

# Cycle 5 Academic Audit Handbook for Universities

---

Dr Jan Cameron, AQA Director

April 2013

Version 1.0

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

**AQA**

Academic  
**Quality**Agency  
For New Zealand Universities

# **Cycle 5 Academic Audit Handbook for Universities**

**April 2013**

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

**Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities**

Level 9  
142 Lambton Quay  
Wellington 6011

P O Box 5787  
Wellington 6145

[www.aqa.ac.nz](http://www.aqa.ac.nz)

© 2013

Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities  
Wellington, New Zealand

## Foreword

Academic quality assurance in the New Zealand university sector ensures that academic processes are of an internationally respected standard.

The Education Act 1989 makes Universities NZ (formerly the NZVCC) the organisation that is primarily responsible for quality assurance of the universities. To discharge this responsibility, the Vice-Chancellors' committee established two bodies with complementary functions: the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) which undertakes the approval and moderation of all university programmes and the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities, AQA (formerly the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit, NZUAAU) which undertakes quality assurance of the institution.

Quality assurance activities overseen by CUAP and AQA for the university sector are underpinned by the following principles.

### 1. Developed by the universities:

CUAP and AQA were established by the universities and operate with their full support. Their functions and operating procedures are reviewed regularly. AQA's academic audit framework has been developed in consultation with the universities.

### 2. Evidence-based:

Universities are required to provide evidence of how their activities and processes meet their stated standards and objectives. Evidence is examined and assessed by peers throughout the quality assurance process. Audit conclusions must be evidence-based.

### 3. Enhancement-led:

Quality assurance is focused on the identification of goals and standards, and the charting of progress towards them. AQA underpins this process by revisiting previous audit recommendations and by facilitating the sharing of good practice in New Zealand universities and abroad.

### 4. Founded on self-review:

Academic quality is ultimately the responsibility of each university. CUAP's moderation processes and the AQA's audit cycles begin with self-review. CUAP and AQA are themselves evaluated regularly by independent panels in audit processes that also begin with self-review.

### 5. Assured by peer review:

National and international peer review is a critical element of teaching and research within a university, and is a fundamental component of the quality assurance system. CUAP uses peer review to evaluate proposals from the universities and to moderate recently introduced programmes. AQA audits are conducted by a panel of auditors comprising academic peers and other professionals who are national and international experts in academic quality assurance.

### 6. Collective and collegial:

CUAP and AQA function with the cooperation of all New Zealand universities and the engagement and expertise of individuals representing key stakeholders such as students, employers, professionals and other members of the universities' communities.

**7. Individually binding:**

All universities are subject to the requirements, and bound by the overall decisions, of the quality assurance system.

**8. Internationally benchmarked and endorsed:**

International auditors are a feature of every AQA audit panel, and CUAP and AQA procedures are informed by professional relationships with similar international agencies. In addition, many AQA auditors also audit in other jurisdictions, bringing an international perspective to their work in New Zealand. The New Zealand universities' quality assurance system is consistent with international guidelines for good practice and its quality assurance processes are regularly held up as an exemplar for other countries. AQA has been assessed as meeting the INQAAHE<sup>1</sup> Guidelines for Good Practice for quality assurance agencies.

**9. Independently operated:**

AQA is funded by the universities but is operationally independent. AQA has a separate board, staff and independently appointed auditors.

**10. Publicly accountable:**

The reports of institutional academic audit are public reports, satisfying the public accountability responsibility. CUAP decisions result in placement of qualifications on the NZQF.

The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities, AQA, was established (as the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit) in 1993 to carry out audits of the processes in universities which underpin academic quality. Evidence is sought to check that goals are being achieved and that policies and practices are under ongoing review as part of an overall quality enhancement regime. AQA audits are enhancement-led in that the conclusions from audits are intended to assist universities to develop their own practices in ways which will lead to high quality academic outcomes for students and staff. Academic quality itself is the responsibility of the institution, its staff and its students.

This handbook outlines the processes being adopted for the fifth cycle of academic audits in New Zealand universities. The handbook is produced in two companion volumes: the Handbook for Universities and the Handbook for Auditors (in prep 2013). Both handbooks will be reviewed, and revised if necessary, two years after initial publication. Feedback is invited from users on areas which require clarification or further detail. We hope this handbook assists you in the preparation for and conduct of your university's audit.

Dr Jan Cameron  
*Director*  
AQA

April 2013

---

<sup>1</sup> International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

## Contents

Foreword.....	i
1. Glossary.....	1
2. Abbreviations.....	4
3. Academic Quality Audit and Enhancement: An Overview.....	5
4. Cycle 5 Timeline.....	7
5. Cycle 5 Framework: Academic Activities and Guideline Statements.....	8
6. The Self-review.....	14
6.1 Carrying out the Self-review.....	14
6.2 The Self-review Framework.....	14
6.3 The Self-review Process.....	15
6.4 The Self-review Portfolio.....	16
6.5 The Self-review Report.....	16
6.6 Self-review Report Structure and Content.....	17
6.7 Diagrams and Tables.....	19
6.8 Benchmarking.....	19
6.9 Case Studies.....	19
6.10 Portfolio Documents.....	19
6.11 Form of Presentation of the Portfolio.....	20
6.12 Supplementary Material.....	21
7. Evidence for Self-review and Audit.....	22
7.1 Evidence.....	22
7.2 Triangulation.....	22
7.3 The Guideline Statements.....	23
8. The Audit Process: An Overview.....	24
8.1 The Audit Process: Timeline.....	24
8.2 Appointment of the Audit Panel.....	25
8.3 Budget.....	26
9. The Site Visit.....	27
9.1 Logistics of the Audit Site Visit.....	27
9.2 The First University-AQA Planning Meeting.....	27
9.3 First Audit Panel Meeting.....	27
9.4 Second University-AQA Planning Meeting.....	28

9.5	Second Audit Panel Meeting.....	29
9.6	The Site Visit.....	29
9.7	Recording of Interviews and Site-visit Secretarial Support .....	29
9.8	The Exit Meeting .....	30
9.9	Student Involvement in the Audit Process .....	30
9.10	Observers .....	30
9.11	Privacy and Confidentiality .....	30
10.	The Audit Report.....	32
10.1	Form and Content of the Audit Report.....	32
10.2	Audit Conclusions.....	32
10.3	Submission and Approval of the Draft Report.....	33
10.4	Media Release.....	33
10.5	Dissemination of the Audit Report .....	34
11.	Audit Follow-up and Dissemination of Good Practice .....	35
11.1	Follow-up after an Audit .....	35
11.2	Form of the Follow-up Report .....	35
11.3	Dissemination of Good Practice.....	35
	Appendix 1: Guideline Statements and Self-review Questions .....	36
	Appendix 2: Acknowledgments .....	76
	Appendix 3: References .....	77

## 1. Glossary

**Academic Activity:** In the context of Cycle 5 academic quality audits, “academic activity” includes all activities which contribute to teaching and student learning, including activities which support these, for example student admission processes or staff recruitment strategies.

**Academic Audit:** The process of quality assessment by which an external body ensures that the overall (internal and external) quality assurance procedures of an institution are adequate and are actually being carried out. Academic audit looks at the system for achieving good quality and not at the quality itself. The results of the audit must be documented (audit report). (Also referred to as **Academic Quality Audit**)

**Academic Quality Assurance:** The ongoing processes of evaluating the quality of academic activity. This includes assessing, monitoring, maintaining and improving academic processes and academic experience and outcomes. Academic quality assurance may focus on accountability as well as enhancement. It might provide judgements but does not normally undertake ranking assessments.

**Academic Quality Audit:** (see **Academic Audit** above).

**Academic Quality Enhancement:** Improvement of existing academic practices, or introduction of new practices to improve existing processes or achieve objectives. “Enhancement” implies an existing activity to be enhanced.

**Academic Quality Management:** The sum of measures adopted at institutional level to ensure the quality of education, with an emphasis on improving quality of academic processes as a whole. Academic quality management includes planning, quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement/enhancement.

**Accreditation [of institutions to offer programmes]:** Recognition that academic programmes meet required standards. Academic quality audit as conducted by AQA does not include accreditation. (Accreditation is the responsibility of CUAP, for the universities, and relevant professional associations.)

**Affirmation:** Validation by the audit panel of action a university is already taking to address an area which the university has identified as requiring attention. 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.

**Audit Framework:** For Cycle 5, the Framework comprises the **audit topic** *Teaching and learning and student support*, the seven **academic activity themes**, and within each academic activity, the **guideline statements**.

**Benchmarks:** Comparative standards for academic activities in other institutions with similar objectives and/or characteristics. Benchmarks usually denote recognised good practice.

**Commendation:** Recognition of excellent practice with demonstrable good outcomes.

**External Review:** A review undertaken by external peers. For the university sector in New Zealand, one form of external review is the institutional audit undertaken by auditors appointed by AQA. As part of their audit activity, AQA auditors consider the university's **self-review** related to the audit framework provided by AQA. (*cf* External evaluation and review conducted by NZQA for the non-university sector<sup>2</sup>.)

**Graduate Attributes:** The core attributes which it is intended a graduate will acquire in a course, programme or institution. Graduate attributes are commonly differentiated as discipline-related attributes and non-discipline-related attributes (for example, ability to work in a team). Graduate attributes might be characterised as *intended graduate outcomes*.

**Graduate Outcomes:** Those graduate attributes which have been achieved.

**Guideline Statement:** In the context of the Cycle 5 framework, a minimum statement of academic processes which students and other stakeholders might expect of a university of good standing, or which universities might expect of each other.

**Programme:** Programme is defined in this publication as a coherent set of courses (sometimes called papers), such as might comprise a subject major, or be required for a degree or diploma.

**Qualifications Framework:** The New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF), managed by NZQA, lists all quality assured qualifications in New Zealand.

**Recommendation:** An advisory statement of an activity requiring attention. Recommendations indicate a need for enhancement but do not dictate how the university is to undertake that enhancement. Universities are required to report their responses to recommendations to AQA and are required to report progress on activity related to recommendations in follow-up reports and the subsequent academic audit.

**Register of Auditors/Reviewers:** A list of those people appointed by AQA as qualified to undertake academic audits or reviews. External audit panel members for New Zealand academic quality audits are selected from the AQA register and from the registers of overseas agencies recognised by AQA as undertaking similar audits.

**Self-review:** The university's own evaluation of its performance against its formal objectives (as articulated in its Investment Plan and other strategic documents) and the audit framework provided by AQA. The self-review is reported in a **Self-review Portfolio** comprising a **Self-review Report** and **key supporting documents** which provide evidence and/or context for the conclusions reached in the Self-review Report.

**Site Visit:** The component of an external academic quality audit (or audit) which occurs at the university's campus or campuses. The site visit provides opportunity for external auditors to meet and interview staff, students and local stakeholders, as well as to gain appreciation of the campus location, community and infrastructure. If a university has more than one teaching location there may be more than one campus visit during an audit site visit.

---

<sup>2</sup> See [www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/](http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/providers-partners/external-evaluation-and-review/) downloaded 040213.

**Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty):** The Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand's founding document signed in 1840, which recognised Māori ownership of its lands and other properties, and gave Māori people the rights of British subjects. The Treaty Principles adopted in 1989 include, *inter alia*, the Principle of Equality which applies to social rights and opportunity. The Principles also recognise the distinctive cultural development of Māori people.

**Triangulation:** The process of using more than one source or type of evidence to investigate a phenomenon, verify a claim or test a hypothesis.

## 2. Abbreviations

<b>AQA</b>	Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (formerly the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit, NZUAAU)
<b>AUQA</b>	[former] Australian Universities Quality Agency
<b>CUAP</b>	Universities New Zealand Committee on University Academic Programmes
<b>HEI</b>	Higher Education Institution
<b>INQAAHE</b>	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum or Memoranda of Understanding
<b>NZQA</b>	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
<b>NZQF</b>	New Zealand Qualifications Framework
<b>NZUAAU</b>	New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit (now named the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities, AQA)
<b>NZUSA</b>	New Zealand Union of Students' Associations
<b>NZVCC</b>	New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (referred to as Universities New Zealand)
<b>QAA</b>	The [UK] Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
<b>TEC</b>	[New Zealand] Tertiary Education Commission

### 3. Academic Quality Audit and Enhancement: An Overview

#### The purpose of academic quality assurance

Academic quality assurance refers to the processes used for evaluating the quality of academic activity. This includes processes for assessing, monitoring, maintaining and improving academic processes and academic experience and outcomes. Academic audit is one tool which is used internationally to assure institutions, their stakeholders, and the university community both nationally and internationally that the processes the university uses to achieve good outcomes for its students are acceptable, appropriate and effective.

