate destinations and comments on matters such as franchising or consortium arrangements, equity considerations and generic issues which might need to be considered by the faculty or might be university-wide.⁷³ The Panel thought the reports

⁷¹ AR, p6.

⁷² Monitoring and Review of Programmes Policy, p1.

⁷³ Monitoring and Review of Programmes Policy, pp9-10.

provided comprehensive summaries which would be useful for the quality assurance of any programme.

In addition to the annual review, all programmes have a “periodic” review on a five year cycle which is intended to provide confirmation of the programme’s continued fitness for purpose and the effectiveness of the annual monitoring and review processes. The focus of periodic review is on the achievement of the programme goals, graduate outcomes, pedagogic aspects and effective implementation of academic and quality assurance processes. The periodic review (named “periodic” to differentiate it from a GYR) may take place in conjunction with a professional accreditation review.

Programme Review Procedures outline actions and objectives for a programme review. As with the programme approval process, a panel of similar composition is appointed to consider the self-review portfolio and related documentation and to meet with the programme team and students and receive any written submissions. The panel may formulate requirements, recommendations and suggestions for the programme. Each step in the process is spelt out clearly. The panel’s report ultimately is forwarded to the relevant faculty and thence to PARC and Academic Board. Within one year after the final report is received by the faculty a follow-up report on actions taken or not taken in response to the review’s findings is to be sent to PARC.⁷⁴

The review processes require interviews with students but there is no apparent requirement for consultation with stakeholders. However the University considers the input of external stakeholders to its review processes to be a particular strength.⁷⁵ Industry and professional input is required on a more frequent basis, as ongoing input and during the annual reporting on programmes.⁷⁶ A number of programmes also have advisory boards which include external members. Interviewees reported this avenue for input to be useful. The University’s template for the self-review does require evidence that graduate attributes have been met and evidence about external collaboration or agreements.⁷⁷

In addition to the above scheduled reviews of programmes, the University routinely gathers feedback on individual papers via the Student Paper Experience Questionnaire (SPEQ) and also gathers the paper coordinator’s reports on staff responses to student feedback (see also section 5.5 re student feedback). The University’s philosophy of transparency is evident in its production of annual programme survey reports for staff with summaries posted on the website for students.⁷⁸ Staff are nominated to follow up on student concerns and papers with issues identified by students are monitored for improvements in subsequent surveys.

The Panel reviewed the University’s list of professional accreditations, noting scheduled review timelines. Sample accreditation reports and the University’s response were made available to the Panel. The Panel agreed with the University’s practice of allowing faculties to negotiate for a

⁷⁴ Programme Review Procedures.

⁷⁵ SR, p34.

⁷⁶ SR, p31.

⁷⁷ Self-review template, Periodic Programme Review.

⁷⁸ Report, Annual Programme Survey 2014.

professional review or a CUAP Graduating Year Review to be considered in lieu of or in conjunction with an internal programme review.⁷⁹

The Panel concluded that the University's review procedures are very thorough. The annual programme reporting is a good initiative and, as described to the Panel, enables staff to identify issues promptly such that action can be taken expeditiously. The practice in some faculties of presenting annual reports at a faculty forum was also seen by the Panel as potentially good practice which might be emulated more widely.⁸⁰ The Panel supports the University's intention to carry out annual programme reporting online, which will further streamline the process by facilitating the collection of data from other sources and by enhancing reporting functionality.⁸¹

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.)

It was apparent to the Panel from its discussions and the documents it reviewed that the Auckland University of Technology has a strong commitment to benchmarking, across a range of University activities. In particular the Panel noted benchmarking practice with universities of similar focus (universities of technology) and similar age ("new" universities). While some benchmarking refers to data, in other areas benchmarking was for similar experiences (e.g. the development of learning spaces) or processes. The University has a benchmarking framework which tabulates internal and external strategic objectives and performance, and processes related to curriculum, assessment and performance.⁸²

In addition to the benchmarking which is implicit in the approval and review processes discussed in sections 3.1 and 3.4 above, the Auckland University of Technology has participated in two external benchmarking collectives: the international project coordinated by Ako Aotearoa which is focused on participation of priority learners and peer review of assessment, and an assessment benchmarking project involving three programmes (the Bachelor of Design, Bachelor of Health Science - Paramedicine and the Bachelor of International Tourism)) with three Australian and two UK universities.

The University has identified some national impediments to establishing reciprocal arrangements with potential benchmarking partners, for example the lack of a consistent national moderation expectation across all qualifications and subjects, or the expectation from some universities that moderators be paid a fee.⁸³

The Panel concluded that there is some excellent benchmarking practice in different areas but in other areas benchmarking of curriculum and assessment is unclear. Communication of an

⁷⁹ Programme Review Procedures, p3.

⁸⁰ SR, p33.

⁸¹ SR, p34.

⁸² SR, p34. Table 3.2.

⁸³ SR, p35.

institution-wide position or expectation would help promote good practice and also provide guidance on benchmark comparators.

Affirmation: The Panel *affirms* the University's proactive participation in international academic benchmarking initiatives and encourages the University to develop more explicit guidance for faculties and programmes, especially around benchmarking of assessment and learning outcomes.

3.6 Assessment

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

The Auckland University of Technology's expectations regarding assessment of student work are outlined in the University regulations and in the Assessment Procedures.⁸⁴ Boards of Studies are responsible for developing an assessment philosophy and plan for the programme(s) for which they are responsible. Faculty Examinations Boards approve final grades and make decisions on assessment outcomes for individual students.⁸⁵ Examination Boards thus moderate assessment outcomes.

The plan prepared by the Board of Studies is expected to include policies and procedures related to assessment practice, including the grade map to be used and processes for both internal and external moderation and any other forms of quality assurance. The assessment guidelines state that assessment must be "linked to the profile of attributes, capabilities and competencies which the programme certifies in its graduates".⁸⁶ The University's Self-review Report documents the mechanisms used to ensure parity of assessment across different delivery modes.⁸⁷

Assessment Procedures include detailed advice regarding monitoring and moderation requirements and procedures. Moderation includes pre-assessment moderation of such matters as types of assessment to monitor level, assessment criteria, workload, type of assessment and to ensure links to learning outcomes. Post-assessment moderation addresses pre-marking consistency of interpretation of standards and assessment criteria, as well as post-marking moderation.⁸⁸

The University has documented types of moderation by the focus of the moderation, including: internal peer moderators; external examiners; external peer moderators; external monitoring for example by an accreditation body; and internal peer reference or validation using paper-level reference points. While peer review of assessment is understood to be widespread, the University identifies further centrally coordinated professional development on moderation of assessment as an area where enhancement is needed.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ 2015 Calendar pp99-102, Assessment and Granting of Credit; Assessment Procedures.

⁸⁵ SR, p36.

⁸⁶ Assessment Procedures, p5.

⁸⁷ SR, p36.

⁸⁸ Assessment Procedures, pp6-8.

⁸⁹ SR, p37.

All theses have at least one external examiner, which functions, *inter alia*, as moderation (see section 7.4). The University states that a number of undergraduate programmes also have a form of external moderation. The Panel also heard about such practices as capstone projects being assessed jointly with partner institutions. The international benchmarking project which includes peer review of assessment (see section 3.5) is likely to inform AUT moderation practice.⁹⁰

In addition to exploring the policies and guidelines, the Panel reviewed extracts from faculty examination board deliberations on assessment. It concluded that the University had ample evidence that its moderation procedures were working well.

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.

The Auckland University of Technology currently teaches programmes in Vietnam, China and in the Cook Islands.⁹¹ (It also has articulation partners which are currently inactive and to be reviewed.) The Cook Islands programme is taught by AUT staff at a University of the South Pacific site. The China and Vietnam programmes are through collaborative provision with those universities.

The University has detailed guidelines on collaborative agreements. These include statements related to academic quality assurance and standards, in that “the University will meet any New Zealand offshore quality assurance requirements for any collaborative programmes delivered overseas” and that “Subcontract and joint award agreements must provide assurance of the quality of the student experience and how the academic standards of the programme will be maintained.”

The guidelines refer to, *inter alia*,

- programme structure;
- learning outcomes, mode of delivery and content;
- assessment and moderation procedures that are consistent with an AUT programme;
- qualifications of staff;
- oversight of quality assurance requirements such as student evaluations, monitoring of student performance and progression, application of the Auckland University of Technology’s academic regulations, policies and procedures or any adaptation thereof.⁹²

The Panel discussed collaborative arrangements with staff responsible for the programmes and also reviewed reports of audits of programmes in Vietnam and China carried out in 2013 and 2014.⁹³ In particular, a 2013 report on collaborative provision with Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh University of Science analysed changes in student achievement in offshore programmes and documented changes that had been made in delivery to address initial challenges. After the third

⁹⁰ SR, p36.

⁹¹ List of programmes taught with partner institutions, June 2015.

⁹² Academic Collaborative Agreements, Guidelines and Procedures, pp19; 11.

⁹³ Programme Annual Report 2014, Faculty of Business and Law, pp6-7.

iteration of delivery the student achievement data (pass rates and retention/completion rates) were commensurate with the data for the same papers taught in New Zealand. A similar analysis for collaborative provision with China Jiliang University indicated that achievement data were higher than the comparative New Zealand delivered papers. The explanation in part is attributed to input of teaching assistants, at least one of whom had attended classes in New Zealand as an observer.⁹⁴ Staff were very clear that off-shore assessment for papers taught in New Zealand had the same expected outcomes and the same assessment standards.

Other offshore partnerships include articulation arrangements which provide for articulation across to a New Zealand AUT degree programme, or cross credits into an AUT programme. The Guidelines include expectations for reviews of such arrangements. The Auckland University of Technology also teaches its Bachelor of Sport and Recreation programme at three New Zealand polytechnic sites, with some papers taught by polytechnic staff. A Certificate in Foundation Studies is taught and assessed by Norton College, with moderation by AUT staff.⁹⁵

The Panel explored arrangements for papers taught on the University's North and South Campuses. It learned that while individual papers might be taught on one site only, the maintenance of standards lies with Boards of Studies which operate across all sites. Learning outcomes are the same for any given paper, irrespective of on which campus or in which mode students study. In addition, online material is available to students equally, regardless of which site they study from.

The Panel was satisfied that the Auckland University of Technology has adequate processes in place to monitor academic outcomes and standards in off-shore programmes, and that its review processes ensure that any problems or variations can be readily identified and addressed.

