

# Report of the 2013 Academic Audit of Massey University – Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

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

February 2014

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



Academic  
**Quality**Agency  
For New Zealand Universities

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*Postal address*

P O Box 5787  
Lambton Quay  
Wellington 6145  
New Zealand

*Location*

Level 9  
142 Lambton Quay  
Wellington 6011  
New Zealand

*Website*

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

ISBN 978-0-9922528-1-6

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## Foreword

The 2013 audit of Massey University is the fifth academic audit of the University carried out by the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities. The University was last audited in 2008, as part of the Cycle 4 audit of New Zealand universities, by a Panel of auditors from the (then) New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit<sup>1</sup>.

The methodology adopted for the 2013 audit of Massey University is that used for all New Zealand universities in this cycle of audits. The focus of Cycle 5 audits is on teaching and learning and student support, including postgraduate. The methodology is centred on a framework of 40 Guideline Statements which are expressions of the qualities or standards which a contemporary university of good standing internationally might be expected to demonstrate. The Guideline Statements were developed after extensive discussion with New Zealand university staff and Vice-Chancellors and consultation with other stakeholders, including students and academic auditors. The Guideline Statements are informed by comparable frameworks in other jurisdictions, in particular the QAA (UK).

The Cycle 5 audit was carried out by a Panel of AQA auditors, including an international auditor, in the second half of 2013. This report presents the Panel's findings, based on the evidence it has considered. The report is released under the authorisation of the AQA Board.

**Dr Jan Cameron**

**Director**

Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

February 2014

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

## Executive Summary

Established originally as a College of Agriculture in 1928, Massey has been a university since 1964. It has campuses in Manawatu (at Palmerston North), Auckland (at Albany) and Wellington and also delivers a programme in Singapore. Nearly half of its students study by distance (15,627 students out of a total enrolment of 33,491 students in 2012).

The University was audited by the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA) in 2013. The AQA audit methodology is centred on a framework of 40 Guideline Statements which are expressions of the qualities or standards which a contemporary university of good standing internationally might be expected to demonstrate.

The University was last audited by AQA (as the then New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit) in 2008. The Panel was pleased to see the momentum sustained since that audit. It noted the large amount of work which has been done in preparing and communicating the Strategic Plan and the systematic development of policy and procedures around core academic activities. Given the wide-ranging nature of these new processes and activities, the challenge to embed these across all Colleges and campuses is significant.

The Panel found that the ways in which Massey University articulates and manages its multi-campus model are effective and clear. The Panel observed that Colleges are the driving structure for implementation of the University's strategic objectives, and that individually they appear to be effective in this role, albeit with differing approaches. There is, however, a tension within the shared services approach to delivering some support services, which will need to be resolved. These tensions were indicated in inconsistencies between Colleges in their responses to the challenges they perceive arising from this model of service delivery. The University might consider whether some generic solutions might be found to problems perceived by staff in the Colleges.

The University's current Strategic Plan is articulated in "The Road to 2020". Its strategy "to define the future of our nation and take what is special about New Zealand to the World" is founded on the values of creativity, innovation and connectedness. The strategy is formulated around seven "Big Goals" related to research and scholarship, teaching and learning, internationalisation, connections, responsibility, generating income, and enabling excellence. Communication about the Strategic Plan to staff appears to have been very good. However, a number of staff who were interviewed were unsure of the implications of related strategic documents for their work or administrative/academic area.

The Panel was impressed by the ways in which the University is endeavouring to ensure that pedagogy is shaping learning space development. It also believes that the Student Success Policy and Academic Standing Model are examples of good innovative practice. The University is commended for its extensive range of student support services and for endeavouring to ensure these meet the needs of students on all campuses, and in whatever mode of learning they are engaged. The University is aware of challenges in recruitment and retention of Māori and Pacific students and has a range of initiatives to support them. It was clear to the Panel from these and other initiatives that the University is trying to be student-centred. However, there remain a number of challenges which distance students face

which are specific to the distance mode of delivery and the study style of distance students. These challenges impact directly on student engagement and success. The Panel notes that some of the issues identified for distance students had been raised by the 2008 audit panel and, despite the University's close attention to them, they seem to persist.

The University is commended on its systematic framework for recognizing excellent teaching. The Panel encourages the University to persist in ensuring all academic staff are well versed in the pedagogical and technological approaches required for the University to deliver effectively its strategic goal of "an exceptional and distinctive learning experience at Massey for all students".