Academic quality assurance may focus on both accountability and enhancement. In New Zealand the programme approval processes managed by CUAP and the academic audit processes managed by AQA together contribute to satisfying the obligations incumbent on the New Zealand Vice Chancellors' Committee to be accountable for academic quality, as per the Education Act (s 253A; s260). In that context they are about external accountability. However, both AQA and CUAP processes also facilitate opportunities for improvement.

AQA holds the view that its academic audits must be enhancement-led. That is, the focus of audits should not be on identifying things being "done wrong" but rather on identifying areas where the university might be assisted to enhance its activity in keeping with its own particular objectives. To that end, commendations are considered to be an important way of recognising and sharing good practice. Excellent practices or processes in a university which are also innovative or exemplary may be considered for inclusion in AQA national resources of good practice. In this way individual institutional audit is linked to national enhancement.

Regular and systematic academic audits, carried out in accord with international best practice, assure the New Zealand public that the quality of university academic activity is scrutinized and subject to an ongoing regime of improvement. This quality assurance also goes some way towards establishing mutual recognition of quality standings between universities in international jurisdictions who share common approaches and standards.

#### The process of academic audit in New Zealand universities

This Handbook refers to the fifth cycle of institutional audits of New Zealand universities. Previous cycles have focussed on whole-of-institution (Cycle 1: 1995-98); research, the teaching-research link and postgraduate support (Cycle 2: 2000-2001); teaching and learning (Cycle 3: 2002-2007) and whole-of-institution (Cycle 4: 2008-2012). Reports from those audits are available on the AQA website, [www.aqa.ac.nz/reports-and-papers](http://www.aqa.ac.nz/reports-and-papers). Cycle 5 audits focus on teaching and learning and student support, including postgraduate study.

Over the previous four cycles, audits were managed around a framework which invited the institution to reflect on its strengths, challenges, areas for enhancement and areas of good practice. This model is continued with Cycle 5. Self-review Reports are expected to be more than a descriptive account of what a university does. If the self-review exercise is to be useful to the institution it must be evaluative and the evaluation should be comprehensive, fair and honest. For this reason, Self-review Reports are not public reports: they are private to the institution, to AQA and to the panels undertaking the audits.

As an overview<sup>3</sup>, an academic audit comprises the following key activities:

- A **self-review** by the university. This review should ask “What are our objectives?”; “What do we do?”; “How well are we doing?”; “How do we know?”; “What are we going to do about it?” Universities are free to conduct the self-review in whatever manner they deem appropriate. It must, however, address the topics of the review framework provided by AQA and document action taken in response to recommendations from the previous audit.
- Preparation and submission to AQA of a **Self-review Portfolio**. The Portfolio includes a **Self-review Report** plus key supporting documents.
- At the same time, students of the university are invited to submit to AQA an **independent student report** on the audit topics.
- Consideration of the Portfolio by an **independent external audit panel**, appointed by AQA. Panels normally include at least one international member.

Auditors use the self-review portfolio as their main source of evidence about the university. They may also draw on other publically available information – for example from the university’s website or published statistical data. The Panel will consider areas where it needs further information, either to test claims made by the university or to explore in more detail areas of potential good practice and areas of particular challenge. Some of this additional information might be requested and assessed prior to the site visit.

- The Panel undertakes a **site visit** where it interviews a range of staff, students and stakeholders, with the objective of further testing the claims made by the university and triangulating the Panel’s own evidence for the conclusions it is drawing. If the university has more than one campus the audit panel, or some of its members, may visit other sites prior to or during the visit to the main site.
- An **audit report** is completed, quality-checked by the AQA Board, checked for accuracy by the university and, after approval by the AQA Board, is made public.
- One year after the site visit the Panel Chair and the Director of AQA will visit the university to be briefed on the **university’s response** to the audit report. Following that visit a written report is prepared by the university outlining the actions it has taken (or is taking) in response to recommendations in the audit report. This report is submitted to the AQA Board.

---

<sup>3</sup> These activities are elaborated on in Chapters 6-11.

## 4. Cycle 5 Timeline

The proposed years for each university audit are:

	<b>Cycle 4</b>	<b>Cycle 5</b>	<b>Indicative date of site visit</b>
Massey	2008	<b>2013</b>	November
Victoria	2009	<b>2014</b>	May
Auckland	2009	<b>2014</b>	June
Canterbury	2010	<b>2014</b>	November
<i>Mid-cycle review of audit process</i>		<i>2015</i>	<i>March</i>
Waikato	2010	<b>2015</b>	August
AUT	2011	<b>2015</b>	November
Otago	2011	<b>2016</b>	May
Lincoln	2012	<b>2016</b>	August
<i>End-of-cycle review of audit process and themes</i>		<i>2016</i>	<i>November</i>

Dates of actual site visits will be negotiated with each university.

Normally a university should begin preparation for a site visit approximately ten months prior to that event. The self-review portfolio is expected to be submitted to AQA 16 weeks (four months) prior to the site visit. See the timeline for specific activities within the audit process in Chapter 8.

## 5. Cycle 5 Framework: Academic Activities and Guideline Statements

The approach adopted for the Cycle 5 academic audit was developed by AQA in consultation with university staff, the Vice-Chancellors, academic auditors, the AQA Board and representatives of NZUSA. AQA also considered alternative types of review in other educational spheres, both national and international, and drew on contemporary practice in several leading international jurisdictions.

The Cycle 5 audit approach is presented as a framework of **Academic Activity Themes** related to teaching and learning and student support, underpinned by **Guideline Statements** pertaining to activities and processes which support these themes. The key **Academic Activity Themes** 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 **Guideline Statements** under each of the Academic Activity Theme headings refer to activities and quality assurance processes which might be expected as fundamental in a contemporary university of good standing. They articulate the *minimum requirements* which students and other stakeholders might expect of a university, and which universities might expect of each other. In addition, the Guideline Statements reflect:

- The requirements of the Education Act (in particular reflecting research-informed degree teaching, and NZQA Rules for programme approval<sup>4</sup>);
- The Tertiary Education Commission priorities for 2010-2015<sup>5</sup>;
- University obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi<sup>6</sup>;
- University obligations under the Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students, 2011<sup>7</sup>;
- Academic activity issues which were raised during Cycle 4 academic audit;
- Academic activity issues which were raised by the 2011 New Zealand analysis of the Australasian Universities Survey of Student Engagement<sup>8</sup>;
- Good practice models for universities and for academic audit<sup>9</sup>.

For each academic activity theme, universities should 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. This **Handbook**

<sup>4</sup>S162 4(a) and 4(b); S253;

<sup>5</sup>[www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/TertiaryEducation/PolicyAndStrategy/TertiaryEducationStrategy/PartTwoPriorities.aspx](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/TertiaryEducation/PolicyAndStrategy/TertiaryEducationStrategy/PartTwoPriorities.aspx)

<sup>6</sup>See [www.aqa.ac.nz/treaty](http://www.aqa.ac.nz/treaty)

<sup>7</sup>See

[www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/InternationalEducation/ForProvidersOfInternationalEducation/CodeofPracticeforInternationalStudents.aspx](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/InternationalEducation/ForProvidersOfInternationalEducation/CodeofPracticeforInternationalStudents.aspx)

<sup>8</sup>See <http://akoaootearoa.ac.nz/node/6353>

<sup>9</sup>Key models have been those of the QAA(UK), the former AUQA (Australia) and the European Quality Standards.

provides more information on the kinds of evidence and indicators which might be appropriate for each expectation referred to in the guidelines (see Appendix 1).

Throughout the academic activity areas identified in the framework, attention will 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 particular student groups (e.g. Māori; Pacific; international) but unless otherwise stated it is assumed processes discussed apply to all students similarly.

In reporting within each academic activity area, universities will respond to the Guideline Statements by addressing the standard audit questions, viz:

- *What is your university's particular objective/commitment? (university expectations)*
- *What do you do to meet – or exceed – this objective/commitment? (verification)*
- *Do you succeed in meeting the expectation and your own objective/commitments? (quality assurance – evaluation)*
- *How do you know? (quality assurance - evidence)*
- *What are you going to do about it? (enhancement)*

A key focus of the audit will be the evidence which the university uses to assure itself of meeting its own expectations and the AQA Guideline statements. Further information about evidence is provided in the following chapter.

## **The Academic Activity Themes and Guideline Statements:**

### **1. Leadership and Management of Teaching and Learning.**

#### **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.

#### **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.

*Note: This section is where universities might discuss any institutional initiatives and/or challenges which span activities referred to in several Guideline Statements.*

#### **1.3 Student input**

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

#### **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.

### **1.5 Information resources**

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

### **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.

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

### **2.1 Admission and selection**

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

*Note: If there is capped intake then this expectation will include those selection policies and procedures, as appropriate to the University's objectives.*

### **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.

### **2.3 Academic advice**

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

## **3. Curriculum and Assessment**

### **3.1 Programme approval**

Universities' internal course and programme approval processes must meet national (CUAP/NZQF) expectations and should include opportunity for input from stakeholders (including Māori) where appropriate.

### **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.

*Note: Universities might refer to graduate profiles, graduate outcomes or graduate attributes, as appropriate to their own terminology. The expectation, however, is intended to address graduate attributes at the programme and/or institutional level, not at the individual course/paper level.*

### **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.

*Note: Universities may also provide evidence of how they know this has actually happened (especially for non-discipline related attributes). AQA recognizes this evidence might not always be readily available.*

**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.

**3.5 Benchmarking programmes**

Universities should use processes for benchmarking curriculum and assessment standards to ensure they are nationally and internationally appropriate. (This Guideline Statement refers to taught courses. See also 7.4 re thesis examination.)

**3.6 Assessment**

Universities should use documented procedures for monitoring and moderating assessment processes and standards. (This Guideline Statement refers to taught courses. See also 7.4 re thesis examination.)

**3.7 Equivalence of learning outcomes**

*(where relevant)* 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 overseas, meet the standards expected by the university on its home campus.

**3.8 Academic misconduct**

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

**3.9 Assessment in te reo Māori**

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

**4 Student Engagement and Achievement****4.1 Student engagement**

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

**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.

*Note: The particular groups would be those identified by the university as needing or deserving special attention.*

**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.)

**4.4 Under-achieving students**

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

#### **4.5 High-achieving students**

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

### **5 Student Feedback and Support**

#### **5.1 Academic appeals and grievances**

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

#### **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 re retention and completion; 5.4 re support on other campuses.)

#### **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.

#### **5.4 Support on other campuses**

*(where relevant)* 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 overseas.

#### **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.)

#### **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.

### **6 Teaching Quality**

*In the following expectations "all staff" refers to non-continuing staff (tutors; staff on contract; sessional staff) as well as to continuing staff.*

#### **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. (See also 7.1 re thesis supervision.)

#### **6.2 Research-active staff**

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

**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 re support on other campuses; 7.1 re thesis supervision.)

**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. (See also 7.1 re thesis supervision.)

**6.5 Teaching support on other campuses**

*(where relevant)* 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.

**6.6 Teaching recognition**

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

**7. Supervision of Research Students****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.

**7.2 Resourcing of research students**

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

**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.

**7.4 Thesis examination**

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

**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.

## 6. The Self-review

### 6.1 Carrying out the Self-review

AQA audits are based on the institution's self-evaluation, which we refer to as the self-review. This focus reflects AQA's recognition that universities have differing priorities and values, that they are autonomous institutions, and that academic audit is intended to respect universities' own, individual, objectives. The self-review is generally regarded as an important and useful component of quality assurance. Not only does it provide the audit panel with the core information required for audit, but it might also lead to improvements in academic processes irrespective of AQA's audit. This accords with AQA's intention that academic audits be enhancement-oriented.

Universities are free to conduct their self-review in whatever way they consider most appropriate and most efficient. All New Zealand universities now have mature quality assurance systems in place. It is likely therefore that a self-review for audit purposes will draw on evaluations already undertaken for the university's own purposes – for example, reviews of processes undertaken as part of scheduled policy review; analysis of feedback from students as part of programme reviews or teaching evaluations; reviews of assessment practices as part of programme reviews or accreditation exercises. In fact a self-review for audit should provide opportunity and incentive for staff in a university to reflect on the effectiveness and outcomes of their existing quality assurance processes.