3.8 Academic misconduct

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

In response to a Cycle 4 audit recommendation that it increase its educative activity related to academic integrity, for both staff and students, the Auckland University of Technology has enacted a significant programme of activities and undertaken initiatives, including⁹⁶:

- drawing on input from students, staff and external experts to enhance documentation about academic integrity for both students and staff;
- development of a single set of Academic Integrity Guidelines and Procedures;
- creation and regular updating of a repository for academic integrity resources on the Library website;
- an inter-faculty project to develop resources for students, funded by the Learning and Teaching Development Fund;

⁹⁴ SCMS Collaborative Provision Programme Annual Report 2013. The University also notes that the AUT programme recruits the higher performing students from China Jiliang University.

⁹⁵ List of programmes taught with partner institutions, June 2015.

⁹⁶ SR, p39.

- a University-wide conference on *Fraud, Fakery and Fabrication: Academic and Research Integrity*;
- institutional membership of the Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity (APFEI) to facilitate benchmarking of both documentation and practices with international best practice in this area;
- a series of academic integrity-themed workshops for Academic Integrity Officers (AIOs) and academic staff.

For students specifically,

- aspects of academic integrity are introduced during orientation workshops with sessions on academic expectations and essay writing;
- online resources including an introductory video illustrating the importance of academic integrity are available through the Student Learning Centre (SLC);
- students are advised about expectations in programme or paper handbook information, in specific documents or in dedicated class sessions;
- degree preparation programmes generally include a full paper on academic literacies, including expectations and practices of academic integrity;
- many bachelor's degrees include at least one first-year paper with specific content on academic expectations and practices;
- ongoing workshops on referencing and academic integrity for both undergraduate and postgraduate students⁹⁷;
- workshops on ethics and research for postgraduate students;
- use of detection software Turnitin for both educative and monitoring purposes.

The University provided examples of or links to many of the activities itemised above.

The Panel notes that University Assessment Regulations include a clause stating that work submitted must be the work of that student and that the University “may use detection software or other means to determine the authenticity” of work submitted for assessment.⁹⁸ Each faculty has an Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) and a faculty disciplinary committee. The Panel also noted that the protocol for offshore collaborative arrangements includes a section on Academic Discipline which outlines forms of dishonesty and disciplinary action and states in Protocol 26 that articulating students will adhere to the Auckland University of Technology's policies and regulations concerning dishonesty and academic discipline.⁹⁹

Until 2013 some individual faculties had their own guidelines on academic integrity. Since 2014 these have been superseded by a single institutional document which covers academic integrity in programmes. These Academic Integrity Guidelines are comprehensive and address such matters as activities to teach students about academic integrity; assessment design; referencing; use of detection software; and the procedures to be followed when different types of dishonesty are

⁹⁷ For example, www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-undergraduates/academic-information/academic-and-study-support/student-learning/student-learning-centre-seminars-and-workshops/study-smart-postgraduate-workshops#Academic%20Integrity%20and%20Referencing%20for%20Postgraduate%20Students accessed 08.12.15.

⁹⁸ 2015 Calendar, p99.

⁹⁹ SCMS Collaborative Provision, 2013, Appendix H: Protocols and Operational Procedures, clause 3.6.

suspected or detected.¹⁰⁰ The University maintains a confidential register to record cases and outcomes where there has been a proven case of dishonesty.

The Panel was impressed with the approach taken by the Auckland University of Technology to respond to the Cycle 4 recommendation. This was educative and developmental and involved both staff and students. Students who were interviewed by the Panel were well aware of issues related to academic integrity. They commented on the educative approach taken to first-year students and students new to studying in New Zealand. Students talked about workshops for postgraduate students and class advice for undergraduates. Students indicated the cover sheet used for assignments was a particularly helpful reminder.

Commendation: The Panel *commends* the University on its comprehensive and coordinated approach to addressing academic integrity through educative, regulatory and experiential activities and documents for both staff and students.

3.9 Assessment in te reo Māori

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

As part of its commitment to building an inclusive Aotearoa/New Zealand and actively trying to build competence in te reo Māori, the University offers a te reo Māori course to anyone (both domestic and international students) at no cost.¹⁰¹ The University notes that for some students who have come from Kura Kaupapa schools, te reo Māori is their first language. The Panel heard about the University's efforts to grow a pool of PhD-qualified Māori staff, but also noted a comment in the Assessment in te reo Māori Guidelines that, given the time normally taken for staff to complete a PhD part-time, there would likely be a long lead time before such staff were qualified to supervise or examine theses.¹⁰² A Learning Adviser in te reo Māori is expected to assist students wishing to submit assessment in te reo Māori.¹⁰³

University regulations, procedures and guidelines outline the requirements and provisions for submission of assessment in te reo Māori.¹⁰⁴ Faculties are responsible for managing this assessment, including arranging for a suitably-qualified assessor to be appointed from a centrally-maintained database, or in liaison with Te Ara Poutama (the Faculty for Māori and Indigenous Development). The University's Guidelines also refer to the Te Ipukarea (the National Māori Language Institute) database of suitably qualified assessors.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Academic Integrity Guidelines and Procedures.

¹⁰¹ www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/faculty-of-maori-and-indigenous-development/qualifications/short-courses/te-reo-maori-beginners-and-intermediate accessed 21.01.16.

¹⁰² Assessment in Te Reo Māori - Dissertations, Masters and PhD Theses Guidelines, note 2, p2.

¹⁰³ SR, p40.

¹⁰⁴ Assessment in Te Reo Māori Procedures and Guidelines Undergraduate and Postgraduate Coursework; Assessment in Te Reo Māori - Dissertations, Masters and PhD Theses Guidelines .

¹⁰⁵ Assessment in Te Reo Māori Procedures and Guidelines Undergraduate and Postgraduate Coursework.

The University notes that translation of work for assessment is ethically problematic and therefore any work submitted for assessment should be assessed only in the language of submission - that is, the assessor's response must also be in the same language. Citing precedents elsewhere, the Auckland University of Technology allows that where a PhD thesis is submitted in te reo Māori, the University will waive the requirement for an international examiner. Guidelines also provide advice to thesis supervisors, including suggestions that supervisors are likely to need twice the usual supervision time to ensure that the student's academic research is portrayed accurately in te reo Māori. Supervisors must also sign an attestation form confirming that the dissertation or thesis is the student's own work as a way of managing conflicts of interest given the small pool of academics eligible to supervise students writing dissertations and theses in te reo Māori.¹⁰⁶

Data provided to the Panel record four PhD theses and four MA theses assessed in te reo Māori in the last five years. One of those PhD graduates subsequently became primary supervisor for three theses. The University reports very few applications for coursework assessment in te reo Māori. As in most other New Zealand universities, the Auckland University of Technology would be challenged to find assessors who have both language and discipline capability.¹⁰⁷

Overall the Panel was impressed with the Auckland University of Technology's common sense, yet aspirational, approach to providing opportunities for assessment in te reo Māori.

¹⁰⁶ Assessment in Te Reo Māori - Dissertations, Masters and PhD Theses Guidelines.

¹⁰⁷ SR, p40.

4. Student Engagement and Achievement

The Auckland University of Technology's vision is to be known for its high quality learning experience and to provide people with opportunities to expand and achieve their aspirations. Its objectives include "providing an enriched and rewarding student experience" by, *inter alia*, strengthening students' engagement with learning and maintaining a high level of satisfaction and enhancing services that promote student success.¹⁰⁸

4.1 Student engagement

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

In its Self-review Report the University lists a large number of ways in which staff assist students to engage in their study and learning. While the recently-appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor Student Success has an overall responsibility for the different activities that contribute to student experience and success, the University emphasises that all staff carry some responsibility towards this objective. Hence the University includes within its list of activities to enhance student engagement such academic activities as design of the curriculum, regular interaction with and feedback to students, and learning and assessment activities that promote active learning and intellectual challenge.¹⁰⁹

The University analyses data from several sources to monitor student engagement and satisfaction, including academic progress, retention and completion statistics; student feedback from SPEQs (see section 5.5) and the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) and Postgraduate Survey of Student Engagement (POSSE). It also monitors the use and effectiveness of support services.

The KPI target for student engagement of more than 80% of students reporting satisfaction with student life at the Auckland University of Technology was exceeded in 2013 and 2014. In addition, in 2014 86% of students expressed satisfaction with the campus environment and 88% said they would recommend the Auckland University of Technology to others.¹¹⁰ Also in 2014, over 80% of students who responded to the Annual Programme Survey (APS) reported they were satisfied that their programmes had clear goals and objectives.¹¹¹

The most recent AUSSE and POSSE results available to the Panel were the 2012 AUSSE and the 2013 POSSE. Both surveys include comparison with three benchmark groups comprising comparator Australian universities; other New Zealand universities and some large polytechnics; and a larger composite group.¹¹² On several measures undergraduate students reported higher levels of academic engagement than did students, collectively, in the benchmark groups. In particular, the University drew attention to the incidence of active learning, staff and student interactions and work-integrated learning and enriching educational experiences. For the POSSE the benchmark

¹⁰⁸ SP, pp1; 3.

¹⁰⁹ SR, p43.

¹¹⁰ AR, p28.

¹¹¹ SR, p44. The proportions scoring in the APS were 82% undergraduates and 83% postgraduates.

¹¹² AUSSE and POSSE Reports, 2012.

group included only one other New Zealand university, plus seven Australian universities. As with the AUSSE, AUT students recorded responses ahead of the benchmark group on academic challenge, active learning, student and staff interactions, supportive learning environment and enriching educational experiences.¹¹³

The student-centred ethos of the Auckland University of Technology was apparent to the Panel during many of its interviews with both students and staff. This was also evident in discussions about space development. Students who were interviewed by the Panel were forthright in their appreciation of opportunities that the University provided to facilitate their engagement with learning. Instances cited included the friendly relationships between students and academic staff; small class sizes (in some disciplines); skill development; work placements and real world industry connections; provision of help by teachers if they see a student struggling; and the well-designed student spaces.

Commendation: The Panel *commends* the University on its proactive and inclusive approach to enhancing student engagement, including the appointment of a senior management role with oversight responsibility for student success; the pervasiveness of a student-centred ethos among staff; and the evidence-based strategies which are used to monitor engagement.

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.

Many of the activities provided by the Auckland University of Technology to assist student retention, academic success and completion are recorded elsewhere in sections 2.2 and 5.2. This section thus focuses on processes whereby the University evaluates the success of its processes for assisting with student retention, academic success and completion.

Māori and Pacific students are the priority groups identified by the University for targeted assistance with educational achievement. Educational Performance Indicators (EPIs) record progress in meeting completion, retention and progression targets. Provisional 2014 data show course completion rates similar to 2012 but slight improvements in most other measures.¹¹⁴ The 2014 Annual Report comments that the University aims to increase success across all measures annually.¹¹⁵ The Self-review Report provided evidence that both the number and the proportion (of total) of graduates who are Māori or Pacific has increased steadily since 2011.¹¹⁶

The Panel heard several times how the Auckland University of Technology is a “university of opportunity” but that this must not be an opportunity to fail. Staff identified the educational gaps and additional responsibilities posed by life circumstances, especially for numbers of Māori and

¹¹³ POSSE statistics are weighted averages. See 2013 AUT POSSE report, p9.