The Panel found that implementation of several aspects of teaching and learning across Colleges and across different delivery modes and sites is inconsistent. In part this inconsistency relates to individual staff choice and in part to variation in implementation of institutional policies and practices across Colleges. Such matters as differing grading practices, different approaches to stakeholder engagement and different approaches to academic decision-making with respect to, for example, appeals, risk undermining academic quality if there is not a shared consensus on desired standards.

The University has a sound equivalence policy but work is needed to ensure this is widely understood and applied effectively. Similarly, the University has robust policies and regulations related to academic misconduct but needs to ensure procedures related to use of plagiarism detection software are applied consistently. Staff induction is another area identified by the Panel as needing attention in some, but probably not all, areas of the University.

The Panel was satisfied that the University's processes around doctoral study are sound. However it has raised some issues regarding the supervision and support of sub-doctoral research students, in particular with respect to those processes which are College-led or determined.

In sum, the Panel considers the University's strategic planning and overall academic policy and process framework are sound but that some weaknesses occur when these are implemented or articulated at College level or for specific groups of students. Given that Colleges appear to be the main drivers of the University's academic activity, and the bodies charged with the main force of implementation of the Strategic Plan, it is critical that the University pays attention to points of vulnerability or sensitivity within Colleges with regard to its over-arching objectives and operationalization.

The University has proposed 33 enhancement initiatives emerging from its self-review process. A number of the initiatives are works in progress. Nevertheless the list implies a significant work plan for the University.

The Panel has made four commendations, six affirmations and 17 recommendations.



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## List of Key Terms and Acronyms

<b>Academic Standing Model</b>	Massey University's new approach to monitoring student performance for the purpose of improving course completions.
<b>AQA</b>	Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities
<b>APRU</b>	Academic Policy and Regulations Unit
<b>AUSSE</b>	Australasian Survey of Student Engagement
<b>Big Goal Dashboard</b>	Massey University's system for monitoring progress against the seven "big goals" contained within The Road to 2020 Strategic Plan.
<b>CUAP</b>	Committee on University Academic Programmes
<b>EFTS</b>	Equivalent Full-Time Students
<b>FTE</b>	Full-time Equivalent (staff)
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>MOST</b>	Massey Online Survey Tool (used for course and teaching evaluation).
<b>NZQA</b>	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
<b>NZVCC</b>	New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (the legal name of Universities New Zealand – Te Pūkai Tara).
<b>PaCE</b>	Professional and Continuing Education
<b>Panel</b>	Unless otherwise specified, "the Panel" refers to the Academic Audit Panel engaged by AQA to conduct the 2013 audit of Massey University.
<b>SLT</b>	Massey University's Senior Leadership Team.
<b>SR</b>	Self-review Report
<b>Stream</b>	Massey University's Moodle-based online learning environment.
<b>The Road to 2020</b>	Massey University's current Strategic Plan document.

## Preface

Established as a university in 1964, Massey University has since its inception been New Zealand's main provider of university distance education. It also hosts New Zealand's only School of Veterinary Science and the only School of Aviation. Since its merger with Wellington Polytechnic in 1999, Massey University now also claims a leading role in Design and Fine Arts. The Massey University site at Albany, Auckland was opened in 1993.<sup>2</sup>

In 2013 the University delivered its programmes from three New Zealand campuses – Manawatu (Palmerston North), Albany (Auckland) and Wellington – and delivered the Bachelor of Food Technology (Hons) from Singapore Polytechnic. The University continued to have an extensive distance programme, totalling 15,627 students in 2012 out of a total enrolment of 33,491 (47%).

## University Profile

Massey University is structured as a matrix of colleges and campuses. The five Colleges deliver the academic activity of the University: the College of Business; College of Science; College of Health; and College of Humanities and Social Sciences all of which span the three physical campuses of the University, and the College of Creative Arts which is based in Wellington. Administrative and support activities of the University are mainly based on the Manawatu campus with outposts on the other campuses. Colleges also have administrative and support services specific to the particular College.

The senior management of the University is constituted as a Senior Leadership Team, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, comprising Pro-Vice-Chancellors with responsibility for colleges and Assistant Vice-Chancellors who have responsibility for supporting research, academic functions, students and non-academic functions. The Senior Leadership Team also includes a senior advisor to the Vice-Chancellor who sits outside the team structure.

The academic units of the Colleges are Schools, Institutes and/or Centres.

The University's academic committee structure flows from Academic Board (a committee of Council) to a suite of academic subcommittees of Academic Board, plus the College Boards. Each College Board in turn has a set of academic subcommittees. The titles and responsibilities of these subcommittees vary across the Colleges.