### 6.2 The Self-review Framework

Given that quality assurance and quality enhancement processes in universities are now generally well developed, AQA expects that preparation for Cycle 5 audit should not burden universities with the preparation of significant new material other than the Self-review Report. The self-review should be a reflection on current practice, with an honest evaluation of the audit questions:

- *What is our university's particular objective/commitment?*
- *What do we do to meet – or exceed – this objective/commitment?*
- *Do we actually succeed in meeting the objective/commitments?*
- *Do we succeed in meeting the AQA guideline statement (if this differs from our own objective)?*
- *How do we know? i.e., what is the evidence?*
- *What, if anything, are we going to do about this objective/commitment?*

Of the above questions, the most critical one is likely to be “how do we know?” That is, the self-review and the audit which follows will be concerned with evidence – the nature of the evidence, its quality and usefulness, and how it is used.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> In addressing the above questions, universities might also find it helpful to use the “ADRI” model to evaluate their practice: approach; deployment; results; improvement.

Approach – planning, resourcing, external constraints or requirements, consultation; risk management; training.  
Deployment (implementation) – how are the plans put into effect? monitoring effectiveness of the processes; interventions.

Results – what is the outcome? can cause and effect be established? analysis of outcomes against goals; performance measures; targets.

Improvement – evaluation and review processes; (re)assessment of objectives.

### 6.3 The Self-review Process

Many universities have found it helpful in the past to organise workshops around themes in the audit framework. In some cases the workshop teams have been existing committees; in other cases existing committees take responsibility for organising workshops or focus groups. Generally, AQA does not believe a university needs to run specific surveys or develop sophisticated investigations to answer the audit questions. If this does seem necessary then it might be a prompt for the university to reflect on the adequacy of its current quality assurance processes around the particular activity.

Over the course of the self-review there is potential for a significant amount of material to be accumulated. This will not only need to be managed efficiently but will also need to be evaluated for relevance and usefulness. It will usually prove helpful to have a person designated as secretary or managing administrator for the project and an overall steering group for the self-review. People contributing to the steering group need to have close familiarity with academic processes and the university's normal quality assurance activities. Most universities have staff who are experienced academic auditors<sup>11</sup>. These people can add considerable value to the self-review process and, in particular, preparation of the report, as they can contribute advice on the kinds of questions auditors might wish to ask or the areas they need to have covered by the portfolio.

Universities may adopt their own strategies for self-review. In doing so, two principles should be borne in mind:

- While there might well be some “key informants” for specific themes, the self-review should, if possible, include the perspectives of all participant groups in the activity, i.e. should not be limited to a management perspective only;
- For activities involving students, a student perspective should be included in the self-review. (Note that for Cycle 5, students will also be invited to make an independent submission to the audit process.)

AQA audits are academic audits. To that end it is essential that academic staff in the university have ownership of the self-review and the audit outcome. The self-review might need to be management-led but ideally it should not have to be management-driven. Given the responsibility of Academic Boards for institutional academic quality, it might be expected that this forum will be critical in confirming overall self-evaluations.

Occasionally universities have carried out “trial audits” as part of their self-review. While these might sometimes be helpful to the institution, it must be emphasized that such activities occur to contribute to the self-review, rather than as preparation or training for the audit itself.

A useful guide to institutional self-review is the paper “Good practice in Reflective Analysis when preparing for Enhancement-led institutional review” prepared by the Universities Scotland Teaching Quality Forum and published by The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)<sup>12</sup>.

---

See [www.nct.edu.om/documents/qa\\_portal/manual\\_adri.pdf](http://www.nct.edu.om/documents/qa_portal/manual_adri.pdf) - accessed 11.01.13. The ADRI model was first known internationally as PDCA (Plan Do Check Act) model.

<sup>11</sup> See [www.aqa.ac.nz/about-us/auditors](http://www.aqa.ac.nz/about-us/auditors)

<sup>12</sup> Available from AQA or downloadable at [Universities Scotland Teaching Quality Forum Project: Good practice in Reflective Analysis when preparing for Enhancement-led institutional review](http://Universities Scotland Teaching Quality Forum Project: Good practice in Reflective Analysis when preparing for Enhancement-led institutional review) - accessed 10.01.13.

“[I]nstitutions which adopt an open, inclusive, reflective and evaluative approach to the production of their RAs (*i.e. self-review*) are more likely to achieve an ELIR (*i.e. audit*) outcome that they see as satisfactory and useful.” (p2)

“[T]hose institutions that consciously used the preparation of the RA (*self-review*) and the rest of the ELIR (*audit*) as part of their ongoing institutional review processes were more positive about the outcomes than those who saw it more as an external imposition”. (p24)

(QAA, 2009)

#### 6.4 The Self-review Portfolio

The self-review portfolio comprises a **report** plus **key supporting documents**.

The Self-review Report should be able to stand on its own for comprehensiveness and understanding. The other documents in the portfolio will augment statements in the report and provide more detail about the context and/or evidence for claims made. It is not expected that these documents would be generated specifically for the purpose of audit. It might be noted that in addition to evaluating specific academic activity areas, auditors will be interested in the institution’s overall academic quality system and how the processes discussed contribute to it.

#### 6.5 The Self-review Report

The Self-review Report is the summary of the institution’s evaluation of its academic quality assurance processes, their effectiveness, and indications of activities which the university identifies as being necessary or desirable to enhance or maintain effectiveness. The Self-review Report is not intended to be a public document (unless the university chooses to make it so), but AQA recommends that universities make it available on their internal intranets. This assists with making good use of the self-review for improvement purposes. It also enables staff who might be interviewed by the audit panel to become familiar with the university’s evaluation.

Some key guidelines for the Self-review Report are that it should be:

- Reflective and evaluative – while some description will be necessary to provide context or evidence, the purpose of the self-review is to conduct a self-evaluation, make an assessment and be analytical about what an institution is doing to provide an excellent academic experience for its students.
- Evidence-based – no claims should be made which cannot be supported by evidence (see Chapter 7 of this Handbook).

- Transparent/honest – the reason Self-review Reports are not public documents is to ensure institutions feel it is safe to be self-critical where this is warranted, and to be self-affirming where evidence justifies this. Besides, a self-review will be useful to the institution only if it derives from transparent and honest self-analysis. Honesty in a Self-review Report might include documentation of constraints on making improvements which might have been identified as desirable.
- Documenting strengths as well as weaknesses.
- Placing most emphasis on aspects which are distinctive. While the audit panel will need to assure itself that "normal practice" activities are done, and will want to know how the university assures itself that they are done well, there is little point in describing such activities in detail if they are normal or common practice in most New Zealand universities.
- Laid out clearly and easy to navigate; provide cross-referencing where appropriate and good referencing to supporting documents, institutional policies etc. (hyperlinks are helpful where possible). Numbering sections within chapters according to the Guideline topics would be helpful – avoid further numbering of subsections if possible. Alternatively, a system of paragraph numbering may be used if preferred.
- Readable and thoroughly edited. A single author is usually preferred; if there are multiple authors then a report editor is essential, in particular to ensure uniformity of style, to guard against unnecessary repetition, and to identify gaps and contradictions. If there are particular terms which might be specific to the university, include a glossary or footnotes to explain these.
- Focussed, succinct and not unnecessarily long (see section 6.6).

Note that any Self-review Report reflects the university's status at a point in time. Self-review managers and report-writers should set the point in time and adhere to it. If there are significant changes to key academic processes after the report has been finalised these can be reported to the panel prior to or at the audit site visit. If the university undergoes major changes which might impact on activities covered by the audit - e.g. a restructuring or merger – an addendum might be provided to the report outlining the changes and possible areas of impact.

## 6.6 Self-review Report Structure and Content

AQA hesitates to provide an actual word length for the Self-review Report. A general guideline is that it should be able to be read in a single session, as this helps maintain a sense of context and connectedness of the institution's activities. This guideline suggests somewhere in the region of 40-60 pages of text (no more than 30,000 words).

The overall structure of the Self-review Report begins with a **Preface** which will set the context for the audit. The Preface will be primarily descriptive. It might provide an overview of the university's current status, management and academic structure, strategic direction, distinctive character, significant current challenges and special projects. In this section the university might alert auditors to the ways in which its distinctive characteristics shape or impact on activities included within the audit framework. The Preface might refer to supporting documents where more detail is available (e.g. Annual Report; Strategic Plan).

The report should also have a **Conclusion** which includes an overview or summary (list) of the enhancements identified, how these fit with the university's own strategic direction and thus how they might be prioritised.

The intervening **chapters** will address the academic activity themes using those activities as chapter headings. The overall structure of the report will thus be:

Preface

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
8. Conclusion

*Appendices:*

- A1 A summary of the methodology adopted for the self-review (est. one page)
- A2 Update report on Cycle 4 audit (see Supporting document 11, below)
- A3 University Profile – A statistical summary for the university (2-3 pages including such data as student EFTS by category; staffing; EFTS by programme area/faculty; publically available TEC educational performance indicators; summary AUSSE scores if available)
- A4 *ff* might include key documents from the Portfolio – see “Portfolio Documents” below.

Within each of Chapters 1-7, it is suggested that the report is structured sequentially according to the Guideline Statements, using the topic headings for each Guideline Statement as section headings, for example,

Chapter 1: Leadership and Management of Teaching and Learning.

- Section 1.1 Delegations
- Section 1.2 Strategic and Operational Planning
- etc.

It will help readability if the relevant Guideline Statement is stated at the beginning of each section; universities might address more than one Guideline Statement in a section if this is appropriate. An introduction to each chapter might draw attention to any initiatives or challenges which span more than one guideline topic.

Where a university received a recommendation in **Cycle 4** which pertains to an area being evaluated in Cycle 5 the Self-review Report should document briefly in the relevant section the progress which the university has made on that topic since the Cycle 4 audit. Further detail might be provided in A2 if appropriate.

Universities may articulate **enhancement initiatives** identified as desirable or necessary either within the text of the chapter at the relevant point, or as a separate section at the end of each chapter. Such enhancements should be strategically important and be considered to have a meaningful impact on academic quality. Enhancements listed should not be activities which might be part of routine review or be little more than “tweaking” of existing processes (though the university might well have identified these during self-review and make notes for itself of such things to be addressed during normal operational activity). The overall list of enhancements should be feasible within the university's current operations. Universities might

also identify **particular strengths** (which can be supported by evidence), usually at the relevant point in the chapter. If preferred, however, these might also be summarized at the end of each chapter.

### 6.7 Diagrams and Tables

Auditors find it helpful to have management and academic structures presented in diagrammatic form. Such diagrams might be included as figures in the text, or be provided as stand-alone documents which are referenced in the text (see key document 2 below).

Tables may be used where these will summarize potentially lengthy text. However the *point* of providing the tabulated data should be made clear in the text.

### 6.8 Benchmarking

New Zealand universities operate in a national and international context which obliges them to ensure their academic processes meet minimum accepted national and international standards. Where universities use formal methods of benchmarking (for example, reference to national library statistics; accreditation by professional bodies; external moderation of assessment) this should be noted as part of the evaluative process.

### 6.9 Case Studies

Some universities like to use case studies to illustrate their practice in assuring academic quality. There is a range of opinion among academic auditors as to whether or not case studies are useful for an audit. Self-review Reports should not be lengthy documents and case studies can “take up a lot of space”. Report writers need to assess whether there is added value in including a case study, or whether instead a reference to this as an example (which an audit panel can pursue if it wishes) will suffice.

If universities are going to cite case studies in their Self-review Reports they need to ensure that the case studies

- Actually add substance to the evidence in the text, as distinct from just reiterating points already made;
- Reflect strategic development or activity;
- Are succinct and to the point;
- Are case studies of institutional processes, rather than isolated examples of good initiatives. Case studies should be good normal practice, rather than exceptional unusual practice. Note that sometimes a case study of an activity which did not deliver as intended might be a useful demonstration of institutional learning or evaluation.
- Are activities which it will be useful for the university itself to have recorded in this way.

### 6.10 Portfolio Documents

In addition to the Self-review Report, the audit panel will wish to examine various documents which might provide evidence in support of the audit, or might assist the panel in understanding the context in which academic activities are occurring.