¹¹⁴ AR, p30. Pacific student progression rates from level 3 to level 4 were slightly lower in 2014 than 2012 and 2013.

¹¹⁵ AR, p30.

¹¹⁶ SR, p45.

Pacific students. The Panel heard, for instance, that the average age of students on the South Campus is 25 years, and that staff must appreciate that the academic journey of such students might take longer than average.

The Panel was told how different faculties adopt different strategies to aid success, including focussing on pedagogy and enhancements or changes to learning activities, teaching resources and assessment methods. Availability of data down to individual paper level enables faculties to monitor student achievement, completion and retention. Staff with senior management responsibility for Māori and Pacific student advancement also reported on their use of scorecard data, enabling them to identify where there is any variability in success rates for these groups. They indicated that their support staff might identify groups of Māori or Pacific students who need assistance and then work with faculties or schools to determine how such students might be helped.

The University reports that faculties are sent information on EPIs at regular intervals and are expected to provide responses which include specific improvement strategies where these are needed.¹¹⁷ The Panel viewed data presentation via the scorecard facility and concluded this was accessible and facilitated a fine level of focus for identifying potential intervention points. It heard from staff how they use data to track students and are able to direct them to appropriate support if needed.

The University notes the requirements for monitoring of international students under the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. Monitoring processes are as for domestic students. The University has carried out its own internal review in 2012 to confirm compliance with the Code's requirements.¹¹⁸

The Panel concluded that with the use of the scorecard facility which enables interrogation of data down to paper level and for specific cohorts of students, the University has very good processes available for monitoring student achievement, and hence for being able to respond to variances which might signal a need for interventions for particular groups (see commendation, GS 1.2). The University webpage provides clear links to resources for these groups of students, as well as for students with a disability.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ SR, p45.

¹¹⁸ SR, p46.

¹¹⁹ www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/services-and-facilities/maori-student-support; www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/services-and-facilities/pasifika-student-support-service; www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/international-students/international-student-support-service; www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-undergraduates/academic-information/academic-and-study-support/disability-and-resource-support accessed 09.12.15.

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.)

The Auckland University of Technology's electronic resources AUTonline and ARION can be used by students to access provisional and final results for course assessment, and also to see their progress through a qualification. Large programmes have academic advisers but in all programmes staff are available to advise students on their assessment or progress. The Panel was told that studio or workshop-based courses facilitate much opportunity for dialogue with staff. Some programmes have formal handback sessions for assignments or exams, enabling students to receive feedback and discuss assessment expectations. Some staff and several students referred to the "open door" policy of many staff. As noted above, accessibility of staff was a feature of the University which was particularly appreciated by students. Also noted in section 3.8, staff are encouraged to use Turnitin as an educative tool, to assist students in ensuring the academic integrity of their assignments.

The Panel was satisfied that the Auckland University of Technology has good practices in place for providing students with feedback on their academic progress.

4.4 Under-achieving students

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

The Auckland University of Technology's approach to identifying and assisting students who might be at risk of under-achieving is comprehensive, including both formal and informal processes.

Formal academic progress regulations stipulate the responsibility of faculty examination boards for monitoring student progress and identifying students who are deemed to be at risk, are making unsatisfactory progress and may be subject to enrolment conditions, or whose enrolment should be discontinued.¹²⁰ This assessment is based on the proportion of passing grades in a student's programme of study. Students considered at risk will be offered advice and support to improve their performance.

Informal mechanisms for identifying students who might be at risk of under-achieving are employed at an early stage in a student's course of study. The University uses its START programme to identify those students who might be most at risk of withdrawing from study or encountering difficulty and who might need additional support early in their academic journey.¹²¹ In addition to monitoring risk points such as assessment submission, staff have developed risk indicators similar to GPA scores. Depending on the level of assessed risk, students will be offered tailored support and/or advice. Some staff reported phoning students whom they thought might be at risk. Other staff told the Panel about deliberately having some form of assessment in the first two weeks to determine if

¹²⁰ Calendar, pp94-95.

¹²¹ The START assessment.

students are engaged with the course. Academic staff who identify students at risk may work with the Student Learning Centre or other services to provide appropriate support. The Panel was pleased to learn that staff are monitoring the validity of the indicators they use in order to further develop a predictive risk model.¹²²

The University also reports that in areas where students in general are known to experience difficulty or challenges, additional support may be put in place through workshops or tutorials or in some cases embedded into courses. For example, assistance with STEM subjects is provided in embedded workshops.¹²³

The Panel considers that the mechanisms used by the Auckland University of Technology to identify students at risk of under-achieving are appropriate. It supported the proactive role taken by Māori and Pacific advisers.

4.5 High-achieving students

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

The Auckland University of Technology provides similar recognition to high-achieving students as that provided by other New Zealand universities, including scholarships, awards, prizes, special events and invitations to undertake an honours programme. High-achieving students might also receive congratulatory letters, be encouraged to do postgraduate study or be invited to become peer mentors, tutors or graduate assistants.

The priority given to Māori and Pacific student success is reflected in the University's determination to identify and support high achievers in these groups. The Panel heard of staff in the Office of Māori Advancement using kaupapa Māori and relationships with Māori networks to support high-achieving students; of Pacific staff using institutional data to identify high-achieving students; and of academic staff "shoulder-tapping" Māori and Pacific students who are unaware that "they are the best". Staff endeavoured to forge relationships with such students so the students can become acquainted with what an academic career involves, can be involved in networks and become aware of professional and academic opportunities. The Panel was told how the experience of being a peer mentor and other similar leadership development opportunities are seen to be important as additional learning opportunities for high-achieving students. As well as providing opportunities for current students, the University's early academic career programme for Māori and Pacific staff is argued to provide an incentive to high-achieving students to consider an academic career.¹²⁴

The Panel noted a number of avenues whereby the University publicises its students' achievements.

¹²² SR, p46.

¹²³ SR, p47.

¹²⁴ SR, p48.

5. Student Feedback and Support

The Auckland University of Technology provides a number of dedicated services to facilitate student support:¹²⁵

- Student Centre (regarding academic matters)¹²⁶
- Student Learning Centre
- Student Advisers
- University Postgraduate Centre
- Career Services
- Student Financial services
- Health and Wellbeing services.

The University notes that some of those services which are formally about personal support nevertheless also address issues which might impact on learning or study ability.¹²⁷ Services provided by the Postgraduate Centre are discussed in section 7.2. Some aspects of student support for Māori and Pacific students have also been discussed in sections 2.2 and 4.2.¹²⁸

5.1 Academic appeals and grievances

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

Appeals against examination, dissertation or thesis results are provided for within the Academic Appeals regulations in the Calendar.¹²⁹ Appeals provisions are also included within other academic regulations, for example against decisions related to recognition of prior learning, or against academic progress decisions.¹³⁰ Other appeal provisions relate to decisions of the AUT Ethics Committee and to enrolment decisions.¹³¹

The Panel explored with staff how the University ensured there was equity of application of appeals procedures across the University and was advised that all faculties and schools work to the same set of rules and guidelines. The number of appeals and their outcomes are reported annually to faculty boards or the postgraduate board, as appropriate. The Panel noted that the Student President (or nominee) is a member of faculty appeals committees and that a student making an appeal may be supported by an AuSM member or other person.¹³²

¹²⁵ SR, p55; www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/starting-out/undergraduates/services-and-facilities accessed 10.12.15.

¹²⁶ www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/starting-out/undergraduates/services-and-facilities/student-information-centre accessed 10.12.15.

¹²⁷ SR, p53.

¹²⁸ www.aut.ac.nz/community/maori ; www.aut.ac.nz/community/pasifika/about-us2 accessed 10.12.15.

¹²⁹ 2015 Calendar pp103-104.

¹³⁰ 2015 Calendar pp98; 95.

¹³¹ www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics/guidelines-and-procedures/appendices/complaints-procedures-appendix-t accessed 09.12.15; Calendar pp584-5.

¹³² SR, p51.

The Self-review Report states that students are advised of processes for reconsideration or appeals through programme or paper information. This information was stated clearly in the Postgraduate Handbook for appeals, grievances or complaints related to supervision of theses or dissertations.¹³³ However it was not evident in some of the sample guides for undergraduate papers seen by the Panel. Also, it was not immediately obvious to the Panel how students would find out about appeal or grievance processes from the website, since a student would need to know which links to traverse (through “being-a-student” to “current-undergraduates” to “academic-information” to “academic-policies-and-regulations” before arriving at the link to a Calendar entry for Complaints procedures).¹³⁴ Students who were asked about appeals and complaints processes did not appear to understand these clearly. Furthermore, the Self-review Report appeared to conflate grievances with complaints which might be received via informal feedback mechanisms.¹³⁵

The initiative of a website for lodging compliments, concerns or complaints, reported in the Self-review Report, is a good one especially if it does enable issues to be resolved informally, but does not obviate the need for clearer advice about formal complaints procedures.¹³⁶ It might not be immediately apparent to a student that a site for “Student feedback” would provide information about academic grievances.

The University has identified the reporting processes on appeals and complaints as an area for enhancement. The Panel agrees but would extend this to include communication about the processes themselves, particularly for undergraduate students.

Recommendation: The Panel *recommends* that the University reviews how it communicates its appeals and academic grievance processes to students, both via the website and through paper and/or programme guides, to ensure clear and consistent advice is available and accessible to students, both about the processes and about who they should approach for assistance with lodging an appeal or grievance claim.

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.)

The University informed the Panel about a wide range of learning support services, both provided centrally and by faculties. It was noted that the University expects the principal learning support provision to be within the design and delivery of papers. Other forms of learning support include:¹³⁷

¹³³ Postgraduate Handbook 2015, pp36-39.

¹³⁴ <https://www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-undergraduates/academic-information/academic-policies-and-regulations/?a=577214> accessed 09.12.15. The Calendar entry on the website (and in the Self-review Report) is p583. However in the printed Calendar it is p573.

¹³⁵ See SR, p52, s5.1.7.

¹³⁶ SR, p52; www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/student-feedback accessed 09.12.15.

¹³⁷ SR, pp52-53; www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-undergraduates/academic-information/academic-and-study-support/student-learning accessed 10.12.15.

