

Cycle 6 Academic Audit

The audit phase of Cycle 6 is approaching its halfway point. The site visits for Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury and the University of Waikato took place in July and September, respectively. The report for Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury is anticipated to be published next month, with the report for the University of Waikato following in December.

The audit phase of Cycle 6 is expected to conclude at the end of 2024, and 2025 is intended to be a year of review and planning. Review work for Cycle 5 comprised of five main elements: (1) a review of processes; (2) an analysis of commendations, affirmations and recommendations; (3) an assessment of impact; (4) an analysis of Māori themes in Cycle 5 academic audit reports; and (5) an analysis of themes for Pasifika. The assessment of impact was published in Quality in Higher Education (27/3) and the other reports are available on the [AQA website](#).



Above: The Panel for the Cycle 6 Academic Audit of the University of Waikato | L-R: Dr Valance Smith, Associate Professor Julie Mackey, Alicia Lemmer, Emeritus Professor Joyce Kirk and Professor David Crabbe.

Initial Review

AQA has undertaken an initial review of the Cycle 6 academic audit based on the reports of the first two universities in the Cycle. The objectives of the initial review were to assess whether the audit framework was being fully utilised; consider initial feedback on the audit methodology and processes; examine the application of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Te Tiriti); and identify any indicative trends and themes in audit findings within the Cycle 6 academic audits that were completed by April 2023.

The spread and balance of commendations, affirmations, and recommendations (CARs) across the two academic audit reports indicates that the Cycle 6 framework is working well. Only four guideline statements across the framework did not receive a commendation, affirmation, or recommendation. Additionally, the auditors' feedback reflected that the Cycle 6 framework provides an audit that is robust and fair, with guideline statements that are specific and capture well-established criteria for higher education quality.

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AQA | About

The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA) was established in 1993 to carry out audits of the processes in universities which underpin academic quality. The mission

of AQA is to contribute to high quality New Zealand university education by engaging as a leader and advocate in the development of universities based on high quality, internationally acceptable,

academic practices, and by providing quality assurance and quality enhancement services which assist universities in facilitating excellent student experience and learning outcomes.

Cycle 6 Academic Audit (*continued*)

Feedback from the auditors indicated they were adequately supported by AQA and emphasised that their time as an auditor was a highly positive experience. This feedback included targeted kōrero with both Māori and student audit panel members. Areas for development were also identified within this feedback. Site visit interviewees also reflected a positive experience with AQA overall. However, AQA could give further thought to both the timing of site visit interviews and the cultural relevancy of the process, especially when interviewing Māori staff and students. Other improvements could be made in relation to site visit interviewees' experiences, providing further support for auditors, and ensuring postgraduate study can be represented in a more holistic way, especially in relation to Masters-level study.

A 5-step Critical Te Tiriti¹ analysis of audit reports was used to help identify if Te Tiriti is reflected within the reports. The initial review found a significant increase of attention to Te Tiriti between Cycle 5 and Cycle 6 academic audits. Although Te Tiriti commitments are evident throughout the reports, AQA can still do further work to ensure a consistent and embedded approach is reflected in future audits.

A thematic analysis of CARs suggests that the Cycle 6 Enhancement Theme, Te Tiriti, student voice, and COVID-19 are initial areas of emphasis. The emergence of COVID-19 as an initial theme is not surprising given the relative recency of the pandemic for the first two universities in the cycle, in particular. The analysis also suggests that, although the intention behind the Enhancement Theme is reflected within the audit reports, there is more work that AQA can do to help uphold the manifestation of aspirations from the Enhancement Theme. The Enhancement Theme will be the subject of a specific review at the end of Cycle 6.

AQA will undertake a mid-cycle analysis of patterns of commendations, affirmations, and recommendations once the report for Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury has been published.

¹ Came, H., & McCreanor, T. (2015). Pathways to transform institutional (and everyday) racism in New Zealand. *Journal of Social Anthropology and Cultural Studies*, 12(2), 24-48.

Haera Rā



AQA is sorry to say goodbye to Deputy Director Hana Meinders-Sykes who is moving into a policy role in the social sector. Her contribution to AQA in developing our Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Plan and Te Tiriti o Waitangi policy will hold AQA in good stead for the future. We wish her all the best.

The Interactional Day of Action for Academic Integrity

The Interactional Day of Action for Academic Integrity is on 18 October 2023

There are pre-event sessions on 4 October. Click [here](#) for further information and to download the poster and other resources.

Nau mai, whakatau mai

AQA welcomes Professor Grant Edwards, Vice-Chancellor of Te Whare Wānanga o Aoraki Lincoln University to the AQA Board.