For Cycle 5 it is intended that universities do not submit an extensive array of documents to AQA with the Self-review Report. Instead, AQA has identified a small number of key documents. Any other documents required by the audit panel will be on request. An indication of the kinds of documents the university might have available is given in Appendix 1, under each Guideline Statement.

The additional documents may be provided electronically or on a USB stick or in printed form (see section 6.11). Apart from the Self-review Report, AQA does not expect universities to prepare special documents for the purpose of the audit.

The **key documents** which the university is asked to make available with its Self-review Report (either as appendices to the Self-review Report, as separate documents or as electronic links) are:

1. Current Calendar (for key academic regulations and policies)
2. University organisational charts:
  - a. Management roles
  - b. Academic committees
3. Most recent Annual Report, including the Statement of Service Performance
4. Current institutional Strategic Plan
5. Learning and Teaching Plan, or equivalent strategic document for learning and teaching
6. Most recent TEC Educational Performance Indicators
7. Most recent AUSSE report if university has one.
8. List of CUAP approvals and reports, and Graduating Year Reviews for last 3 years.
9. List of programme and departmental reviews for last 3 years.
10. One-year follow-up report from Cycle 4, with addition of a current update.
11. A list of weblinks to major policy documents related to teaching and learning, and referenced in the Self-review Report, which can be accessed externally by the audit panel. This might include documents which are on the university's intranet, for which special arrangements might be needed to facilitate panel members' access. The Self-review Report might include hyperlinks to these documents.
12. A list of the acronyms and their meaning, as used in the Self-review Report.
13. A glossary of any terms whose particular meaning might be specific to the university.

### 6.11 Form of Presentation of the Portfolio

The following notes refer to presentation of the portfolio in printed form. If a university wishes to present its portfolio as an e-portfolio or in some other non-print-based form, it is asked to discuss this with AQA at an early stage of preparation. While AQA will endeavour to facilitate forms of electronic submission, it will nevertheless require some key documents in hard copy format, or as PDFs.

If the university is submitting its Self-review Portfolio in printed form, or in printed form with electronic links, then the following requirements apply:

- The university must submit TEN copies of the **Self-review Report** in printed form.

In addition, the university is asked to provide AQA with:

- SIX printed copies of the university's most recent Calendar and Annual Report;
- SIX printed copies of any other key supporting documents which are not available electronically;
- ONE printed copy of any key supporting document which is available electronically;
- SIX electronic copies (on a USB stick) of the Self-review Report and all those supporting documents which are available electronically.

Key supporting documents should be numbered as in the list above (section 6.10) with a short identifier, e.g. ***KD9. Reviews List; KD11. Weblinks.***

The audit panel must be provided with means of accessing policy documents and other material referred to as evidence in the Self-review Report. Ideally this might be by facilitating panel access to the institutional intranet. The manner of making this material available to the panel will be determined by the university after discussion with the AQA Director. (See item 11 in the list of Portfolio documents).

If the university (and AQA) decide to use intranet access, they must ensure this is feasible for all audit panel members. That is, AQA needs to ascertain that auditors have suitable IT access and support, and the university must ascertain that it does not have external access impeded by firewalls.

## **6.12 Supplementary Material**

Any **supplementary documents** requested by the panel should be numbered according to the Chapter to which they refer (or the first chapter to which they refer) as, e.g. ***SD 2.1 Achievement by admission category.*** The Director will advise the university how many copies of additional documents will be required at the time the documents are requested. In many cases the university will be able to provide an electronic link, in which case the document identifier will be, e.g. ***SD 2.1 Achievement by admission category*** [www.university.ac.nz/admin/admission12](http://www.university.ac.nz/admin/admission12) .

## 7. Evidence for Self-review and Audit

Central to any evaluation is the analysis of evidence which might support claims or assumptions, whether these are claims made by the universities or conclusions reached by auditors.

### 7.1 Evidence

Audit evidence may be defined as “records, statements of fact or other information which are relevant to the audit criteria *and verifiable*”. (Designated Auditing Agency Handbook, Ministry of Health, 2011, p31 – citing AS/NZS ISO 19011:2033<sup>13</sup>, *emph. added*).

The evidence used for self-review and for audit will include:

- Documents such as existing policies, reports and analyses, principally from internal sources;
- Statistical evidence from internal and, where appropriate, external sources;
- Oral evidence collected during the self-review or audit process.

### 7.2 Triangulation

Universities in their self-review, and auditors in the academic audit, are expected to triangulate evidence.

“Never draw a conclusion based on a single piece of evidence.”  
(Davidson, 2005, *Evaluation Methodology Basics*, p55)

“An HEI should not present information in its Portfolio that has not been adequately triangulated. Similarly, the Audit Panel should not present findings [in its report] that have not been adequately triangulated”. (Oman Accreditation Council, *Quality Audit Manual*, p83).

“It is the amalgamation of the evidence – its synthesis – that is essential to making the case, not just any bit of evidence”.  
There is an analogy to law, where the lawyer uses multiple ‘bits’ of evidence to ‘make the case’. (William M.K. Trochim, 2009 “Evidence and Evaluation”)

Triangulation facilitates strong analysis and confidence in the conclusions drawn. It assists in ensuring a claim is verified. Triangulation may involve:

- Multiple original *sources* of data, and/or
- Multiple *methods* of data collection, and/or
- Different *types* of data (e.g. quantitative/qualitative; objective/subjective).

---

<sup>13</sup>International standard, Guidelines for quality and/or environmental management systems auditing.

In some cases the evidence of something “existing” is in fact a single item of documentary evidence – e.g., a policy. However, robust evidence of *use* of that policy will require more than one piece of evidence – e.g., use statistics; survey data; interviews with students or staff. The audit evidence might also derive from *samples* of the available information or from *audit trails*.<sup>14</sup> When referring to survey or interview data, samples, or documentary items, consideration needs to be given to validity and reliability – i.e. to how representative the data are. Any claims of cause and effect (for example, between introduction of a policy and subsequent improvement in performance) also need to be verified.

### 7.3 The Guideline Statements

Appendix 1 provides suggestions as to the kinds of questions a university might ask itself to assess how well it meets each of the Guideline Statements. The Appendix also identifies the kinds of evidence a university might use and cite in support of its own claims regarding a Guideline Statement. The evaluation questions in the Appendix might, if desired, be extracted and used by relevant working groups or committees in conducting the self-review. **Please note that these suggestions are not intended to be binding, or to be exhaustive – they are suggestions, not requirements.** Universities might have various ways of conducting their own quality assurance, as appropriate to their own needs and distinctive identities. The key requirement for AQA audit is for the university to be able to demonstrate to an audit panel that the university’s conclusions are based on systematic knowledge – or that if there is no such evidence available the university will address this gap.

---

<sup>14</sup> ISO 19011:2011, p22

## 8. The Audit Process: An Overview

### 8.1 The Audit Process: Timeline

The following timeline is indicative and is provided as a guideline. Actual dates for submission of the Self-review Report, student submission, planning meetings, site-visit and follow-up reports will be negotiated with each university.

	<i>Indicative number of weeks before site visit</i>
<b>University is provided with audit procedures</b> and key documents required.	40
<b>University Students' Association provided with audit explanation</b> and list of Guideline Statements with invitation to provide independent comment to AQA.	30
<b>First university planning meeting</b> , university with AQA Director.	28
Names of panel members (including proposed Chair) submitted to university.	20
Panel confirmed by AQA Board.	18
<b>University submits to AQA Self-review Report</b> and key documents.	16
<b>University students submit to AQA any comment</b> they wish to make.	16
Panel reviews the portfolio and student comments. Panel identifies key themes for audit.	12
First panel meeting (face-to-face).	9
<b>Second university planning meeting</b> of Chair and AQA Director with the university. University advised of indicative programme and likely interviewees for site visit.	7
Second panel meeting (video-conference if possible).	6
University is advised of the key areas the panel wishes to explore. University advised of final programme and interviewees required for site visit.	4
<b>Site visit</b> – normally 3 days. Additional day may be required for visiting a second campus.	<b>0</b>

	<b><i>Indicative number of weeks after site visit</i></b>
Draft report to AQA Board.	6
[Revised] draft report to university for confirmation.	10
<b>Publication of final report</b> ; media releases authorized.	14
Informal feedback to AQA re recommendations and audit process.	20
One-year follow-up by panel chair and AQA Director (site visit).	48
<b>One-year follow-up</b> written report from university to AQA Board.	52
Update report on recommendations and affirmations (Director site visit).	[approx. 2 years]

## **8.2 Appointment of the Audit Panel**

Processes for selection and appointment of an audit panel are laid down in AQA's policies, as approved by the Board of AQA. They are covered in more detail in the *Auditor Handbook*. Current auditors are listed on AQA's Register of Auditors and Reviewers, on our website at [www.aqa.ac.nz/about-us/auditors](http://www.aqa.ac.nz/about-us/auditors).

Auditors appointed to audit New Zealand universities are individuals who have been identified by AQA as meeting specific criteria pertaining to academic audit of a university. Auditors are most commonly senior academics, or other professionals experienced in quality assurance in universities or allied sectors, who have been trained as academic auditors either by AQA or by another quality assurance body. All New Zealand audit panels include at least one overseas auditor.

Auditors are identified for the panel for reasons of their particular expertise and experience, as appropriate for the university being audited, and to ensure a balance of skills, experience and expertise across the panel. Auditors are appointed in the first instance because of their skills and experience *as auditors*. While AQA will pay attention to trying to achieve a range of disciplinary backgrounds across the panel this is not a first consideration in making appointments.

Once availability of panel nominees has been ascertained, AQA submits the proposed panel to the Board of AQA (or the Chair on behalf of the Board), for its approval. Once Board approval is obtained the proposed panel, including identification of the proposed panel chair, is submitted to the Vice-Chancellor of the university being audited for consideration. A university may object to inclusion of an individual panel member on grounds of conflict of interest; or a university may object to overall panel composition if it deems it to be inappropriate for that university. Any objection must be justified with good reason. Objections will be considered by the Board of AQA, who will make a final decision regarding the panel membership.

All audit panel members sign a statement of confidentiality and a declaration of any conflict of interest. Conflicts of interest may pertain to personal or professional interactions with the university or to some ideological difference which might influence the panel member's evaluation as an auditor. Depending on whether or not the conflict of interest can be managed within the audit process, an auditor may be stood down. In such cases a replacement would be appointed, through the process outlined above.

### **8.3 Budget**

The university will be advised of an indicative budget for the total audit prior to or at the first planning meeting (see 9.2). As an indication, for Cycle 4 each university was invoiced for costs in the region of \$40,000.

It is expected that the university will cover the cost of on-site catering and provision of suitable rooms for interviews. The university will also cover the cost of printing the Self-review Report and copying of additional documents required by the panel.

The costs included in payments for which AQA will invoice the university include:

- Auditor honoraria
- Travel costs for AQA staff and the panel chair for planning meetings and follow-up meetings with the university
- Travel, accommodation and off-site meals for AQA staff and auditors for the site visit and preliminary panel meetings
- Local transport between accommodation and the university
- Miscellaneous costs.

AQA does not charge New Zealand universities a fee for its service. Note that the amount of auditor honoraria to be paid will depend on the length of the site visit. This will be higher for universities where the panel visits more than one campus. Travel and accommodation costs are also likely to increase with a multi-campus visit.

The university will be invoiced for the audit costs as follows: a first payment will be requested prior to the site visit for costs incurred to date; a second payment will be requested immediately after the final audit report has been submitted to the university; a final payment will be requested after the one-year follow-up visit and relate to costs directly associated with that visit.

## 9. The Site Visit

### 9.1 Logistics of the Audit Site Visit

Planning for the site visit is usually undertaken by staff of AQA and nominated staff of the university (often either a person within the Academic Quality Office or a person in the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic)). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is normally involved in discussions related to selection of interviewees and timing of the overall visit programme.

The following notes are indicative of the key matters to be considered in preparation for and during the site visit:

### 9.2 The First University-AQA Planning Meeting

The **First Planning Meeting** (which might be by telephone, Skype or email interaction) is usually 6-8 months prior to the scheduled site visit. This “meeting” is commonly a series of communications between AQA and the university. It might involve the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), the person managing the self-review process and/or any other staff with a significant involvement in the university’s preparation for audit.