- peer assisted study sessions (PASS);
- student mentors provided within programmes;
- services provided by the Library – e.g. workshops, online tutorials, learning labs;
- services provided by ICT – e.g. dedicated student support helpdesk;
- services provided by the Student Learning Centre (SLC) – e.g. study skills, language support, numeracy support, support for specific learning needs, peer tutors, student learning mentors, YouTube videos;
- SLC also provides links to other non-AUT learning resources;¹³⁸
- services provided by the Postgraduate Learning Centre (see section 7.2);
- specific learning support for Māori and Pacific students, including
 - iMAPS (Inspiring Māori and Pacific Success) peer assisted learning in the Faculty of Business and law
 - Pacific Learning Villages in the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences
 - academic mentoring in other faculties
 - a Wānanga series of study weekends
 - writing retreats for Pacific students
 - an annual symposium of 12 programmes for Māori and Pacific research students;
- specific support for international students;
- specific support for Chinese students, provided by the the University’s Chinese Centre;
- specific support for students with an impairment or a disability, run by Disability Student Support;
- specific support for distance students, e.g. online assistance, webinars, podcasts, AUTonline discussions;
- specific support for student athletes;
- a range of orientation activities focused on study.¹³⁹

In addition to the Student Learning Centre, the Student Experience Team provide a frontline face to students, contacting them if they miss an assignment, don’t log in to AUTonline, fail an assignment or test or are known to have been absent. Members of the Student Experience Team are employees who are also students.¹⁴⁰

The University’s commitment to ensuring student support is available, appropriate and accessible was evident to the Panel from interviews, documentation and the discussions it had regarding building design and location of services. A redesign of the Student Learning Centre in 2013 was followed by a 53% increase in students accessing a learning adviser.¹⁴¹ Notwithstanding this apparent improvement, a recent document provided to the Panel concluded that further

¹³⁸ www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-undergraduates/academic-information/academic-and-study-support/student-learning/student-learning-centre-learning-resources/online-resources-and-videos accessed 10.12.15.

¹³⁹ www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/starting-out/undergraduates/orientation accessed 10.12.15.

¹⁴⁰ www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/services-and-facilities/student-experience accessed 09.12.15.

¹⁴¹ Student Services & Administration Impact Report 2014, p5.

improvements could be made by moving student advisers into a single high-traffic corridor at the heart of the campus.¹⁴²

The Panel learned that student learning services are evaluated regularly via student surveys. Data included in the Self-review Report indicate high satisfaction levels with timeliness, impact and fulfilment of the service, in particular with specialist services (range for service fulfilment for specialist groups 80-94% satisfied; for impact 78-90% satisfied). Of over 1,000 respondents, 86% were satisfied with the Student Learning Centre's service and only 4% were dissatisfied.¹⁴³ Data from the 2014 Student Services Impact Report indicated that just under a quarter of students (23%) accessed a support service – though the report summary does not disaggregate this figure to learning support or other (pastoral) support.¹⁴⁴

Commendation: The Panel *commends* the University on its comprehensive and well-coordinated approach to identification of student learning support need, on the provision of appropriate support and ensuring opportunity to access it is maximised, and in particular on the work of the Student Experience Team.

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.

Auckland University of Technology students have access to various sources of personal support. A service level agreement between the University and AuSM defines the services provided by AuSM, overseen by a joint Student Advisory Group.¹⁴⁵ Within this arrangement students may access:

- Advocacy and legal advice
- Careers advice and guidance
- Childcare services
- Health services
- Counselling and pastoral care
- Financial support and advice
- Employment information
- Sport, recreation and cultural services
- Clubs, societies and cultural events.

Student levies also enable AuSM to produce and disseminate information via selected media.¹⁴⁶ Services are evaluated regularly, for example as evidenced in the 2014 Student Services Impact Report.

¹⁴² Student Hub Primer, May 2015.

¹⁴³ SR, p54.

¹⁴⁴ Student Services & Administration Impact Report 2014, p3.

¹⁴⁵ SR, p12.

¹⁴⁶ AR, pp56-57.

The University has the services of seven chaplains, including one Buddhist, one Muslim and one interfaith. It has multi-faith rooms on all campuses and Muslim prayer rooms on the City and North Campuses.¹⁴⁷

The Auckland University of Technology prides itself on being a diverse and inclusive community. In addition to recognising the special place of Māori, the Strategic Plan refers specifically to an aim to advance aspirations and achievements of all staff and students including Pacific people, disabled people, Asian people, refugees, new migrants and people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender.¹⁴⁸ On its website it states that it is “committed to building a safe, positive, and inclusive work and study environment characterised by the free exchange of diverse ideas, skills and cultural perspectives”. Web resources are available for a number of different groups, as part of the community, for instance migrants, refugees, multi-faith, LGBTI, as well as multicultural groups. Throughout the year the University organises a number of diversity-related events.¹⁴⁹ The Auckland University of Technology is a recipient of the “Rainbow Tick” in recognition of its provision of a safe workplace for LGBTI people.¹⁵⁰

The Office of Pacific Advancement and the Office of Māori Advancement facilitate activities and access to support services for Pacific and Māori students. Both engage in outreach to their respective communities. The Office of Pacific Advancement has a specific objective to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in University activities.¹⁵¹ The University’s Ngā Wai o Horotiu Marae serves as a whānau, cultural and spiritual centre. Any students may use its space for study. Pacific students have the use of fono rooms on the City and North Campuses.

Pastoral and academic assistance for students of Chinese origin is provided by the the University’s Chinese Centre, which is run under the umbrella of the Office of International Relations and Development and Student Services.¹⁵² The Panel learned of the appointment of an Arabic-speaking adviser who can assist Saudi students and that there is a dedicated office for NZAid students from the Pacific. In addition to supporting the national Refugee Centre at Mangere, the University has a dedicated webpage in support of refugees and new migrants, in recognition of the specific challenges such people often face.¹⁵³

Students told the Panel that the University has a culture of belonging, provides spaces appropriate to all kinds of people, that “everything is open and everyone can find a place to relate and feel comfortable”. Panel members noted the careful design principles described for new buildings. They heard that there are many students who prefer to spend their study time at the campus rather than in what is sometimes less-than-ideal personal accommodation and that the University’s 24 hour access to some areas facilitated this.

¹⁴⁷ www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-postgraduates/your-health-and-wellbeing/spirituality-and-chaplaincy accessed 10.12.15.

¹⁴⁸ SP, p3.

¹⁴⁹ www.aut.ac.nz/community/aut-diverse-communities accessed 10.12.15.

¹⁵⁰ SR, p55.

¹⁵¹ www.aut.ac.nz/community/pasifika/about-us2 accessed 1.12.15.

¹⁵² www.aut.ac.nz/study-at-aut/international-students/aut-chinese-centre accessed 10.12.15.

¹⁵³ www.aut.ac.nz/community/aut-diverse-communities/migrant-and-refugee-backgrounds-community accessed 10.12.15.

The University has policies and procedures in place to support harassment prevention and to manage health and safety. A webpage is devoted to personal safety on campus and for after-hours emergencies.¹⁵⁴ The Panel concluded that the University makes considerable effort to ensure it is a culturally inclusive institution and has a physical environment in which students and staff feel safe and comfortable. No issues of concern were raised with the Panel.

Commendation: The Panel *commends* the University for its significant effort in endeavouring to provide an inclusive and safe campus for all students and staff.

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.

For students being taught overseas at partner institutions, the agreements require that appropriate learning and pastoral support is provided by the partner.¹⁵⁵

The University states that all student services are available on all three Auckland campuses. However it also comments that the satisfaction surveys indicate that student satisfaction with services is slightly lower at the South Campus than at the City and North Campuses. This difference is attributed to the provision at the South Campus being still at a development stage, with some services integrated for delivery.¹⁵⁶ The Panel was told that international support staff go to the AUT Millennium Institute to support students there.

The Panel is satisfied with what it heard about the student services being provided on all three Auckland campuses. However the challenge for the University will be to ensure that as the South Campus grows, the level of student services is maintained and evaluated.

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.)

As indicated elsewhere, student feedback on services is gathered via specific surveys, for example the University IT Service Quality Benchmark Survey (see also sections 1.5, 5.2 and 5.3) and student feedback is sought for programmes during programme reviews (see section 3.4).

¹⁵⁴ www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-undergraduates/your-health-and-wellbeing/your-safety/studying-after-hours accessed 10.12.15.

¹⁵⁵ Collaborative Agreement Template, Schedule 4.

¹⁵⁶ SR, p56.

A Survey Governance Group has oversight of all institutional surveys. An annual student survey plan is developed by the Academic Quality Office, for approval by the Survey Governance Group.¹⁵⁷ The main surveys used to gather student feedback on teaching, courses and student experience are the Student Paper Experience Questionnaire (SPEQ), the University Experience Survey (UES), the Annual Programme Survey (APS) and the Graduate Destination Survey (see section 5.6). The APS tracks satisfaction with programmes and is intended to trigger responses at faculty level. The nationally-benchmarked UES tracks satisfaction with non-programme aspects of a student's experience, including facilities, library collections, ICT services, administration and student services. The UES is intended to trigger responses from relevant service and academic units.¹⁵⁸ The University has also run a South Campus survey and has participated in the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) and the Postgraduate Survey of Student Engagement (POSSE) (see section 4.1). A student webpage outlines what these surveys are for and when and how they are administered.¹⁵⁹

The University has adopted the online survey management tool BLUE and is in the process of integrating this with other ICT systems to enhance the reach of surveys, improve access to data and summaries and to determine the most effective ways of (a) analysing qualitative comments and (b) communicating feedback to students.¹⁶⁰ BLUE combines questions related to papers with separate questions related to each teacher in the paper into a single survey form per paper, the SPEQ. Analysis is also undertaken such that reports can be produced for the course and for each separate teacher.

Results of surveys are considered by relevant service units, programme leaders, faculties and boards of studies. The University expects programme leaders and faculties to report on actions taken in the annual programme report. The Academic Quality Office considers reports for identification of any common issues or needs for improvement. Where scores for a programme are notably low a subsequent SPEQ might be undertaken.

The formal mechanism for feedback to students is via the survey webpage.¹⁶¹ Students interviewed by the Panel said academic staff are very receptive and responsive to needs for improvements. Some stated they thought the SPEQ a very good mechanism but, despite results being anonymised in reports, others thought lack of anonymity because of class size could constrain honest responses for students in small classes. The University has indicated it wants further improvement in mechanisms to ensure feedback on actions resulting from surveys (enhancement 5.2).¹⁶² The Panel supports this objective.

¹⁵⁷ Survey Policy – Student Surveying and Feedback.

¹⁵⁸ SPEQ Process – Simplified Overview, p3.; 2014 UES - Executive Summary.

¹⁵⁹ www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/student-surveys accessed 10.12.15.

¹⁶⁰ SR, p57.

¹⁶¹ See, for example www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/student-surveys/?a=537304; www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/student-surveys/manukau-student-experience; www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/student-surveys/annual-programme-survey/the-2014-annual-programme-survey accessed 10.12.15.

