

# news

June 2018

# AQA

Academic  
**Quality**Agency  
For New Zealand Universities



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

## Quality Enhancement

The AQA Executive Director has been accompanying Fiona Johnson-Bell, Te Pouhārō - Māori from Universities New Zealand on her engagement visits to universities. The enhancement theme topic was strongly shaped by Te Kāhui Amokura (TKA) and intersects with TKA's ongoing workstreams. As each university is approaching the enhancement differently (as anticipated), our engagement differed at each university. During the course of the visits we have met with internal university enhancement theme steering groups, students, Māori staff and Pasifika staff and attended the launch of the University of Waikato's new Pacific Plan.

The next meeting of the Enhancement Theme Steering Group is on Thursday 19th July. Before then, the Enhancement Theme is presenting a plenary panel at the STARS conference at 8.30am on 10 July in Auckland. See <http://unistars.org/docs/STARS2018PROGRAM.pdf>.

The panel members are Professor Robyn Longhurst, Dr. Darryn Russell, Professor Giselle Brynes, Dr. Tasileta Teevale, Ali Leota and Parekura Pewhairangi, and Dr. Joseph Te Rito from Ako Aotearoa will be the facilitator for the session.



Above: The University of Waikato celebrates the launch of their new Pacific Plan (photographs courtesy of University of Waikato)

### Save the Date



Please save the date of **Wednesday 31 October 2018** for an 'Enhancement Theme Symposium' to be held in Wellington. More details coming soon.



Left: Fiona Johnson-Bell and Sheelagh Matear meet with students at Massey University Oteha Rohe campus (photo courtesy of Fiona Johnson-Bell)

### 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.

# Review of Cycle 5 Audit Findings

AQA has completed the second paper in the Cycle 5 review series. An analysis of commendations, affirmations and recommendations in Cycle 5 academic audits is available on the [AQA website](#).

The objectives of the paper were to:

- examine areas of strength and good practice, current activity and areas for development in universities, indicated by commendations, affirmations and recommendations made in audit reports;
- provide a resource for universities and others interested in the quality assurance practices of New Zealand universities by compiling commendations, affirmations and recommendations made in Cycle 5 academic audit reports into a single document; and
- suggest areas for further examination and implications for Cycle 6.

The paper uses audit 'findings' of commendations, affirmations and recommendations (CARs) as a lens through which to examine Cycle 5 academic audit reports. Overall, results indicate that New Zealand universities have maintained high academic quality standards and there are no issues of systemic concern. These findings are reflective of the sector as a whole and apply differently to individual universities.

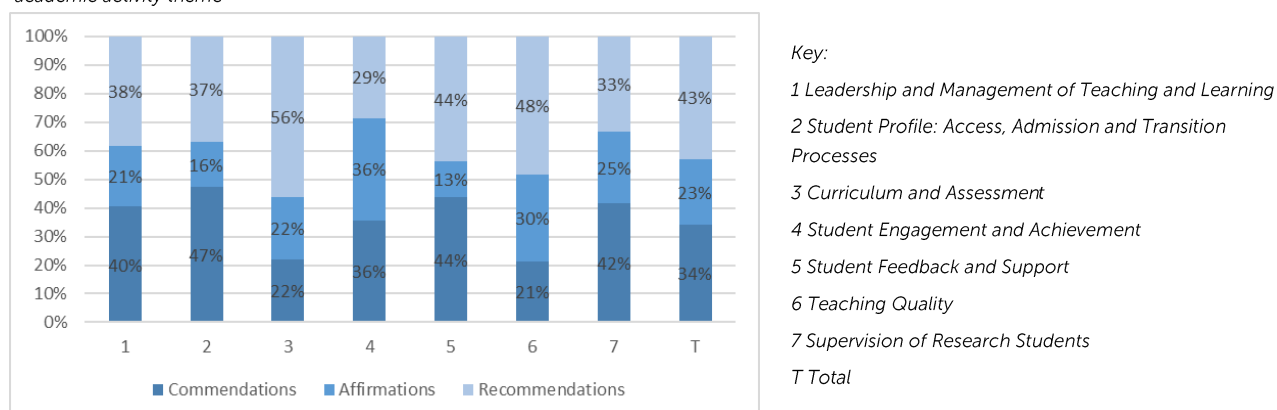
New Zealand universities have strengths in the academic activity theme areas of leadership and management of teaching and learning; access, admission and transitions; and supervision of postgraduate students. Particular strengths are found in strategic and operational planning, having appropriate information resources, access, admission and transition processes, where universities are specifically considering access, admission and transition for Māori students and Pasifika students, and learning support.

In Cycle 5, universities were actively developing their risk management and staff recruitment and induction processes.