The objective is to discuss general preparation, identify any issues or difficulties in meeting the time line for the audit, to discuss informally the self-review process and explore any organisational problems which might have arisen. At this time decisions might be made about:

- Finalised dates for the site visit
- Which campuses are to be visited (if there is more than one)
- Duration to be spent on each campus
- Designation of key contact and support person for organisational matters (e.g. supply of additional documents; operational aspects; support of the panel when on site).

The university might also advise AQA on the most feasible way of gaining a student submission on the audit. At this stage the university should discuss the form the Self-review Report will take (if not a printed or print-based format).

### 9.3 First Audit Panel Meeting

The first meeting of the Audit Panel takes place approximately 6 weeks after the self-review portfolio has been received by AQA. At this meeting the panel, *inter alia*,

- Identifies the main areas to be examined in detail during the audit
- Identifies any additional documentation it wishes to examine
- Identifies the people (i.e. roles) it wishes to interview during the site visit(s).

After the first panel meeting AQA will communicate these requirements to the university.

## 9.4 Second University-AQA Planning Meeting

The second planning meeting involves the Chair of the audit panel, the Director of AQA (or other staff member) and the key personnel from the university (see 9.1). This meeting happens at the university and will include:

- Confirmation of logistics for the site visit(s)
  - Availability of rooms suitable for the interviews and for the panel's private meetings
  - Inspection of proposed rooms for interviews and other facilities
  - Availability of waiting areas
  - Catering requirements
  - Arrangements for administrative support during the site visit (e.g. for photocopying; provision of name labels; IT support; video links, booking taxis etc.)
  - Security arrangements
  - (if required) Advice regarding accommodation, parking and local transport.
- Provision of additional material for the audit.
- An initial discussion about the most appropriate interviewees for areas to be investigated during the site visit.
- Consideration of any special groups to be interviewed and possible catering arrangements.
- Arrangements for a pōwhiri or mihi whakatau (if the university wishes).
- Confirmation of Vice-Chancellor availability at start of the visit and for an exit meeting.
- Discussion of indicative programme for the site visit(s) including timing, and arrangements for the exit meeting with the Vice-Chancellor.
- (if possible) a brief visit with the Vice-Chancellor to confirm the audit approach and explore any organisational issues likely to impact on the audit.
- Identification of additional documents required by the panel and, potentially, inspection of some of those documents where the panel requires documentary evidence of processes or policies (see 9.3 above).

Subsequent to the second planning meeting AQA will consult with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to finalise the site visit programme and interviewees.

During this time there is also likely to be communication within the university, usually by the key contact and support person or the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic):

- Advice to potential interviewees of their inclusion in the site visit programme.
- Briefing about the purpose of the audit.
- Ensure they have access to the Self-review Report.
- Confirmation of interview times and arrangements for appearance (e.g. where and when to report).

## 9.5 Second Audit Panel Meeting

This meeting may take place by video-conference. Its purpose is to finalise the key areas the panel wishes to explore and to determine interviewing strategy and questions. After this meeting the university may be advised of any specific areas for investigation (not already covered during the planning meeting).

## 9.6 The Site Visit

The site visit to the university normally takes place over three or four days. If additional campuses are visited these visits will normally occur prior to the main campus visit but if close by might occur during the main campus visit. It is likely that the full panel will not all visit secondary campuses. (If there is more than one satellite campus the panel may split to visit both. This decision would be made during the second planning meeting.)

The usual programme for a panel site visit to one campus is

- Panel members assemble and have final meeting the afternoon and evening prior.
- Day one begins with pōwhiri or mihi whakatau if the university wishes, followed by panel meeting with Vice-Chancellor.
  - Usually interviews with senior management are on the first day.
- Day two interviews.
- Day three interviews and report drafting (might extend to day four).
- End of day three, or day four, report drafting followed by exit meeting with Vice-Chancellor.

Panel visits to satellite campuses will usually be one day and will focus mainly on matters related to dispersed teaching and learning activity.

For some interview sessions the panel might wish to meet with groups over lunch. This option and the appropriate catering requirements will be decided with the university prior to the site visit.

While panel members might appreciate a brief campus tour if time permits, it is not usual for the panel to need to inspect facilities. It might be appropriate for the panel, or for some panel members, to meet with some staff at locations away from the main meeting room, which would provide opportunity for panel members to view other areas of the campus.

## 9.7 Recording of Interviews and Site-visit Secretarial Support

Interviewees should be advised by the university that all interview sessions are recorded. Normally this task is undertaken by an AQA staff member or by another person (not a staff member of the university being audited) who is experienced in recording discussions related to academic matters. The person recording these sessions is bound by the same obligation of confidentiality as are auditors (see 9.11).

## 9.8 The Exit Meeting

The Exit Meeting is held with the Vice-Chancellor and whosoever he or she chooses to attend (commonly the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and/or Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), and possibly the senior Academic Quality Manager or person responsible for managing the audit). At the exit meeting the Chair of the audit panel briefs the Vice-Chancellor on the general findings of the panel but does not normally provide *verbatim* text of commendations, affirmations or recommendations. Participants in the exit meeting do not engage in any discussion other than for points of clarification. The conclusion of the exit meeting includes the leave-taking of the panel from the university.

## 9.9 Student Involvement in the Audit Process

The Cycle 5 audit specifies mechanisms to facilitate a student perspective on the issues being audited. Students are invited to make a written submission to AQA on the themes in the framework, this submission to be received by AQA at the same time as the university's Self-review Portfolio. Prior to the audit AQA will discuss with the university the most feasible way of inviting the student contribution (given varying forms of student organisations within the university sector).

During the site visit it is usual for the panel to wish to hold at least one interview session with students. The form of this session and the characteristics of students to be interviewed will be discussed with the university during the second planning meeting. With respect to feedback to students after the site visit, it is the Vice-Chancellor's prerogative as to whether and how to brief students on the outcome of the audit. Students will receive a copy of the final report when it is released to the public.

## 9.10 Observers

On occasion AQA is approached by another tertiary quality assurance agency with a request for their staff or auditors to observe our audit process. In such instances, the university is asked to give its approval for an observer to be present. Observers would receive a copy of the Self-review Report, but not necessarily the other portfolio items, to assist their understanding of the process. Normally observers will be silent during the audit and will not contribute to the discussion or evaluation. Observers might seek clarification of process. They are bound by the same confidentiality requirements as apply to the audit panel. If there is opportunity, an observer from overseas might appreciate a private tour of the university campus if the university wishes to offer this.

## 9.11 Privacy and Confidentiality

Inevitably, in the course of an academic audit a panel might receive information which concerns individuals at the university, or individual external stakeholders. AQA requires that any personal information obtained during the audit process is used only for the purpose for which it was collected and is divulged only to those who require it for the audit process. All personal information is destroyed after the audit has been completed.

Similarly, it might not be possible for auditors to complete their task satisfactorily without access to some sensitive information about a university. The Chair of the panel or the AQA

staff member will discuss with the university the best way in which such information can be managed. All confidential or sensitive information is destroyed after the audit has been completed.

Interviews with staff, students and stakeholders during the site visit are treated as confidential to that meeting. In this context, interviewees are asked to honour the “Chatham House Rule”, which guarantees anonymity with respect to interviews. This is particularly important when a group of staff is interviewed and personal opinions or experiences might be expressed. All personal notes made by AQA staff or by auditors are destroyed after the audit has been completed and the report made public.

## 10. The Audit Report

### 10.1 Form and Content of the Audit Report

The audit report will follow a form similar to that of the Self-review Report, namely:

Preface

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
8. Conclusion

*Appendices:*

- A1 Acknowledgments
- A2 The Audit Panel Membership
- A3 University Profile – A statistical summary for the university
- A4 List of enhancements identified by the university
- A5 Summary of the methodology adopted for the audit (the Cycle 5 framework)

The audit report will not reiterate descriptive material except where this is necessary or helpful to elucidate conclusions drawn by the panel. From the university's perspective, the audit report might be seen as a "companion volume" to the Self-review Report.

Each audit report will be accompanied by an Executive Summary which will be the main vehicle for communicating the outcome of the audit to external audiences. However the report itself is a public report and as such is available to anyone who wishes to access it. The report will be placed on the AQA website. It is recommended that the university might also, for a time, highlight a link to the report from its own website.

### 10.2 Audit Conclusions

The conclusions of the audit panel take the form of **comment** in the text, or as specific:

**Recommendations** - refer to areas where the audit panel believes the university needs to make some improvements. Recommendations alert the university to what needs to be addressed, not to how this is done. A panel may, if it chooses, 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 as requiring attention, and about which the university has already taken action but does not yet have an outcome. 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 good practice (which are seen as exceptional rather than typical for a New Zealand university), 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.

AQA academic audits are “enhancement-led”. The objective is to help a university improve its academic processes and, as a consequence, its academic outcomes. To this end, auditors draw on an extensive knowledge of what is accepted good practice both in New Zealand universities and internationally. It is important to note, however, that auditors are not consultants and should not normally be advising a university how to do something. Their role is to alert the university to areas where action is needed.

It is also important to note that AQA academic audits are not compliance audits – the panel does not impose requirements, it makes recommendations. If a university decides a recommendation is inappropriate or not feasible then it is expected to outline the reasons for this in its follow-up report.

### **10.3 Submission and Approval of the Draft Report**

Before the draft report is sent to the university it must be approved by the AQA Board. The report is sent to the university, as a confidential draft, approximately ten weeks after the site visit. This submission is an opportunity for the university to check for factual accuracy and also to make any comment related to sensitive issues or information. Where the latter occur there might need to be some discussion between the university and AQA as to how an item is reported. Usually the university has two weeks in which to respond to the draft report. The report should not be circulated widely at this stage but it is important that, in addition to the Vice-Chancellor and appropriate senior managers, key people involved in preparation for the audit have opportunity to check its accuracy.

The draft submission is not intended to elicit comments on the panel’s judgements unless it is determined that the panel based its judgement on incorrect information.

Once any errors or changes to the draft have been resolved, AQA will produce the final report, approximately 14 weeks after the site visit.

### **10.4 Media Release**

When the final report is submitted to the university it will have ten working days in which to prepare its own media release, before the report is released publically. A date for public release will be agreed between AQA and the university – until that time the report should continue to be treated as confidential. In practice, senior communications staff in the university might be privy to the confidential draft and thus have opportunity to work on the university’s release prior to official publication. Access to the draft by communications staff is at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor.

AQA also prepares a media release, which will be circulated to newspapers, relevant news websites and educational reporters on the day of publication.

While it is not a requirement, it is usually helpful to both parties if AQA and the university copy to each other their respective media releases prior to publication.

## **10.5 Dissemination of the Audit Report**

Audit reports are published on the AQA website [www.aqa.ac.nz/reports-and-papers](http://www.aqa.ac.nz/reports-and-papers). The university is encouraged to also publish the report on its website, or to provide a link to the report on the AQA website.

Copies of reports are deposited with the National Library and are sent free-of-charge to all New Zealand universities and key educational agencies. Copies are sent to the major daily newspaper(s) in the city where the university is located. Other people may purchase copies of the report.

The university which has been audited is normally provided with thirty copies of the audit report. Additional copies may be requested if required.

## **10.6 Appeals**

An appeal against the content of an audit report may be lodged on grounds of a failure of audit process or where it is considered that a conclusion is not adequately supported by evidence. An appeal is lodged only after efforts have been made to resolve the matter directly with AQA.

The process follows two steps: initially a review by the Board of AQA and, if that does not resolve the matter, then an independent appeal investigation convened by Universities New Zealand. A university considering making an appeal should request a copy of the appeals policy from AQA or from Universities New Zealand.

An appeal must be lodged before the audit report is published and should be lodged, or notice given of an appeal to be lodged, within ten working days of the university receiving the final report.

## 11. Audit Follow-up and Dissemination of Good Practice

### 11.1 Follow-up after an Audit

For Cycle 5 there will be four points of follow-up after an audit site visit:

- About six weeks after the audit report is published - informal feedback to AQA, via email, telephone or a campus visit, on the relevance and feasibility of the audit recommendations, and for both parties to give feedback about the audit process.
- One year after the audit report was published – a follow-up visit by the AQA Director (or staff member) and the Chair of the audit panel, to discuss the university's responses to recommendations and affirmations and actions taken and planned. At this meeting any issues or constraints, or changes in circumstances which impact on the recommendations, will also be discussed. This visit will be followed by a **written report** from the university to the AQA Board, documenting the university's plans and actions related to recommendations and affirmations. *This report marks the formal end of the audit process.*
- Approximately two years after the site visit - the AQA Director (or staff member) will visit the university for a general discussion about academic quality developments. During this visit the university will provide an informal update report on audit recommendations and also on any developments related to affirmations and commendations.
- At the time of the next audit – a brief formal report on outcomes against the recommendations and affirmations will be part of the audit portfolio.