¹⁶² SR, pp57, 59.

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.

The Auckland University of Technology runs an annual Graduate Survey (GS) which, it states, seeks feedback from graduates on their satisfaction with their University experience and with their programme.¹⁶³ The survey report states that the Graduate Survey provides insight into the destinations of AUT graduates, and their experiences of transition into the workforce, by investigating their employment and study status approximately six to eight months after completion of their qualifications. The survey seeks to determine the value added by AUT qualifications by collecting feedback on graduates' main paid work and/or study status, their work status in their final year of study, their perception of their employability after studying at the Auckland University of Technology, and their job search strategy.¹⁶⁴ While this is in effect a graduate destination survey, it does ask graduates about the relevance and impact of the programme they had studied on their employability, for instance, *"Thinking about the knowledge and skills you acquired in your recently obtained qualification, how much have you applied in your current job?"*¹⁶⁵

The University anticipates that further development of BLUE will facilitate integration of information from the Graduate Survey with other data sources. It is also exploring whether it might gain access to salary earnings data on its graduates collected by the Ministry of Education.¹⁶⁶

It is not clear how any feedback gained from graduates is used for programme or service improvement, though the University states that it might inform individual programme development and that data might inform KPIs for internal and external reporting and for benchmarking and ranking purposes.¹⁶⁷ The Self-review Report identifies this as an area that could be developed further depending on the external data sources that become available.

¹⁶³ SR, p58.

¹⁶⁴ Graduate Survey Report 2014, p5.

¹⁶⁵ Graduate Survey Report 2014, pp29-30; Summary from Graduate Survey results 2013-2014.

¹⁶⁶ SR, p58.

¹⁶⁷ SR, p58.

6. Teaching Quality

The Auckland University of Technology's first strategic objective for Learning and Teaching is to develop skilled and innovative teachers who are at the forefront of knowledge, research and practice. The University highlights research, innovation and knowledge exchange with communities, industry, business and professions as means whereby a challenging curriculum is created and student experience is enriched.¹⁶⁸

The University also has a strategic commitment to increase the number of Māori and Pacific academic staff, and the number of women academic staff, particularly in senior roles.¹⁶⁹ The University's KPIs for Māori and Pacific staff referring to senior appointments show a small increase in the number of senior Pacific staff from two in 2013 to four in 2014 but the number of senior Māori staff declined from 13 in 2013 to 10 in 2014.¹⁷⁰

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.

The University's Recruitment Policy and Procedures outline the recruitment and appointment process. Hiring managers are responsible for this, including obtaining evidence of any qualification required for the position.¹⁷¹ The University reports that recruitment processes have been reviewed recently and technological mechanisms introduced to streamline and facilitate monitoring of processes. AUTonline has also facilitated quality assurance of qualification records.¹⁷²

Employees appointed to permanent or fixed term positions may be required to undertake a monitoring and review period of up to one year, during which time their workload is reduced to 80%.¹⁷³

The University provides a one-day orientation programme for new staff, and short sessions on particular topics during the year.¹⁷⁴ Staff without prior teaching experience are also expected to undertake specific professional development (see section 6.4). Staff referred to various activities provided by schools or faculties which assisted their induction – for instance, mentors and “teaching squares” where two experienced staff work with two early-career staff. Team teaching, where used, is also argued to assist with inducting new staff. The Panel was told that casual (non-continuing) staff have some opportunities for induction but this is variable. The Panel supports the proposed

¹⁶⁸ SP, p3.

¹⁶⁹ SP, p5.

¹⁷⁰ AR, p41.

¹⁷¹ Recruitment Procedures, p2.

¹⁷² SR, p62.

¹⁷³ Collective Agreement, p12.

¹⁷⁴ SR, p62.

enhancement 6.1 and encourages the University to ensure that as many casual staff as possible receive timely induction plus notification of ongoing training which might be relevant to their area of work.¹⁷⁵

The Panel heard that heads of school receive training in staff recruitment processes. It was also told about leadership development opportunities, in particular for Māori and Pacific staff and for female staff.¹⁷⁶ A pilot programme to provide specialised development support for selected Māori and Pacific AUT doctoral graduates to become new academic staff is underway.

The Panel was concerned that the 2013 staff engagement survey suggested almost a third of staff responding did not feel they had the tools and resources they needed to do their jobs effectively and/or were adequately trained.¹⁷⁷ From the survey responses however it is unclear what proportion of these respondents were academic staff. Also, the Auckland University of Technology scores for these two measures were not markedly poorer than those for the comparator institutions.¹⁷⁸

Overall the Panel found little evidence to indicate a strong or coherent institutional induction programme. It appeared that apart from initial orientation and occasional seminars, induction is left to schools to manage as they see fit. While the Panel supports the University's involvement of peers in the induction of new colleagues, it suggests there remains a potential risk in that the University has no formal means of ensuring that induction is either fair or equitable. It is suggested the University might benefit from benchmarking pre-arrival and post-arrival induction activities against good practice found in comparable universities elsewhere in New Zealand or Australia.

Recommendation: The Panel *recommends* that the University reviews its objectives and processes for inducting all new academic staff, whether permanent, fixed-term or casual, and develops a framework which will foster consistent practice across the University, which can be quality assured to ensure new staff all receive relevant advice about academic expectations at the Auckland University of Technology, and receive appropriate guidance to integrate into the University's community.

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 Strategic Plan's objectives for research and scholarship refer to support for staff, resources, linkages and communication. The KPIs refer to resources, revenue, number of research outputs (verified and/or peer-reviewed) and increasing the proportion of staff producing such research outputs.¹⁷⁹ All faculties are expected to have a research plan with clear targets for activity and outputs and the University lists a number of provisions for staff to encourage their research development and activity.

¹⁷⁵ SR, p68.

¹⁷⁶ www.aut.ac.nz/s/search.html?cluster0=Women+In+Leadership accessed 11.12.15.

¹⁷⁷ SR, p62.

¹⁷⁸ Staff Engagement Survey 2013, pp18; 23.

¹⁷⁹ SP, pp 31; 33.

The collective employment agreement for academic staff defines the principles that workload must be safe, reasonable and equitable. It acknowledges academic staff work as including teaching and related activities, research, academic leadership and other activities in support of the University. In addition, the responsibilities that Māori staff might have to their whanau, hapu or iwi and that Pasifika staff have to their aiga potopoto and Pasifika communities are to be recognised.¹⁸⁰ The requirements of the Collective Contract are given effect in the Academic Workload Policy.

The Panel explored the University's practice of defining Workload Bands. The University has four bands which reflect the number of timetabled teaching hours and accordingly determine expectations of other duties appropriate for staff in each band. These are intended to assist in the allocation of duties, but are not intended to be prescriptive.¹⁸¹ The Collective Agreement also refers to "Teaching Path" lecturers and "Research Path" lecturers. A Research Path position is normally in Workload Band A. It requires continuous research activity and a higher degree qualification, or equivalent outstanding achievement as an industry practitioner, and research experience.¹⁸²

The Panel understands that degree level teaching and thesis supervision is undertaken primarily by staff in Workload Band A. The Self-review Report states that heads of school are responsible for allocating staff to Workload Bands to ensure that degree students are taught mainly by staff who are research-active.¹⁸³

The Panel is aware that the use of Workload Bands should help mitigate against degree level students being taught by staff who are not research-active. However the Panel does note with concern the University's own assessment that research outputs are currently short of the targets it has set itself, as is the proportion of staff contributing verified research outputs.¹⁸⁴ This might introduce a risk that the staff who are research-active have inequitable teaching loads at degree level and that postgraduate supervision is spread unevenly.

The Panel explored the ways in which the University is addressing the development of research capability and output. It heard about efforts to develop a research culture and development of researchers. The Panel was told that there had been an increase in the proportion of staff who are research-active since the last PBRF (2012) round. Staff said that most non-research-active staff are teaching in pre-degree or clinical areas.

The Panel recognises that the Auckland University of Technology continues to have some amount of legacy effect from its pre-University staff profile, in part reflecting the vocational nature of some of its taught programmes. The Panel notes a strategic KPI to increase the proportion of doctorate qualified academic staff is gradually being met (an increase of 9% between 2012 and 2014). It

¹⁸⁰ Academic and Associated Staff Members' Collective Agreement, p19-20. Aiga potopoto are extended families.

¹⁸¹ Academic Workload Policy, pp3-4. The Collective Agreement, pp68-70, refers to five bands but the fifth is a grandparented provision. The University advises that the "Teaching Path" is rarely used for employment of new staff. (comm. 17.03.16)

¹⁸² Academic and Associated Staff Members' Collective Agreement, p80.

¹⁸³ SR, p62.

¹⁸⁴ SR, p63; AR, p34.

considers the provision of Doctoral Study Awards which allow staff in the final stages of a PhD six months relief from teaching and administration to complete their qualification to be an excellent initiative.¹⁸⁵ In the last seven years over 100 such awards have been made, with a 95% completion rate to date.¹⁸⁶

Recommendation: The Panel *recommends* that the University continues its provision of Doctoral Study Awards and continues to explore all other means to support the research activity of its academic staff, to ensure that its degree-level programmes are taught by active researchers and that postgraduate students have a wide range of suitably qualified and experienced supervisors available to guide their research projects.

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.)

Assessment of teaching quality is undertaken within the framework of the Staff Development Policy and Guidelines. The Policy emphasises formative feedback and states that all staff have a responsibility to both seek and respond to constructive feedback on their work as well as contribute to feedback on their peers. All staff are expected to maintain an Individual Development Plan (IDP) which shall take into account at least the requirements of the position, the staff member's career and/or personal development needs, any training needs, the University's development needs and feedback on the performance of the staff member during the preceding 12 months. The IDP is to be reviewed at least annually.¹⁸⁷

IDPs include a section on review of work practice.¹⁸⁸ The Guidelines advise staff to obtain feedback from customers/clients (i.e. students), colleagues/peers, the manager/supervisor.¹⁸⁹

The University advised the Panel that the Staff Development Policy and Guidelines were currently under review.

The University has good processes in place for collecting, analysing and reporting survey data on teaching and courses (see section 5.5). Data collated from surveys are being reproduced on the institutional scorecard and are thus accessible down to individual paper level. In addition to the regular surveys, the Self-review Report also lists other indicators of teaching quality, ranging from promotions processes and teaching awards to peer review and student achievement.¹⁹⁰ It was unclear how these data fed into staff performance assessments or the IDP process. The Self-review Report states that heads of school are responsible for managing performance and that they are

¹⁸⁵ AR, p40.

¹⁸⁶ SR, p63.

¹⁸⁷ Staff Development Policy.

¹⁸⁸ Staff Development Guidelines, p4.

¹⁸⁹ Staff Development Guidelines, p10.