Despite it being an area of strength, leadership and management of teaching and learning is also a priority area for further development, along with curriculum and assessment and teaching quality; particularly delegations, benchmarking of academic programmes, assessment, assessing and monitoring teaching quality and support for teaching development. Academic advice for students, feedback from students and resourcing of research students are other specific areas for further development. More broadly, universities should continue to ensure consistency of decision-making across faculties, divisions and schools within universities.

These findings and implications have contributed to the development of the audit framework for Cycle 6 Academic Audit.

*Below: Percentage of commendations, affirmations and recommendations within each academic activity theme*



## Student Voice

*Contributed by Jonathan Gee (NZUSA President)  
and James Heath (OUSA Education Officer)*

Last month, a range of student representatives from across the country attended one of two Education Summits as part of the Government's development of a 30-year vision for education, Kōrero Mātauranga.

Student representatives really appreciated sitting alongside principals, educators, employers, MPs, and other young people on an equal platform to discuss values, principles and possibilities for the future. It was an opportunity to take a step back and reflect on the big questions, when so often we are asked for feedback on the small ones.

When it comes to shaping the future of education in Aotearoa New Zealand, student voices are fundamentally important throughout the entire conversation. Our education system exists to educate; therefore, it makes sense to listen to those it is actually educating. This way we can know what works, what doesn't, and what direction we should be heading. The recent Education Summit was a fantastic opportunity for this.

The Education Summit reinforced to us the importance of having the learner at the centre of any system or policy change we make in education. From an academic quality perspective, we need to ask ourselves how we are involving students not just at the evaluation stage, but also the agenda-setting stage of the process. Students are positioned best to know what works best for students, meaning there is immense value in bringing in their voices when making changes to papers, policies and qualifications.



As we know from research on student voice in tertiary settings, student voice is more than just an activity. It involves an institutional culture which hears and heeds that voice. Many of our universities already do this well. We hope that Kōrero Mātauranga allows us to make an even greater contribution to our own learning experience.

## Congratulations

AQA welcomes the appointment of Helen Lomax as the Director of Ako Aotearoa and looks forward to working with Helen and the Ako team.

## Cycle 6 Audit Framework

The audit framework for use in Cycle 6 is nearing completion. AQA has consulted with universities and the framework is being considered by the AQA Board. If approved, it will then be submitted to the Vice-Chancellors for their endorsement.

AQA wishes to thank Quality Managers and other quality professionals in the universities for their work in developing the Cycle 6 audit framework.



## Have You Seen This?

Presentations from the Higher Education Quality Network Conference on Assessment, Integrity, Review are available at:

<https://www.hes.edu.au/resources/2018-higher-education-quality-network-conference>

The HEQN document repository holds a series of other conference presentations and papers at:

<https://www.hes.edu.au/document-repository>

The Australian Higher Education Standards Panel report on Improving retention, completion and success in higher education was released on 8 June 2018. It is available at:

<https://www.education.gov.au/news/release-final-report-improving-retention-completion-and-success-higher-education>

EY have released another report on future scenarios for universities. See:

<http://cdn.ey.com/echannel/au/en/industries/government---public-sector/ey-university-of-the-future-2030/EY-university-of-the-future-2030.pdf>

The report from the Higher Education Pacific Quality Benchmarking project undertaken by Sara Booth is available from the Ako Aotearoa website at:

<https://ako.ac.nz/knowledge-centre/hepq/research-report-higher-education-pacific-quality-benchmarking-project/>

Sara has now moved onto an international project on 'Embedding Employability'. See:

<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/strategic-priorities/employability/embedding-employability-exchange-initiative-eeee>

Closer to home, there is no shortage of education review activity to keep an eye on and engage with. The Ministry of Education's Kōrero Mātauranga web page <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/> has links to the review of NCEA

<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/conversations/ncea-have-your-say/>

## Meetings and Conference Calendar

8 – 11 July 2018 in Auckland  
STARS (Students Transitions Achievement Retention Success) Conference

<https://www.ncsehe.edu.au/event/2018-stars-conference/>

18 – 19 October 2018 on the Gold Coast  
Regional Universities: Anchor Institutions Transforming their Regions

<https://www.hes.edu.au/events/regional-universities-anchor-institutions-transforming-their-regions>

28 – 30 November 2018 in Melbourne  
TEQSA Conference and Higher Education Quality Forum 2018

<https://www.hes.edu.au/events/teqsa-conference-and-higher-education-quality-forum-2018>

3 October 2018 in Wellington  
Quality Meeting

4 October 2018 in Wellington  
Student Voice Summit, in partnership with NZUSA

5 October 2018 in Wellington  
Students and internal programme review processes, in conjunction with CUAP

31 October 2018 in Wellington  
**Enhancement Theme Symposium:** Access, outcomes and opportunity for Māori students and for Pasifika students.

**Please watch the AQA website for further details.**

19 – 21 November 2018 in Melbourne  
AAIR Annual Forum: Reflecting on the past, experiencing the present, shaping the future  
<http://www.aairforum.com.au/>



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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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