### 11.2 Form of the Follow-up Report

The formal one-year-on follow-up report is not expected to be a lengthy document, but should record action taken and outcomes to date with respect to each recommendation. It should also record outcomes for activities which were subject to an affirmation. It is often useful to produce this report in a tabulated form. Such a table might also record who (i.e. what role) is responsible for oversight of activity related to the recommendation or affirmation. If the university has been unable to embark on a course of action in response to a recommendation, or has chosen not to, then a brief explanation of the reasons for this should be included in this report. If action is planned but implementation has been delayed then an indicative timeline for a response should be noted.

### 11.3 Dissemination of Good Practice

One of AQA's roles is to assist with quality enhancement. An important strategy for doing this is to identify and disseminate examples of good practice from our own universities. To this end, AQA from time to time asks a university to develop a case study of an activity or process which has been identified during an audit as being of particularly good practice or an effective innovative practice. AQA works with the university on this, ensuring that confidentiality or commercial sensitivity are not compromised. Cycle 5 case studies will be published on the AQA website as part of its development of good practice resources for universities at [www.aqa.ac.nz/good-practice](http://www.aqa.ac.nz/good-practice).

## Appendix 1: Guideline Statements and Self-review Questions

1

### Leadership and Management of Teaching and Learning

#### 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.

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- Do we have formal delegations schedules for academic decisions?
- How is delegated authority communicated to staff – how do staff know who has authority to make particular decisions (e.g. to approve aegrotats; appoint examiners)?
- Who (i.e. which roles) has authority to make decisions or to sub-delegate decisions related to
  - teaching quality and staff performance
  - learning and academic performance (e.g. admissions; aegrotats; extensions; academic appeals; award of scholarships)
  - postgraduate supervision (e.g. appointment of supervisors; extensions; appointment of examiners)
  - quality assurance of programmes (e.g. programme reviews)
  - quality assurance of courses (e.g. course reviews; moderation of assessment; curriculum reviews)?
- What do we do when a staff member makes a decision which he/she is not authorised to make (e.g. waives a pre-requisite)?
- Have we identified any particular weaknesses in our delegations processes?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Organisational chart showing key academic roles.
- Formal delegations schedules.
- (If no delegations schedules exist) a list of formal delegations and an indication of where these are specified (e.g. in Calendar regulations).

## 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.

*Note: This section is where universities might discuss any institutional initiatives and/or challenges which span activity areas which follow.*

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What are our key strategic and operational planning documents related to teaching and learning and student support (including postgraduate)?
- What are the university's strategic objectives related to teaching and learning and student support?
- What are the key performance indicators for teaching and student achievement which meets our university's objectives?
- How do the performance indicators inform our quality assurance processes?
- Are our plans and performance indicators useful in promoting quality enhancement of teaching and learning and student support?
- Have we identified any particular challenges for the university arising from our current strategic and operational plans related to teaching and learning and student support?
- Have we identified any changes to our planning and reporting processes which might assist us in meeting the university's objectives for teaching and learning and student support?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- The university's institutional strategic and operational plans.
- The university's Statement of Service Performance.
- Strategic and operational plans related to teaching and learning, student support and postgraduate study.
- Any reports related to institutional KPIs or to analyses of institutional outcomes in teaching and learning and student support.

### 1.3 Student input

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

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- Do students have input to planning, policy development and monitoring of key academic activities – e.g. teaching quality and teaching development; programme approval and review; course development and review; monitoring of academic integrity; development of academic policies?
- What are the structures that facilitate or ensure student input
  - at institutional level
  - at faculty level
  - at programme or department/school level
  - at course level?
- How effective is student input at these different levels? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths in our processes for facilitating student input?
- Are there any areas where we need to enhance our processes for seeking/gaining student input?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Terms of reference of committees.
- Policies related to student involvement in academic planning or decision-making.
- Protocols for consultation with students or feedback to and from students.

## 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.

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What processes do we have in place to evaluate and monitor the suitability of our teaching and learning spaces for
  - teachers
  - students?
- How do we ensure that planning for teaching and learning spaces reflects developments in teaching and learning activity; how do we ensure connections between facilities management and pedagogical developments?
- Have we identified any areas of weakness in our processes for ensuring that teaching and learning spaces are appropriate and sufficient for the teaching and learning activities which take place in them?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Space analyses and plans.
- Reports of any specific projects related to space development.
- Reports of any student or staff surveys related to space use and suitability.

## 1.5 Information resources

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

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What processes do we have in place to evaluate and monitor the suitability of our information resources (library; electronic material) for
  - teachers
  - students?
- How do we ensure that planning for information resources reflects discipline developments and developments in teaching and learning activity?
- How do we ensure connections between the library and pedagogical developments?
- How do we ensure that the appropriate information resources will be available for new programmes and courses?
- Have we identified any areas of weakness in our processes for ensuring that information resources are appropriate and sufficient for research-informed teaching and learning?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Library plans.
- Course and programme approval templates or examples.
- Relevant committee minutes and/or terms of reference.

## 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.

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- Do we have recovery plans and procedures which are designed to facilitate continuity of teaching and learning in instances of
  - specific infrastructure failure (e.g. IT system going down)
  - widespread infrastructure failure (e.g. electricity failure across the institution)
  - disaster impact (e.g. fire; flooding; earthquake; pandemic)?
- How conscientiously do we evaluate or test our recovery procedures?
- Have we identified any particular strengths in our recovery plans and processes (e.g. by real life testing; by benchmarking)?
- Have we identified any gaps or weaknesses in our recovery plans and procedures?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Recovery plans.
- Any reports which evaluate or benchmark current plans and procedures.

2

## Student Profile: Access, Admission and Transition Processes

### 2.1 Admission and selection

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

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- Do we have admission and selection policies which are intended to enable us to select specific categories of student?
- Do our selection practices conform to our policies? How do we know?
- Do our selection practices conform to our strategic objectives? How do we know?
- Are our policies and procedures publically available to students? Are they transparent and easily understood by students? How do we know? How do we manage student challenges or appeals related to our policies?
- Have we identified any challenges resulting from the application of our current policies and procedures?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to admission requirements, selection policies or selection practices?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Current admission and selection policies.
- Current strategic objectives with respect to desired student profile.
- Analysis of current admission statistics by admission or selection category.

## 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.

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- Do we have policies or procedures which are intended to assist with access to university of specific categories of student?
- Do these policies and procedures conform to our strategic objectives?
- Are these policies and procedures effective? How do we know?
- Do we have activities which are intended to assist with transition to university of specific categories of student?
- Are these activities effective? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our current activities related to access and transition of the identified groups?
- Have we identified any challenges related to access and transition of these groups of students?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to access and transition?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Policies, procedures and activities related to access and transition.
- Reports on evaluations of any projects or activities related to access and transition.
- Student achievement data for targeted access groups.

### 2.3 Academic advice

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

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- Do we have policies and/or procedures defining who may give official advice to students about courses and other academic requirements (e.g. admission; pre-requisites; placements; completion requirements)?
- What are our processes for ensuring students receive advice about non-course-related academic matters (e.g. examination procedures; appeals; aegrotats)? Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- What procedures do we have, or what action do we take, when it has been discovered that a student received and acted upon inaccurate advice?
- How is course information provided
  - to new/prospective students
  - to continuing students?
- Are these processes effective – i.e. accessible, accurate, timely and useful? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our current procedures related to provision of course advice and academic advice?
- Are there any particular challenges we have identified related to the provision of course advice and advice about academic requirements?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to course advice and advice about academic requirements?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Any protocols or policies related to provision of course advice and advice about programmes/degrees.
- Any protocols or policies related to provision of other academic advice.
- Charts showing roles with authority/responsibility for provision of academic advice.
- Any feedback the university has from students related to effectiveness of advice or the mechanisms for gaining advice.

## 3

## Curriculum and Assessment

**3.1 Programme approval**

Universities' internal course and programme approval processes must meet national (CUAP/NZQF) expectations and should include opportunity for input from stakeholders (including Māori) where appropriate.

**Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):**

- How do we ensure our internal course and programme approval processes meet national (CUAP/NZQF) expectations? Who is responsible for this?
- How do we ensure we gain input from stakeholders (including students) to our course and programme approval processes? How do we monitor that this input is relevant and effective?
- How do we ensure that new courses and programmes are consistent with the university's strategic objectives?
- Regarding deletion of programmes, what are our processes for ensuring students are not unreasonably disadvantaged in their programme planning? Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our approval processes (including processes for deletion)?
- Have we identified any challenges in ensuring that our internal course and programme approval processes meet national (CUAP/NZQF) expectations and include input from stakeholders?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to course and programme approval, and course or programme deletion?

**Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:**

- A sample of course approval documentation.
- A sample of programme approval documentation (a CUAP proposal).
- A sample of documentation related to programme deletion.
- List of CUAP approvals and reports, and Graduating Year reviews for last 3 years (required).

### 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.

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- Does our university require graduate outcomes to be reported for all programmes (i.e. subject majors; degrees or diplomas)? How are these communicated to students? How are these addressed by staff?
- Does our university have a generic university graduate profile or set of intended graduate outcomes? If so, how were these determined? How are these communicated to students? How are these addressed by staff?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from establishing intended graduate outcomes?
- Have we identified any challenges resulting from our graduate profiles or intended graduate outcomes?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to articulation or communication of intended graduate outcomes or graduate profiles?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- The university's graduate profile (if it has one).
- A sample of graduate outcome statements.
- Any feedback, e.g. from employers; stakeholders, with respect to the graduate profiles or intended graduate outcomes.

### 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.

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- How do we ensure we provide students with opportunities to achieve the outcomes specified in programme graduate outcome statements during their period of study? Who takes responsibility for this? What monitoring processes do they use?
- *(If relevant)* How do we ensure we provide students with opportunities to achieve the outcomes specified in the institution's graduate outcome statements during their period of study? Who takes responsibility for this? What monitoring processes do they use?
- Have we identified any challenges in providing appropriate opportunities for students to meet intended graduate outcomes during their period of study?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to provision of opportunity for students to meet intended graduate outcomes during their period of study?

*Though not required for this Guideline Statement, the university might also comment on how it assesses for graduate outcomes, and how it knows outcomes are achieved. This might include (for example) comment on course assessment, feedback from graduates, and feedback from employers.*

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

If the university has an institutional graduate profile it might identify examples of activities provided to ensure students have the opportunity to meet non-discipline-related outcomes (e.g. affective attributes such as “civic responsibility” or attributes related to generic skills such as “teamwork capability”).

### 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.

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What are our processes for ensuring regular review of individual course/paper curricula? How do we ensure course/paper reviews are used to ensure and enhance curriculum quality? Who is responsible for this?
- What are our processes for ensuring regular review of programmes (i.e. subject majors; awards)? How do we ensure programme reviews are used to ensure and enhance programme relevance and quality? Who is responsible for this?

*Note: The university should respond both for programmes subject to professional accreditation and for programmes not requiring such accreditation.*

- How do we ensure we gain and use input from stakeholders (including students) to our programme review processes?
- How do we ensure that lessons learned from programme reviews are shared with other relevant areas of the university?
- How do we ensure appropriate follow-up to the recommendations of programme reviews? Who is responsible for this?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our review processes?
- Have we identified any challenges in ensuring that our internal course and programme review processes are timely, relevant and include input from stakeholders?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to course and programme review processes?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Policy and guidelines (re. process) for programme reviews.
- List of programme and departmental reviews for last 3 years (required; see key Portfolio documents section 6.10).
- List of programmes subject to accreditation reviews, and date of most recent review.
- Sample of (a) course review reports, including follow-up action and (b) programme review reports, including follow-up action.

### 3.5 Benchmarking programmes

Universities should use processes for benchmarking curriculum and assessment standards to ensure they are nationally and internationally appropriate. (*This Guideline Statement refers to taught courses; See also 7.4 thesis examination*)

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- Does the university have processes for benchmarking curriculum and assessment standards to ensure they are nationally and internationally appropriate?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our benchmarking processes?
- Have we identified any challenges in ensuring that courses and programmes use appropriate procedures for benchmarking curriculum and assessment processes and standards?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to benchmarking of programmes?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Policies and guidelines (re. process) for benchmarking of programmes or curricula.