¹⁹⁰ SR, p64.

responsible for following up on areas of concern identified from formal survey results or from complaints received. The University emphasises that multiple lines of evidence are preferred to reliance simply on survey data.

While accepting the University's position that teaching evaluation is based on individual professional responsibility, and that development of teaching portfolios, which are currently voluntary, will assist with this, the Panel nevertheless is concerned that oversight of teaching quality appeared patchy and that some institutionally monitored processes would be beneficial. At the same time, the Panel was impressed by a consistent and clear ethos about the importance of good teaching which was communicated to it from several areas of the University. It also understands that access to data on the Scorecard will enable staff (as well as their managers) to monitor some aspects of their own performance.

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.

The Academic Workload Policy states that the University is committed to the development of work practices which are effective and efficient. Innovation in teaching which fosters effective learning and student independence is encouraged and supported.¹⁹¹ The Workload Policy requires that lecturers will receive training in the use of new technologies prior to being required to use these technologies and will receive appropriate technical support and professional development in effective on-line teaching.¹⁹²

The Collective Agreement states that permanent lecturers who are appointed to the Auckland University of Technology without significant prior teaching experience will, in the first two years following appointment, undertake up to 12 weeks appropriate professional development in the practice of adult and tertiary education. The requirement may be waived if there has been appropriate prior learning. In addition, in each of the first two years of employment a lecturer may be required to use up to three weeks' discretionary time and five days' professional development leave for professional development. The Agreement stipulates the total amount of professional development time to which staff at each academic grade are entitled. All Māori staff members may apply to use professional development time to attend culturally significant hui.¹⁹³

The Panel heard many positive reports of the opportunities provided by the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CfLAT). Staff access is via AUTonline, which is accessible to staff on all campuses.¹⁹⁴ CfLAT activities include:

¹⁹¹ Academic Workload Policy, p1.

¹⁹² Academic Workload Policy, p2.

¹⁹³ Academic and associated Staff members' Collective Agreement, pp 33; 36.

¹⁹⁴ www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-undergraduates/autonline/staff-support/staff-support accessed 11.12.15.

- provision of a voluntary “introduction to university teaching” course for new staff and teaching assistants;
- workshops;
- provision of flexible learning and academic development advice;
- assistance with use of new technologies;
- managing and supporting AUTonline, the University’s learning management system.¹⁹⁵

The CflAT team is also responsible for managing the Vice-Chancellor’s teaching awards (see section 6.6).

The Panel noted that schools played a considerable role in the provision of staff development opportunities and that the collaborative provision with CflAT was seen as a good mechanism to encourage staff development.

The Self-review Report states that senior staff across faculties with learning and teaching portfolios meet on a regular basis. Each faculty bases its learning and teaching development programme on its own needs and priorities.¹⁹⁶ Faculties and schools draw on the experience of colleagues to provide teaching support and advice and to provide development of teaching assistants. Peer observation and review is used in some, but not all faculties; mentors were also mentioned to the Panel. Staff may, with approval, enrol in teaching programmes offered by the School of Education under a zero fee arrangement. At the time of the audit AUT staff constituted the majority of the 60 enrolments in the Graduate Certificate and Diploma in Tertiary Teaching.¹⁹⁷

The IT department plays a role in teaching development, working with CflAT where relevant. The Panel was impressed by CflAT’s use of “LATTEs” (Learning and Teaching Technology Enablers”), who are students who coach staff in the use of new technology. Staff reported around 607 jobs had been logged through the LATTE system over the period 2012-2015.

CflAT’s main mechanism for providing teaching development support is via its Learning and Teaching Development Fund (LTDF) Projects. Funding for these is contestable. Projects usually span one or two semesters. The Panel viewed some of the outputs from LTDF Projects and agreed they were innovative and had potential for positive impact. The University had supported over 100 such projects in three years. It noted that some projects also resulted in research outputs. Staff reported very positively on the value of LTDF projects. Several staff intimated though that while CflAT is excellent in supporting staff projects they are not proactive in leading projects. This view tended to be supported by other staff who said that CflAT had a service role, though they did also have a responsibility to keep the University abreast of pedagogical developments.

In order to move teaching development onto a more formalised professional basis, the Auckland University of Technology is in the process of introducing a professional learning programme (PLP) which uses multiple pathways to accreditation, based on the model used by the UK Higher Education

¹⁹⁵ SR, pp65-66.

¹⁹⁶ SR, p66.

¹⁹⁷ SR, p66.

Academy (HEA) and certified Membership of the Association of Learning and Technology. Termed *Ako Aronui*, the AUT initiative is part of a pilot (with Massey University) supported by Ako Aotearoa. The key outcome for individual staff will be a teaching portfolio which provides the basis of an application as a Fellow, Associate Fellow or Senior Fellow of the (UK) Higher Education Academy.¹⁹⁸ The Panel sees this as a very positive initiative. However the Panel also concurs with the self-review conclusion that while there are good development activities across the University, these are largely *ad hoc* and uncoordinated. Staff were unable to provide the Panel with an indication of how many staff, or which staff, used professional development opportunities, precisely because it is so diffused. The Panel therefore supports the proposed enhancement 6.3.

Affirmation: The Panel **affirms** the University's clear statement of an expectation of staff professional development and an entitlement to time to carry this out.

Recommendation: The Panel **recommends** the University take advantage of the introduction of the professional learning programme (PLP) initiative to also review the manner in which professional development for teaching is provided across the institution; and that the University develops a plan which will facilitate identification of common development needs, central coordination of appropriate development activities and also provide mechanisms for sharing good practice and innovation.

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.

The Academic Collaborative Agreements, Guidelines and Procedures specify that staff employed to teach its programmes in partner institutions must be "appropriately qualified" as a quality assurance requirement.¹⁹⁹ The University states that its agreement with partner institutions is also expected to specify the responsibilities of each party regarding staff development.²⁰⁰

AUTonline is usually available to staff and students in partner institutions so they have access to the same material as do AUT staff and students.

Staff at the North and South Campuses are included in all New Zealand-based provision of teaching support. Staff from these campuses who were interviewed told the Panel they felt well connected with the University as a whole. They had good input to University deliberations, noting that important meetings or workshops are held in different locations and staff decide venues for some meetings according to where most staff are located. This is particularly the case with respect to postgraduate supervision. The University shuttle helped facilitate commuting. Sometimes Skype is used for meetings.

¹⁹⁸ Ako Aronui – Learning about university teaching. Briefing paper 2015. See also <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/> accessed 14.12.15.

¹⁹⁹ Academic Collaborative Agreements, Guidelines and Procedures, p11.

²⁰⁰ SR, p67.

These staff referred to academic support teams, professional development opportunities and to library access as being available across all campuses. They said support for professional development from CflAT staff was excellent. The University has a CflAT team based at the North Campus as well as at the City Campus. Staff at the South Campus were particularly appreciative of space developments and IT support there.

The recommendation made in section 6.4 would apply to staff at all AUT Campuses.

6.6 Teaching recognition

Universities' reward processes (promotion; special awards) should recognise teaching capability.

The Auckland University of Technology recognises and rewards teaching through its promotions and awards processes. Formal promotion criteria include aspects of teaching, curriculum development, supervision and innovative pedagogical contributions.²⁰¹ For instance, lecturers applying for promotion must provide evidence of the research and scholarship they have undertaken to demonstrate a scholarly and informed approach to their teaching.²⁰² The Academic Promotion and Progression Procedures provide guidance on the kind of information which might be included in a portfolio in support of teaching success. Staff also reported that teaching is given due recognition in promotion deliberations and that some staff were acknowledged as being promoted to Associate or Professorial levels on the basis of teaching being their strongest area.

The Auckland University of Technology has had its own teaching awards for ten years. AuSM also has teaching awards, as do individual faculties. It was not apparent whether or how the University made use of the achievements of award winners, including staff who hold national tertiary teaching awards, for example in sharing good practice across the university and in encouraging other innovative and excellent teachers to put themselves forward for recognition. This potential might be considered in the University's response to the above recommendation (section 6.4).

Staff told the Panel how they appreciated the fact that atypical contributions (for example, in serving community projects) were recognised by the University in its promotion deliberations. The Panel was also told of staff who appreciated that they were actively being encouraged to apply for promotion.

²⁰¹ SR, p67.

²⁰² Academic Promotion and Progression Procedures – Lecturers, p2. (See also Academic Promotion and Progression Procedures – Senior Lecturers).

7. Supervision of Research Students

The Auckland University of Technology has strategic objectives to build the number and proportion of postgraduate students. KPIs for 2014 indicate targets are being met or exceeded; 15% of students (EFTS) were in postgraduate study, showing a progressive increase since 2012.²⁰³ In 2014 the University recorded the following profile of postgraduate students:

PhD	544 EFTS
Master's	1,006 EFTS ²⁰⁴

Of research postgraduate students²⁰⁵,

Master's	248 EFTS (384 headcount)
PhD	544 EFTS (617 headcount)
Total research student	792 EFTS (1,001 headcount)

This chapter focuses only on research students, i.e. master's thesis and doctoral students.

All doctoral programmes and the MPhil degree at the Auckland University of Technology are overseen by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and the University Postgraduate Board which includes the Associate Deans (Postgraduate) from each faculty. The Dean heads the University Postgraduate Centre which is responsible for administration of processes related to thesis supervision and examination. The Panel was shown the delegations schedule for postgraduate decisions, which covered key decisions clearly. The Research Committee and the Ethics Committee support the work of the Postgraduate Board. Research institutes and centres also support postgraduate as well as staff research.

Master's theses, other than the MPhil, are the responsibility of the faculties. The Postgraduate Handbook covers thesis matters for both doctoral and master's students. It is an excellent compendium covering all matters related to postgraduate research and study. The Panel noted that the University's Australasian benchmarking activities related to postgraduate processes.

Commendation: The Panel *commends* the University on the comprehensive, clear and accessible Postgraduate Handbook and on the thoroughness of procedures associated with admission, enrolment, supervision, progression through study and examination.

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.

The Auckland University of Technology requires a minimum of two supervisors for doctoral research, one of whom is designated a primary supervisor and is responsible for ensuring supervision is

²⁰³ AR, p26.

²⁰⁴ SR, p83. This figure includes taught master's students.

²⁰⁵ Breakdown of research student data provided by the University on request, 15.12.15.

monitored. Master's theses or dissertations and honours projects normally require only one supervisor.²⁰⁶ The University requires staff to have a minimum of a research master's degree if they are supervising a master's thesis, and to normally have a doctoral degree in a relevant field to supervise a doctoral thesis. Supervisors are expected to provide evidence each year of being active researchers and have this documented by the University Postgraduate Centre.²⁰⁷ The Postgraduate Centre holds a register of approved supervisors.