International Day of Action For Academic Integrity **October 18, 2023**



Join us for the International Day of Action for Academic Integrity on **October 18th 2023!!!**

Sign up on the ICAI Website with this QR Code or go to: academicintegrity.org/events-conferences/idoa-international-day-of-action-for-academic-integrity

Our theme:

Championing Academic Integrity in the Age of AI

- Free online events open to all, including talks, interviews, panels, student activities.
- Resources for you and your institution to use on academic integrity and AI
- Student creativity contest with choice of submission format
- Social media promotion to champion academic integrity

International Center for Academic Integrity

Student Voice - Academic Quality and Disabled Student Experience

Contributed by Sean Prenter and Tara Shepherd, Co-Presidents, National Disabled Students' Association.



The National Disabled Students' Association (NDSA) is a non-partisan, pans impairment, national association representing disabled student voices across Aotearoa New Zealand. NDSA was founded in 2021, motivated by the barriers disabled students face accessing tertiary education. NDSA members have identified recurring concerns for academic quality, namely inaccessible lecture recordings, exclusionary examination style and avoiding Artificial Intelligence.

During the lockdown, disabled students outperformed our non-disabled peers. Our disabled students' adapted resilience enabled them to thrive during the adversity of the COVID-19 lockdowns. These lockdowns created the institution-wide necessity for flexible learning; the disabled community had long advocated for assignment-based assessment, hybrid learning and inclusive education, and the pandemic accelerated progress in all these areas.

Unfortunately, the tertiary sector now appears to be regressing to a pre-lockdown state. Institutions are, once again, using inconsistent lecture recordings and resorting to demanding marathon-style final exams (with questionable effectiveness). Some examinations even occur in the evening, despite an awareness that, in the current cost of living crisis, many students need to work to support themselves. For disabled students who have higher expenses, lecture recordings mean not having to choose between medical needs, financial demands and gaining an education. For disabled students, assignment-based assessments better reflect academic ability.

NDSA understands that many institutions have returned to final examinations due to concerns about Artificial Intelligence (AI). On this topic, NDSA would like to highlight innovative approaches our members have noted: Some institutions have adopted oral defences, ensuring that a student's work is their own, while other institutions have adopted assignments that actively critique AI. Leading institutions are using this technology for adaptive learning tools that enhance accessibility. These examples provide a strong starting point for institutions in Aoteroa to build on the progress of disability-inclusion which was fostered in lockdown, ultimately working towards an inclusive, accessible, and quality education.

For further information on the National Disabled Students' Association, please visit:

facebook.com/NationalDisabledStudentsAssociation

Working for AQA

The Executive Director would welcome expressions of interest from anyone interested in working for AQA.

We are particularly seeking someone who can guide our continuing journey to become a Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsive organisation and honour our obligations and responsibilities as a good Tiriti partner.

We are happy to discuss a secondment or other arrangement with interested individuals.

Please email sheelagh.matear@qa.ac.nz.

Have You Seen This?

This 'Have you seen this' column includes links to reviews of the tertiary and higher education systems in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, and the UK and where to find Sally Kift's Needed Now in Teaching and Learning series. Finally, it includes a link to some recent research on making employability initiatives inclusive to disabled and/or diverse students.

Roger Smyth has produced a three-part analysis of the tertiary education system in Aotearoa New Zealand that is well worth a read in thinking about the review of higher education funding. It can be found on his blog at:

<https://rogersmyth.com/blog-2/>

On the subject of system level reviews, the **Interim report** for the Australian Universities Accord has been released, as have submissions on the Interim report.

The relatively slow moving **reform of higher education** in the UK has taken another step. Nick Hillman at HEPI provides an **analysis**.

Sally Kift's Needed Now in Teaching and Learning has moved to **Substack**. It needs a subscription (free) but is still well worth following.

Molly Dollinger, et al. have published a paper on "Employability for inclusion" in the **Journal** of Higher Education Policy and Management.

Meetings and Conference Calendar

13 October 2023

Brisbane and online

Student Voice Australasia **Symposium**

2-4 November 2023

Dhaka, Bangladesh

Asia Pacific Quality Network Academic **Conference**

8-11 November 2023

Utrecht, The Netherlands

International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (issotl) **Conference**

16 November 2023 (TBC)

Wellington

Quality Managers' Meeting

17 November 2023

Wellington

Tertiary Student Voice Summit 2023

Registrations close 4 November.

22-23 November 2023

Melbourne

TEQSA Annual Conference

23-25 November 2023

Portugal

European Quality Assurance **Forum**

3-6 December 2023

Christchurch and online

ASCILITE

<https://2023conference.ascilite.org/>



AQA | Academic
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We welcome feedback on this newsletter and the AQA website, along with news and suggestions for newsletter items.

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