### 3.6 Assessment

Universities should use documented procedures for monitoring and moderating assessment processes and standards. *(This Guideline Statement refers to taught courses. See also 7.4 thesis examination.)*

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- Are assessment requirements, including expectations for standards of achievement (e.g. grading scale requirements), communicated effectively to students and understood by them? How do we know?
- Does our university require assessment processes and standards to be monitored and/or moderated internally, and how does this happen
  - for undergraduate courses
  - for postgraduate courses
  - (if relevant) for pre-degree level courses?
- Does our university require assessment processes and standards to be monitored and/or moderated externally, and how does this happen
  - for undergraduate courses
  - for postgraduate courses
  - (if relevant) for pre-degree level courses?
- If there is variation among programmes or departments/schools as to whether or not assessment is moderated, on what basis is this variation justified? What action is taken for courses which do not have such processes?
- Does the university have processes for ensuring parity of assessment expectations, including standards achieved, for students taught by different teaching modes (e.g. on-campus face-to-face; blended teaching; distance; off-shore)? What are these processes? Who is responsible for this?
- Are our processes for monitoring assessment standards effective? How do we know?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to monitoring and moderation of assessment?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Assessment policies, procedures or guidelines.
- Information or guidelines for students regarding assessment.
- Information or guidelines for staff regarding assessment.
- Information about staff development workshops or training related to assessment and moderation.
- Sample of moderation reports for undergraduate and/or taught postgraduate courses.
- Terms of reference of programme committees; boards of studies.

### 3.7 Equivalence of learning outcomes

*If they teach programmes on more than one campus, 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 overseas, meet the standards expected by the university on its home campus.*

**(If relevant)**

#### **Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):**

- In addition to the “home” campus, where else does the university teach programmes (whether independently or in partnership)
  - in New Zealand
  - overseas?
- What processes or procedures do we use to assure ourselves that learning outcomes of students in programmes taught on other campuses and/or with partner institutions, meet the standards expected by the university on its home campus
  - students elsewhere in New Zealand
  - students overseas?
- Who (i.e. what roles) are responsible for quality assuring equivalence of learning outcomes
  - in individual courses
  - in programmes?
- Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our processes for assuring the equivalence of learning outcomes?
- Have we identified any challenges related to the assurance of equivalence of learning outcomes?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to how we assure ourselves of equivalence of learning outcomes?

#### **Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:**

- Any policies, protocols or written documents (for example, MoUs) outlining processes which are designed to monitor or quality assure equivalence of learning outcomes.
- Any examiners’ reports or meeting minutes which report on quality assurance of equivalence of learning outcomes.

### 3.8 Academic misconduct

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

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What are our processes for ensuring students are aware of their responsibilities relating to academic integrity, in both formal examinations and in other forms of assessment? Who is responsible for this? Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- What are our processes for ensuring staff are aware of risks relating to academic integrity, in both formal examinations and in other forms of assessment? Who is responsible for this?
- What processes do we use to detect academic misconduct? Are the processes for detecting misconduct and penalising perpetrators effective? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our processes for educating students and staff or from our processes of detection and penalty?
- Have we identified any challenges in ensuring students are aware of the risks and penalties related to academic dishonesty and misconduct?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to our processes for educating students and staff or to our processes of detection and penalty?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Policy and guidelines for detection and response to plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct.
- Any evaluation of relevant policies and processes, if available.
- Any committee reports or other reports on the nature and scale of academic misconduct and dishonesty.

### 3.9 Assessment in te reo Māori

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

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What are our processes for ensuring students are aware of the opportunity to submit assessment in te reo Māori? Who is responsible for this?
- Are our processes the same for postgraduate as for undergraduate assessment, or do they differ?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our processes for facilitating assessment in te reo Māori?
- Have we identified any challenges related to facilitating assessment in te reo Māori?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to facilitating assessment in te reo Māori?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Policy and guidelines for submission and conduct of assessment in te reo Māori.
- An indication of how many students have used this facility (over previous three years).

4

## Student Engagement and Achievement

### 4.1 Student engagement

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

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What are our processes for monitoring students' engagement with their learning? Who (i.e. what role) is responsible for this?
- What processes or activities do we have which are designed or intended to enhance students' engagement with their learning
  - for students at different levels (pre-degree to postgraduate)
  - for students in different disciplines
  - for students at different locations (*if relevant*)
  - for students enrolled in different modes of study
  - for different identifiable student groups?
- How do we know how well students engage with their learning? What are our data sources? Who gathers these data? Who uses the data, for what purpose and to what effect? How does this information inform our strategic and operational planning for student achievement?
- Have we identified any barriers or impediments to students' engagement with their learning?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our existing processes and activities which are intended to support or improve student engagement?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider to improve student engagement?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Reports or analyses of data pertaining to student engagement (e.g. AUSSE reports; institutional surveys).

## 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.

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What groups of students has the university identified as needing special assistance to ensure academic success?
- Who is responsible for monitoring retention, academic success and completion
  - of students at different levels (pre-degree to postgraduate)
  - of particular groups of students
  - of students studying in different modes
  - of students studying in different locations (*if relevant*)?
- What processes or activities do we have which are designed or intended to assist retention, academic success, progression and completion of the above groups? How effective are these activities and processes? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particularly good strategies for helping these groups of students to complete their study, have a good student experience and achieve academic success?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from current processes intended to improve retention, academic success, progression and completion?
- Have we identified any challenges related to retention, academic success, progression and completion of the above groups?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to improving the retention, academic success, progression and completion of the above groups?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Performance data on retention and completion.
- Any plans, policies or guidelines related to provision of assistance to students, including to identifiable groups of students.
- Reports and analyses of data pertaining to student retention, academic success and completion.
- The university's self-evaluation against elements of the Code of Practice for Pastoral Care of International students related to student experience<sup>15</sup>.
- Results from student surveys or university evaluations related to academic assistance for these groups.

<sup>15</sup>See

[www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/InternationalEducation/ForProvidersOfInternationalEducation/CodeofPracticeforInternationalStudents/InformationforCodeSignatories/ReviewProcedures.aspx](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZEducation/EducationPolicies/InternationalEducation/ForProvidersOfInternationalEducation/CodeofPracticeforInternationalStudents/InformationforCodeSignatories/ReviewProcedures.aspx) downloaded 13 June 2012

### 4.3 Feedback to students

Universities should use processes for providing feedback to students on their academic progress.

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What are our processes for ensuring students receive feedback on their academic achievement and academic progress
  - at course/paper level
  - at programme/degree level?
- Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our processes giving advice and feedback?
- Have we identified any gaps or challenges related to academic advice and feedback?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to academic advice and feedback?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Any policies or guidelines related to provision of academic advice.
- Any analyses related to formal advice (i.e. in the nature of a warning, or a congratulatory note) and subsequent student performance.
- Results from student surveys or university evaluations related to academic advice and academic feedback.

#### 4.4 Under-achieving students

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

##### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What are our processes for identifying students at risk of under-achieving? Who is responsible for this?
- What do we do to assist students who are considered to be at risk of under-achieving? Are these processes or activities effective? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our processes for identifying and assisting students at risk?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to the identification of, or provision of assistance to, students at risk?

##### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Any policies, processes or guidelines related to identification of, or assistance to, students at risk.
- Results from student surveys or university evaluations related to academic assistance when students are identified as under-achieving.

#### 4.5 High-achieving students

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

##### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What are our processes for identifying high-achieving students and who is responsible for this
  - at programme/discipline level
  - at qualification level?
- What do we do to support students who have been identified as high-achieving or potentially high-achieving? Are these processes or activities effective? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our processes for identifying and supporting high-achieving students?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to the identification of, or provision of support to, high-achieving students?

##### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Any policies or guidelines related to identification of, or support to, high-achieving students.
- List of awards.
- Sample congratulatory letters to students.
- Scholarships Handbook.
- Any reports on graduate destinations of students identified as being high-achievers.
- Results from graduate surveys related to support of high-achieving students.

## 5

**Student Feedback and Support****5.1 Academic appeals and grievances**

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

**Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):**

- What are our processes for addressing academic appeals and grievances? Who (which role) is responsible for these?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our processes for academic appeals and grievances?
- Have we identified any challenges related to academic appeal and grievance processes?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to academic appeal and grievance processes?

**Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:**

- Policies and guidelines for academic appeals and grievances.
- Reports of any satisfaction survey or evaluation of appeals and grievance processes.

## 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.

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What specific learning support services do we provide
  - for undergraduate students
  - for postgraduate students
  - for students studying off-campus
  - for international students
  - for any other groups identified as having particular needs?
- Are these services effective, i.e. sufficient, accessible, relevant, timely and useful? How do we know?
- Who (i.e. what role) is responsible for planning and oversight of student learning support needs and providing appropriate services?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our student learning support services?
- Have we identified any challenges or constraints in providing appropriate services?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to the provision of student learning support?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Any policies, procedures or plans related to the identification of learning-support needs and provision of services.
- Reports or analyses of service use.
- Student satisfaction data on learning support.
- Reports on any reviews of learning support services.

### 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.

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What pastoral and support services do we provide? Do we provide any services for any groups identified as having particular needs?
- Are these services effective, i.e. sufficient, accessible, relevant, timely and useful? How do we know?
- Who (i.e. what role) is responsible for planning and oversight of identifying student personal support needs and providing appropriate services?
- Have we identified any challenges or constraints in providing appropriate services?
- How do we assure ourselves that we provide a safe and inclusive campus environment?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our student support services and campus safety policies?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to student support?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to personal safety of students, including safety from harassment and discrimination?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Any policies, procedures or plans related to the identification of personal support needs and provision of services.
- Any policies or guidelines pertaining to issues related to personal safety, such as harassment; discrimination; alcohol use; equity.
- Reports or analyses of personal support service use.
- Student satisfaction data on personal support.
- Reports on any reviews of personal support services and/or personal safety policies.

## 5.4 Support on other campuses

*(where relevant)* 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 overseas.

### **Where relevant**

#### **Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):**

- What processes or procedures do we have to assure ourselves that students taught on other campuses have adequate learning and pastoral support
  - at other campuses in New Zealand
  - at campuses overseas?

*"Adequate" support would be support which is sufficient to meet their needs, and also, if relevant, is culturally appropriate.*
- Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits in the support services that are provided to students on other campuses?
- Have we identified any challenges in ensuring students on other campuses have adequate support?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to improving the support services provided to students on other campuses?

#### **Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:**

- Any policies, protocols or written documents (for example, MoUs) outlining processes which are designed to ensure students have adequate support services.
- Any reports or analyses of student satisfaction with support services.

## 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.

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- How do we gain feedback from students about
  - teaching quality
  - course quality
  - student services and student support?
- Who (which role/s) has oversight responsibility for gaining this feedback?
- How is the feedback used
  - for teaching improvement
  - for course improvement
  - for improving student services and support?
- How are students informed of what happens as a result of their feedback related to
  - teaching quality
  - course quality
  - student services and support?
- Are our processes for gathering and using feedback from students effective? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits in our processes for obtaining and using student feedback?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to obtaining and using student feedback or related to informing students about how their feedback is used?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Policies, guidelines or procedures related to student evaluation of courses, teaching and services.
- Policies, guidelines or procedures related to staff use of student evaluations.
- Samples of significant actions at institutional or faculty/school level which have been taken as a consequence of student feedback.

## 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.

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- How does the university gain feedback from graduates regarding their satisfaction with their university experience and learning outcomes? Who is responsible for this?
- What do we do with the feedback information received? Is the information used effectively? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from our methods of obtaining feedback and ensuring it is used effectively?
- Have we identified any challenges related to gaining feedback from graduates?
- Have we identified any challenges related to using the feedback obtained from graduates?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to obtaining and using feedback from graduates?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Examples of feedback processes used and examples of how this is used at faculty/school or institutional level.

## 6

## Teaching Quality

*In the following Guideline Statements “all staff” refers to non-continuing staff (e.g. tutors; staff on contract; sessional staff) as well as to continuing staff.*

### 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.

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- In what ways do recruitment processes address whether staff are appropriately qualified for the level(s) at which they will be teaching?
- What processes does the university have to assist staff to become familiar with our academic expectations? Are these processes effective (i.e. timely, relevant, useful)? How do we know?
- Have we identified any challenges related to the recruitment and induction of appropriately qualified staff?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to ensuring that the majority of staff teaching degree-level students are research-active?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Recruitment and selection policies and guidelines.
- Induction policies or guidelines.