The Cycle 4 academic audit report included two recommendations pertaining to postgraduate supervision, one of these arising from a concern by that audit panel that the University had an inadequate number of staff qualified or experienced to be postgraduate supervisors.²⁰⁸ The Cycle 5 Panel has similar concerns but acknowledges that considerable effort has been devoted to addressing this. The University continues to acknowledge that the need to build research capability among academic staff, and thus be able to support supervision of increased numbers of research students, is a challenge. The Panel heard about deliberate recruitment initiatives to build supervisory capacity, including external membership on supervisory panels. The University also has processes in place to assist with building supervision capability of current staff, for example mentoring of less experienced academics as secondary supervisors.

Prior to undertaking a role of supervisor, all AUT staff must complete a supervision training workshop, provided by the University Postgraduate Centre. Thereafter these must be attended every second year. The University Postgraduate Centre also provides seminars for ongoing professional development of supervisors. The Associate Dean (Postgraduate) must ensure any external supervisors who are appointed have access to the supervision workshops and that these supervisors are familiar with AUT processes and regulations. While staff mentioned the value added by involving external staff, for example from industry, the Panel was told that the University has very few external supervisors.

If an appointed supervisor has not already supervised a thesis to completion they are required to have an approved mentor supervisor.²⁰⁹ The Postgraduate Handbook includes detailed guidelines for the requirements of a supervision mentor. It is expected that mentors will meet with the supervision team regularly, will observe part of the supervision process and will report to the Associate Dean (Postgraduate) or the Postgraduate Centre on any difficulties that arise. The Handbook also outlines the activities which a mentor must oversee and sign off on (for example, progress reports; appointment of examiners).²¹⁰

A Code of Practice for Supervisors details administrative and academic responsibilities, including procedures to be followed in the extended absence of a supervisor or supervision mentor. The Associate Dean (Postgraduate) also has designated responsibilities.

²⁰⁶ Postgraduate Handbook, p89. Also available online. www.aut.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/189946/2015-PG-Handbook-web.pdf accessed 14.12.15.

²⁰⁷ Postgraduate Handbook, p88.

²⁰⁸ The Auckland University of Technology Cycle 4 Academic Audit Report, pp38-39.

²⁰⁹ Postgraduate Handbook, p89.

²¹⁰ Postgraduate Handbook, pp90-91.

The Panel considered the procedures in place for mentoring new or inexperienced supervisors to be excellent. The Panel is aware, however, that the additional responsibilities of mentoring probably fall on those same experienced staff who are themselves carrying significant supervision loads. Staff indicated the tensions and challenges arising between demand or opportunity to increase postgraduate numbers and capability to supervise. This was highlighted in some particular areas where there are few staff available to supervise but demand is increasing. Staff told the Panel of strategies such as ensuring prospective students fitted with staff research areas. Co-supervision with staff from other universities and from outside universities was also mentioned.

The University Workload Guidelines indicate factors which need to be taken into account in determining a staff member's supervision workload. These include such variables as the number of students who are not first-language English speakers; the supervisor's own professional development or degree study; supervision at a distance; issues about managing safety (of student research) and the extent of overlap of the student's work with the supervisor's own research activity.²¹¹ The Panel was told that in some cases staff with heavy supervision and mentoring loads have a lower service responsibility and might have some administrative support.

While the Panel read that the degree of supervision concentration which resided with a small number of staff varies across disciplines, it was told that progress has been made in addressing this. The University would like to proceed further in having more staff supervising fewer students each. The Panel supports the University's proposed enhancements in this area. It also notes the success of the University's professional development opportunities for staff to take leave to complete PhDs . The Panel acknowledges the progress made in developing research capacity since the Cycle 4 audit, but urges the University to continue to address any areas where staff capability to supervise postgraduate research needs development, including areas where supervision capacity is unevenly spread among staff, as highlighted in section 6.2.

Commendation: The Panel *commends* the University for the provisions made for training, supporting, mentoring and monitoring supervisors and for its guidelines regarding workload management of supervisors.

7.2 Resourcing of research students

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

Documentation of processes used by the Auckland University of Technology to guide resourcing of student research is within the Postgraduate Handbook and also on the Postgraduate website.²¹² The Handbook states the University's minimum resource commitment to doctoral students, to provide:

- appropriate resources to carry out the research (including lab or creative space and technical support if relevant);

²¹¹ Workload Guidelines, pp72-73.

²¹² www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/starting-out/postgraduates accessed 14.12.15.

- appropriate study space, including secure storage and access to communal social and/or refreshment space or facilities;
- after-hours access to workspace provided both safety and security requirements are met;
- access to appropriate computing resources, email, internet, copying, telephone;
- access to Library facilities;
- access to University-wide seminars, workshops and events.

Postgraduate study rooms on each campus provide access to a number of the resources listed above. These rooms are maintained at institutional level (by the Postgraduate Centre at the City Campus, and by the Library on the North and South Campuses). The Panel was told that these spaces are very popular with students.

Each faculty or school is also required to establish a maximum amount for reimbursement of research support annually.²¹³ Some staff indicated that this statement applies to master's as well as doctoral students at faculty level, though the Statement of Minimum Resources in the Handbook applies only to doctoral students. Students are required, as part of their candidature, to develop a planned and defensible budget in order to have access to funds.

In addition to the above physical resources, the Postgraduate Centre provides an orientation programme for new (non-doctoral) postgraduate students, with additional events for international postgraduate students.²¹⁴ A doctoral induction programme and orientation tours for new doctoral and MPhil students are offered four times a year. Other activities intended to help postgraduate students with their study or to assist in their development as researchers or teachers, documented in the Self-review Report, include:

- a research development programme of seminars and workshops;
- tutoring opportunities through the Graduate Assistant programme;
- preparation for oral examinations;
- teacher development workshops offered by CfLAT.²¹⁵

Resources provided by Student Services to all students are also available (see sections 5.2, 5.3).

Students who were interviewed said they had many opportunities to be involved in seminars and workshops and appreciated opportunities to learn from outside speakers. They also reported opportunities to present their own research. Opportunities to train as teaching assistants were appreciated, with students noting that peer review was very good and they valued the involvement of their supervisors in the training. Some students also said they have very good support as teaching assistants, though this appeared to vary across schools or by supervisor. The comments made by students to the Panel were consistent with the results from the most recent 2012 postgraduate research experience survey, where 78% of respondents said they were satisfied with resources and facilities available to them and 87% said they were satisfied with the supervision they experienced. The Research Report on Developing Research Culture records similar trends in satisfaction.

²¹³ Postgraduate Handbook, pp24-28.

²¹⁴ www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/starting-out/postgraduates/orientation accessed 14.12.15.

²¹⁵ SR, p72.

The survey reported high levels of agreement – exceeding 80% - on a number of measures of satisfaction with their research experience but it does indicate that students would have appreciated more opportunities for networking, both outside their own faculties and outside the University. Relatively low rates of satisfaction were also recorded for aspects of the research environment.²¹⁶ The Research Report on Developing Research Culture also commented that research culture appeared to be faculty-specific.²¹⁷ As noted elsewhere, the University has been working progressively to enhance its research environment and, on the KPIs it records, has made progress since 2012, but there is more work to be done.²¹⁸

The Māori and Pasifika Postgraduate Students Wānanga Series received positive mention by students who were interviewed. Coordinated by several service groups, the Wānanga series covers a range of activities related to the postgraduate research journey, including talks by guest presenters, student presentations, student reading groups and writing retreats (in 2014, one off-shore). The Panel was pleased to see evaluations of the Wānanga Series.²¹⁹

The Panel also read reports of the Pacific Postgraduate Talanoa series, a national initiative coordinated by the Auckland University of Technology in support of Pacific postgraduate students, and noted that the University is a contributor (with Victoria University and the University of Canterbury) to a programme to develop transferable skills for doctoral students using the Australian LEAP (Learning Employment Aptitude Programme).²²⁰

Staff reported a range of resources available to assist international postgraduate students, in particular related to writing skills and English language, with assistance provided by both the Postgraduate Centre and the Student Learning Centre. The Student Learning Centre has a dedicated postgraduate adviser. The Panel was told that much of this support is intensive, one-on-one assistance. Academic staff expressed a particular concern related to international students who come to New Zealand on scholarships which support their university costs but who might struggle with the personal costs of accommodation, food and family-related expenses.

Overall the Panel concluded that resourcing of research students related to their academic experience and development is appropriate and the University's handbook and website provide clear documentation of what is available at an institutional level. Though the Panel was not alerted to any inequities, the University might nevertheless be advised to review whether there is any unevenness of support at faculty or programme level so that this can be managed at an early stage.

²¹⁶ Postgraduate Research Experience Survey Report 2012, Executive Summary.

²¹⁷ Research Report on Developing Research Culture, p2; pp15-16.

²¹⁸ AR, pp6-7; 34-36.

²¹⁹ 2014 reports on Māori & Pasifika Postgraduate Students Wānanga series.

²²⁰ Final Milestone (3) report on the Priorities for Focus project 813.

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.

Monitoring of supervision is the joint responsibility of the individual faculties and the University Postgraduate Centre. As recorded in section 7.1 above, the University's processes for mentoring of new or inexperienced supervisors include a monitoring role, to ensure supervision is effective and to address any issues which might arise. The Postgraduate Handbook includes a list of responsibilities of students.²²¹

The Postgraduate Handbook includes detailed expectations for supervision agreements, both for doctoral students and for master's and honours students.²²² This includes reference to intellectual property and ethical approval, as recommended in the Cycle 4 audit report.²²³ The requirements for six-monthly progress reports on doctoral theses, and guidelines as to actions to be taken if different circumstances arise (for example extensions, leave of absence, unsatisfactory progress, change of supervisors) are also detailed in the Handbook.²²⁴ The acceptable grounds for making an unsatisfactory progress decision are laid out clearly. Similar provisions for progress reports and variations on supervision arrangements are documented for master's and honours research.²²⁵

Progress reports are monitored at faculty level and by the Postgraduate Board, to identify and manage any issues which might arise. If supervision issues emerge that cannot be managed by the supervisor these are referred to the Associate Dean in the first instance and then to the Dean or Board if necessary. Remedial plans to address inadequate progress or supervision issues involve the Associate Dean.

The Panel learned of a project being piloted to introduce a toolkit for monitoring the quality of the supervision process and to assist with supervisor development.²²⁶ The Panel thought this a potentially helpful initiative.

Students interviewed by the Panel were very positive in their comments about supervision and their supervisors. Staff also told the Panel how arrangements were made for supervision when students and supervisors were on different campuses, for instance by use of Skype or ensuring travel arrangements were sensible and realistic for the student. The Panel was satisfied that good supervision arrangements are in place. It was also pleased to hear how Associate Deans work together as a team, sharing good practice and common challenges, and involving staff on all three campuses.

²²¹ Postgraduate Handbook, pp94-95.

²²² Postgraduate Handbook, pp149-155.

²²³ The Auckland University of Technology Cycle 4 Audit Report, pp39-40.

²²⁴ Postgraduate Handbook, pp46-51.

²²⁵ Postgraduate Handbook, pp67-71.

²²⁶ SR, p72.

7.4 Thesis examination

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

Examination procedures for both doctoral theses and creative works and for master's and honours theses and dissertations are detailed in the Postgraduate Handbook.²²⁷ Doctoral theses require three examiners, two of whom are external to the Auckland University of Technology and one of these is normally international. Master's theses and dissertations of more than 60 points have at least two examiners, one of whom must be external; dissertations of 60 points or less have two examiners, of whom one may be external or both may be internal. The guidelines for doctoral examination include provisions related to conflict of interest. In either doctoral or master's examinations, if the student is also a member of AUT staff then all examiners must be external.

The Handbook includes criteria against which theses and dissertations are to be examined.²²⁸ Overall examination processes and the appointment of examiners are the responsibility of the Postgraduate Board. The Self-review Report lists a number of activities related to the examination process, which reflect good practice and assist in ensuring the robustness of the examination procedure. Examination results for all theses, dissertations and research projects must be signed off by all supervisors and by the relevant Associate Dean.

The Auckland University of Technology has processes in place, aligned to those for supervisors, which ensure staff who examine theses meet specific criteria, and are given support and assistance to become qualified and sufficiently experienced to be appointed as examiners. This includes mentoring by an experienced examiner, and workshops. All new examination convenors must attend workshops and attend two oral examinations as observers before chairing one.

The University has guidelines for the submission and examination of theses in te reo Māori (see section 3.9).

A specific challenge which has been noted in the Self-review Report is the provision of supervision and examination for research projects contained within coursework master's, which are a growing area of enrolment.²²⁹ Responses to the Panel's queries about this referred primarily to staff workload rather than capability.

The Panel is satisfied that the Auckland University of Technology benchmarks doctoral theses in a conventional way, through appointment of international examiners. The Panel was pleased with the comprehensive detail of examination processes for master's and honours research as well as doctoral theses. The Panel also noted inclusion in the Handbook of Graduate Profiles for both doctoral and master's degrees.²³⁰

²²⁷ Postgraduate Handbook, pp52-62; 72-85.

²²⁸ Postgraduate Handbook, pp54; 57; 75-79.

²²⁹ SR, p72.

²³⁰ Postgraduate Handbook, pp8-9; 11.

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.

The University lists several mechanisms for gathering feedback from postgraduate students, including workshops, focus groups, fora, seminars and feedback facilities; input to the annual University Experience Survey; for non-doctoral students, input to the Annual Programme Survey; comments on the Thesislink blog.

The University consulted students in developing its Research Experience Survey in 2012 and invited student comment on its Research Report on Developing Research Culture – Enhancing the Postgraduate Research Culture at AUT (see section 7.2). The University has also participated in the Australasian benchmarked Postgraduate Survey of Student Engagement, POSSE (see section 4.1). A further iteration of the POSSE is planned for 2016.²³¹

Students referred to working parties set up to respond to particular issues identified from evaluations. They also referred to instances where students had directed review initiatives. However the University’s Self-review Report does not provide any specific examples of initiatives which have resulted from postgraduate student feedback, other than to “influence policy and guideline changes”. The Panel notes that the Research Report on Developing Research Culture includes a number of enhancement suggestions as a result of student feedback.²³²

²³¹ SR, p74.

²³² Research Report on Developing Research Culture, pp16-17.

Conclusion

During the site visit the Panel interviewed 100 staff and 28 students, as well as five members of the University Council. It found staff to be well versed in their portfolio areas and prepared to engage well with the Panel. Students spoken to were articulate and frank and gave very warm and positive reflections on their experiences at the Auckland University of Technology.

The Panel reviewed the University's response to the 2011 Cycle 4 recommendations and was satisfied that the University had addressed these. In some cases, for example with respect to benchmarking, education about academic integrity and development of processes related to postgraduate supervision, the University had undertaken significant work. In other cases, for instance with respect to management of business continuity of teaching and learning and in areas related to research capability, the Panel identified further work needing to be done.

The University provides strong evidence in a wide range of areas of its commitment to providing very high quality teaching, learning and student support experiences for its students, and to supporting its staff to facilitate these. The University also provides a wide range of activities in support of groups who might otherwise be disadvantaged or challenged in their university experience.

The Panel was impressed by the extent to which activity at the Auckland University of Technology across a wide spectrum of areas is evidence-based and data-driven.

The recommendations made by the Panel include areas where the Panel considers a risk of inconsistency or inequity might result from devolved responsibilities, including in staff induction, staff professional development and the provision of academic advice to students.

The University is expected to report on its response to the recommendations made by the Panel in twelve months' time (April 2017) and again at the time of the next academic audit.

Commendations

- GS1.2 C1 The Panel **commends** the University on its data-driven approach to planning, decision-making, monitoring, analysis and reporting across the spectrum of its academic and administrative activities and on the widespread use made of the Scorecard Dashboard.
- GS1.4 C2 The Panel **commends** the University on its systematic, evidence-based, internationally benchmarked approach to learning space design, on its consultative processes, on its identification and replication of effective space utilisation and design principles and for its initiatives to assist students with technological needs.

- GS2.2 C3 The Panel **commends** the University for its South Campus initiative and, in particular, on the University's success in recruiting and supporting Pacific students and endeavouring to ensure that the opportunities available for Māori and Pacific students are not unfairly constrained by location, affordability or educational inexperience.
- GS3.1 C4 The Panel **commends** the University on the clear, comprehensive and systematic programme approval process which ensures appropriate stakeholder input and external academic scrutiny as well as facilitating benchmarking and ensuring strategic alignment of new developments.
- GS3.3 C5 The Panel **commends** the University on the success of its determination to ensure a high proportion of students have the opportunity for work-integrated learning, on the commitment of staff to this and on the strong endorsement by students of its value to their learning.
- GS3.8 C6 The Panel **commends** the University on its comprehensive and coordinated approach to addressing academic integrity through educative, regulatory and experiential activities and documents for both staff and students.
- GS4.1 C7 The Panel **commends** the University on its proactive and inclusive approach to enhancing student engagement, including the appointment of a senior management role with oversight responsibility for student success; the pervasiveness of a student-centred ethos among staff; and the evidence-based strategies which are used to monitor engagement.
- GS5.2 C8 The Panel **commends** the University on its comprehensive and well-coordinated approach to identification of student learning support need, on the provision of appropriate support and ensuring opportunity to access it is maximised, and in particular on the work of the Student Experience Team.
- GS5.3 C9 The Panel **commends** the University for its significant effort in endeavouring to provide an inclusive and safe campus for all students and staff.
- GS7 C10 The Panel **commends** the University on the comprehensive, clear and accessible Postgraduate Handbook and on the thoroughness of procedures associated with admission, enrolment, supervision, progression through study and examination.
- GS7.1 C11 The Panel **commends** the University for the provisions made for training, supporting, mentoring and monitoring supervisors and for its guidelines regarding workload management of supervisors.

Affirmations

- GS3.2 A1 The Panel **affirms** the University's development of an institutional Graduate Profile and encourages it to expedite the application of this model to all qualifications and majors in a manner which will be easily understood by students and stakeholders.
- GS3.5 A2 The Panel **affirms** the University's proactive participation in international academic benchmarking initiatives and encourages the University to develop more explicit guidance for faculties and programmes, especially around benchmarking of assessment and learning outcomes.
- GS6.4 A3 The Panel **affirms** the University's clear statement of an expectation of staff professional development and an entitlement to time to carry this out.

Recommendations

- GS1.6 R1 The Panel **recommends** that the University gives priority to the identification of risk events which might impede teaching, learning, research and associated academic activities over an extended period and ensures that plans are in place, and procedures in place or available, to expedite business continuity of all core activities.
- GS2.3 R2 The Panel **recommends** that the University reviews its systems for giving, recording and reviewing academic advice to students; and that the University considers formulating a policy and procedures for academic advising which addresses responsibilities for giving advice, recording advice and follow-up of advice where relevant.
- GS5.1 R3 The Panel **recommends** that the University reviews how it communicates its appeals and academic grievance processes to students, both via the website and through paper and/or programme guides, to ensure clear and consistent advice is available and accessible to students, both about the processes and about who they should approach for assistance with lodging an appeal or grievance claim.
- GS6.1 R4 The Panel **recommends** that the University reviews its objectives and processes for inducting all new academic staff, whether permanent, fixed-term or casual, and develops a framework which will foster consistent practice across the University, which can be quality assured to ensure new staff all receive relevant advice about academic expectations at the Auckland University of Technology, and receive appropriate guidance to integrate into the University's community.

- GS6.2 R5 The Panel **recommends** that the University continues its provision of Doctoral Study Awards and continues to explore all other means to support the research activity of its academic staff, to ensure that its degree-level programmes are taught by active researchers and that postgraduate students have a wide range of suitably qualified and experienced supervisors available to guide their research projects.
- GS6.4 R6 The Panel **recommends** the University take advantage of the introduction of the professional learning programme (PLP) initiative to also review the manner in which professional development for teaching is provided across the institution; and that the University develops a plan which will facilitate identification of common development needs, central coordination of appropriate development activities and also provide mechanisms for sharing good practice and innovation.

Acknowledgments

The Panel thanks the Auckland University of Technology Vice-Chancellor Derek McCormack and Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Rob Allen for their warm welcome to the University and their support of the audit process.

The preparation and submission of the University's Self-review Portfolio was managed by Dr Ineke Kranenburg and Ms Lizzie Kelly. 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 and Council members who gave their time to appear before it during the site visit.

Audit Panel

Emeritus Professor Dugald Scott
Chair of the Panel

Education Consultant

Professor Elizabeth Deane

University of Western Sydney, Australia

Associate Professor Hon. Winnie Laban

Victoria University of Wellington

Professor Eric Pawson

University of Canterbury

Dr Lorraine Petelo

Lincoln University

Secretariat

Dr Jan Cameron

Director
Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

Heather Dickie

Education Consultant
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.

© AQA
2015

Level 9, 142 Lambton Quay, Wellington
P O Box 5787, Wellington 6145

Phone +64 (0)4 801 7924
email comms@qa.ac.nz



AQA | Academic
QualityAgency
For New Zealand Universities

Level 9, 142 Lambton Quay
PO Box 5787, Wellington 6145, New Zealand
p +64 4 801 7924 | e admin@aqac.ac.nz | w www.aqa.ac.nz