## 6.2 Research-active staff

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

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What are our processes for ensuring that degree-level students, including (*where relevant*) those taught on other campuses, are taught mainly by staff who are research-active? Who is responsible for this?
- Have we identified any challenges related to research experience of degree-level teaching staff?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to the research experience of degree-level teaching staff?

### Evidence the university might be asked to make available on request:

- Staffing policies.
- Staff position descriptions or similar documents which specify staff responsibilities (sample might be sought by an audit panel).

### 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).

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What are our formal processes (i.e. directed by institutional policy) for assessing teaching quality and capability of individual teaching staff, including part-time and non-continuing staff? Who is responsible for this? Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- What other processes do we have for assessing teaching quality and capability of individual teaching staff, including part-time and non-continuing staff (e.g. peer review; mentoring)? Who is responsible for this? Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- How do we address instances of reported and/or proven inadequacy related to individual teaching staff? Who is responsible for this? Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- Have we identified any challenges related to assessment of teaching capability?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to the assessment of teaching capability?

#### Evidence the university might be asked to make available on request:

- Policies regarding teaching evaluation; promotion policies.
- Professional development policies, guidelines and/or sample plans.
- Peer review or mentoring guidelines.
- Reports on teaching development initiatives.
- Strategic and/or operational plans related to quality of teaching.

## 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.

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What processes and activities do we have for assisting individual teaching staff, including part-time and non-continuing staff, to develop their teaching capability
  - in use of learning management systems
  - in accessing and using contemporary pedagogical research
  - in development of new and/or more effective teaching strategies
  - in curriculum development
  - in other teaching-related activities?
- Who is responsible for providing these?
- Are these teaching development activities effective? How do we know?
- What provision do we make, and what recognition do we give, to encourage academic staff to undertake pedagogical research in their own disciplines?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits resulting from the processes and activities we use for the development of teaching capability?
- Have we identified any challenges related to providing support for the development of teaching capability?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to the provision and use of teaching development support?

### Evidence the university might be asked to make available on request:

- Strategic and/or operational plans related to quality of teaching.
- Professional development policies, guidelines and/or sample activities.
- Reports on teaching development initiatives, including any evaluation reports.
- Data related to use of teaching development services.

## 6.5 Teaching support on other campuses

*(where relevant)* 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.

### **Where relevant**

#### **Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):**

- What processes or procedures do we have to assure ourselves that staff teaching our courses on other campuses have adequate support for their teaching and professional development
  - at other campuses in New Zealand
  - at campuses overseas?

*“Adequate” support would be support which is sufficient to meet their needs, and also, if relevant, is culturally appropriate.*
- Is the support provided effective (i.e. accessible; appropriate; timely; useful)? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits in the teaching support services provided to staff on other campuses?
- Have we identified any challenges in ensuring staff on other campuses have adequate teaching support?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering or should consider related to improving the teaching support services provided to staff on other campuses?

#### **Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:**

- Any policies, protocols or written documents (for example, MoUs) outlining processes which are designed to ensure staff have access to adequate teaching support services.
- Any reports or analyses of staff satisfaction with teaching support services.

## 6.6 Teaching recognition

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

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- How is teaching capability recognized in promotion criteria? What criteria are used for determining teaching capability? What weighting does teaching performance and effective innovative practice have in overall assessment?
- What other processes or activities do we have which recognize and reward excellent teaching?
- Are the processes we have for recognizing teaching excellence appropriate? How do we know?
- Have we identified any areas where enhancements to teaching recognition are needed?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Promotion criteria.
- Policies, processes or guidelines related to recognition of teaching excellence.

## 7

**Supervision of Research Students**

For this section universities might find the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Ch B11 Research Degrees* helpful.<sup>16</sup>

**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.

**Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):**

- What processes do we use to ensure staff supervising research students (including staff from other institutions or organisations) are appropriately qualified as
  - main/primary supervisors
  - associate/secondary supervisors?
 Are these processes documented and made readily available to all staff and research students?
- What processes do we use to ensure staff supervising research students (including new staff and staff from other institutions or organisations) obtain training as supervisors? Who provides this training? Is it effective (i.e. accessible; timely; appropriate; useful; successful)? How do we know?
- What other processes do we have to enable new or inexperienced staff to gain opportunity, support, assistance and training to become effective supervisors? Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths or benefits in the support or training we provide for staff who are supervisors of research students?
- Have we identified any challenges in ensuring staff who supervise research students are appropriately trained and qualified for this task?
- Are there any enhancements we are considering related to training and support of supervisors of research students?

**Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:**

- Policies, guidelines and procedures related to appointment of supervisors.
- Policies, guidelines and activities related to training of supervisors.

<sup>16</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/quality-code-B11.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Publications/InformationAndGuidance/Pages/quality-code-B11.aspx)

## 7.2 Resourcing of research students

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

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What processes do we have for ensuring research students are resourced appropriately to do their research?
- How are the expectations and guidelines regarding appropriate resourcing communicated
  - to students
  - to staff responsible for supervision (including heads of department or school)?
- How are the expectations and guidelines regarding appropriate resourcing determined and monitored, and by whom (i.e. which role/s)?
- Have we identified any particular strengths in the processes whereby we determine and allocate resources for student research, and communicate these processes to staff and students?
- Have we identified any challenges related to the processes whereby we determine and allocate resources for student research?
- Have we identified any enhancements we need to make related to the processes whereby we determine and allocate resources for student research, and communicate these processes to staff and students?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Policies or guidelines for assessing and determining allocation of resources to research students.
- Any report on evaluation of resources for student research.
- Thesis student handbook or guidelines.

### 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.

#### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What processes do we use to monitor the supervision and support of research students to ensure they are appropriate and effective? Who has overall responsibility for the development, deployment and monitoring of these processes? Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- What processes do we use to ensure continuity of effective supervision (what do we do when a supervisor leaves, for example)?
- What processes do we use to monitor the academic progress of research students? Who has overall responsibility for these processes? Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- Do we have processes or activities available for students to assist in their research development and career development (e.g. tutoring opportunities; participation in teaching development; preparation for oral examinations)? Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- Have we identified any particular strengths in our processes for monitoring supervision and student progress and how we communicate the outcome of this monitoring to staff and students?
- Have we identified any enhancements we need to make related to the monitoring of supervision and support and how we communicate the outcome of this monitoring to staff and students?
- Have we identified any enhancements we need to make related to the monitoring of research students' progress and how we communicate the outcome of this monitoring to staff and students?

#### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Policies and guidelines related to monitoring of progress and success of research students.
- Policies and guidelines related to replacement of supervisors deemed inappropriate, or who resign or are on leave.
- Policies and guidelines related to research students identified as making inadequate progress.
- Thesis student handbook or guidelines.

## 7.4 Thesis examination

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

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- What processes do we use to ensure theses conform to the academic standards expected
  - across our university, including (*where relevant*) at campuses overseas
  - at other New Zealand universities, in the discipline
  - internationally, in the discipline?
- What processes do we use to ensure that our examination processes reflect established good practice and meet the expectations of
  - our own university for all disciplines
  - other New Zealand universities
  - the universities with which we wish to be compared internationally?
- What processes do we have to ensure staff who examine research theses are appropriately qualified and knowledgeable of the examination processes for theses (including conduct of oral examinations)?
- What processes do we have to enable new or inexperienced staff to gain support and assistance to be thesis examiners? Are these processes effective? How do we know?
- What processes do we have for ensuring that thesis oral examinations are convened and conducted appropriately and effectively?
- Have we identified any enhancements which are needed related to our thesis examination processes?
- Have we identified any enhancements which are needed related to the training and/or appointment of thesis examiners?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Policies, guidelines and procedures related to appointment of thesis examiners.
- Policies, guidelines and procedures related to the examination of theses.

## 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.

### Questions the university might ask itself (and answer in the Self-review Report):

- How do we gain feedback from research students on their supervision needs and experience of supervision? Who has responsibility for obtaining this feedback?
- How is the feedback used? How are students informed of how the feedback is dealt with
  - individually
  - collectively?
- How do we gain feedback from research students on their support needs related to their research? How is the feedback used?
- How do we gain feedback from research students on their support needs related to their academic life – for example, preparation of papers; professional development related to teaching? How is the feedback used to inform institutional support and practice?
- Have we identified any enhancements which are needed related to gaining, communicating and using research student feedback?

### Evidence the university might have or be asked to make available on request:

- Institutional surveys, focus group discussions or other forms of formal feedback.
- Reports of institutional surveys, focus group discussions or other forms of formal feedback.
- Examples of institutional initiatives prompted by student feedback.

## Appendix 2: Acknowledgments

AQA acknowledges the experiences of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, UK), the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), the former Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), the National Accreditation and Assessment Council (NAAC, India), the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA) and the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), all of which AQA has drawn on for ideas of good practice when developing our own audit procedures and this publication.

In particular, AQA acknowledges the work of QAA (Scotland) and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), whose reports have been a valuable source of ideas and critique on quality assurance practice.

AQA wishes to acknowledge the assistance and guidance of the Cycle 5 Steering Group (Professor David Mackay; Professor Gareth Jones; Professor Rob Allen; Professor Eric Pawson) who provided immensely helpful advice and reflections on audit process and the development of the framework. Also appreciated for their comments, critique and for sharing their own audit experiences have been the staff from all New Zealand universities who attended workshops and provided written feedback at different stages of the Cycle 5 development. AQA notes its appreciation of Sue Holstein's work as our external editor; we remain responsible, however, for this final version of the Handbook.

## Appendix 3: References

Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (2010). *Minimum Standards for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions*.

Alaniska, H *et al* (2007). *Student Involvement in the processes of quality assurance agencies*. European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Helsinki.  
[www.engq.eu/files/Student%20involvement.pdf](http://www.engq.eu/files/Student%20involvement.pdf). Downloaded 11 June 2012.

Australian Learning and Teaching Council and Macquarie University (2009). *Teaching Standards Framework* unpubl.

Bitusikova, Alexandra, *et al* (2010). *Quality Assurance in Postgraduate Education*. ENQA Workshop report 12, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Helsinki.

European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2009). *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*.  
[www.engq.eu/files/ESG\\_3edition%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.engq.eu/files/ESG_3edition%20(2).pdf). Downloaded 11 June 2012.

Malaysian Qualifications Authority (2009). *Code of Practice for Institutional Audit* Second edition. [www.mqa.gov.my/portal2012/garispenduan/COPIA/COPIA%202nd%20Edition.pdf](http://www.mqa.gov.my/portal2012/garispenduan/COPIA/COPIA%202nd%20Edition.pdf). Downloaded 7 June 2012.

Ministry of Health (2011). *Designated Auditing Agency Handbook*.  
[www.health.govt.nz/publication/designated-auditing-agency-handbook](http://www.health.govt.nz/publication/designated-auditing-agency-handbook). Downloaded 13 June 2012.

Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (2008). *Quality Audit Manual Institutional Accreditation: Stage 1* Can be downloaded at [www.oac.gov.om/QAM\\_2008\\_FINAL2.pdf](http://www.oac.gov.om/QAM_2008_FINAL2.pdf) (June 2012).

Quality Assurance Council (n.d). *Audit Manual*. University Grants Committee Hong Kong.  
[www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/doc/qac/publication/auditmanual.pdf](http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/doc/qac/publication/auditmanual.pdf). Downloaded 19 June 2012.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2011 - 2012). *The UK Quality Code for Higher Education*. [www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx). Downloaded 28 January 2013.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2009). *Universities Scotland Teaching Quality Forum Project: Good practice in Reflective Analysis when preparing for Enhancement-led institutional review*. [www.qaa.ac.uk/Scotland/Documents/ELIR-good-practice-reflective-analysis.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/Scotland/Documents/ELIR-good-practice-reflective-analysis.pdf). Downloaded 10 January 2013.

Trochim, William M. K., (2009). "Evidence and Evaluation". Paper to Australasian Evaluation Society International Conference, Canberra, Australia, 2 September, 2009.

Vlasceanu, Lazar, *et al* (2007). *Quality Assurance and Accreditation: A Glossary of basic terms and definitions*. UNESCO, Bucharest.  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001346/134621e.pdf> Downloaded 13 June 2012.



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

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