Of the 19,704 EFTS in 2012, 77% (15,185) were enrolled in undergraduate degree-level programmes, 13% (2,513) in taught postgraduate programmes and 8% (1,529) in postgraduate research programmes; only 2.4% (478) were enrolled in pre-degree courses.<sup>3</sup> Over half of Massey students study part-time – in 2012 approximately 53%.<sup>4</sup>

In 2012 the University recorded 2,972 staff (FTE) of whom 1,072 were academic staff.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/history-of-massey-university/](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/history-of-massey-university/) downloaded 09.12.13.

<sup>3</sup> Annual Report 2012, p87. Sum exceeds total EFTS.

<sup>4</sup> University Profile, p26.

<sup>5</sup> Annual Report 2012, p93.

## Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan

The University's Vision is:

*To be New Zealand's defining university and a world leader in higher education and scholarship.*

The University's Mission is:

*To define the future of our nation and to take what is special about New Zealand to the world.*

The University lists its values as

*Create  
Innovate  
Connect.*<sup>6</sup>

In order for Massey University to achieve its vision it specifies seven "Big Goals":

- To promote the highest standards of research and scholarship and be a world leader in [our] areas of specialisation;
- To ensure an exceptional and distinctive learning experience at Massey for all students;
- To strengthen [our] connections with local, national and international partners and stakeholders to gain mutually beneficial outcomes;
- To take Massey University to the world so that [our] students, whether studying onshore or offshore, experience a unique education with a distinctive Massey flavour, and [our] academic community is engaged in knowledge-sharing with scholars and researchers from all parts of the globe;
- To enhance [our] reputation as New Zealand's defining university by contributing to understanding of, and innovative responses to, social, economic, cultural and environmental issues;
- To significantly increase [our] income and improve [our] financial position to allow for more investment to enable the University to achieve its goals;
- To provide the best working and learning environment for [our] staff and students.<sup>7</sup>

The University's Strategic Plan, The Road to 2020, specifies the attributes it expects of its students, reflecting the three values of the University, viz that students "will develop the graduate attributes of creativity, innovation and connectedness that will enable them to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the workplace of the future."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The Road to 2020, inside cover.

<sup>7</sup> The Road to 2020, p3.

<sup>8</sup> The Road to 2020, p2.

## The 2013 Academic Audit

The methodology adopted for the current audit is that used for New Zealand universities in the fifth cycle of academic audits. It focuses on teaching and learning and student support, including postgraduate.<sup>9</sup>

The University submitted its Self-review Portfolio, including a report and key supporting documentation in electronic form, at the beginning of September 2013. The Self-review Report included hyperlinks to documents on the University's public website and also links to documents organised on tablets or USB flash drives by the University for the purpose of the audit. These processes ensured the audit Panel had a large amount of information available to it. Further documents were provided on request as needed.

The Chair of the audit Panel and the AQA Director visited the University for a pre-audit planning meeting in October 2013. In addition to reviewing the logistics of the site visits, the planning visit provided an opportunity for the Chair of the Panel to meet with some members of the Senior Leadership Team and other staff.

The audit site visit commenced on 12 November with a visit by one Panel member plus the AQA Director to the Wellington Campus, followed by a visit by a second Panel member plus the AQA Director to the Albany Campus on 15 November. The full Panel of five auditors came together in Palmerston North on 17 November for the site visit to the Manawatu Campus on 18-20 November. Video-links and teleconferences facilitated interviews with staff and students from all campuses and from Singapore. The Panel also interviewed Council members by teleconference and distance students by telephone calls. In total, during the site visit the Panel spoke to about 100 staff and approximately 45 students.

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<sup>9</sup> See pp63-64.

## 1. Leadership and Management of Teaching and Learning

In its Self-review Report Massey University comments that over the three years prior to the audit the University has undergone substantive restructuring and reconfiguration. The objective has been to enhance the alignment and coordination of central services with the needs of the Colleges, and to build capability and capacity for new directions associated with, for example, internationalisation. Colleges have also undergone substantive reconfiguration to enhance disciplinary strengths and to create spaces for new opportunities in teaching, learning and research.<sup>10</sup>

At the time of the site visit the University was again considering some reshaping of its senior management team. This chapter reflects the current situation with respect to management roles, responsibilities and delegations.

### 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.

Massey University has a Delegation Statute which sets out the Council delegations. It has a schedule of all the powers the Council is permitted to delegate under the Education Act and to whom these are delegated. The Statute includes delegations under other legislation such as Health and Safety. Most of the academic delegations are to the Vice-Chancellor or the Academic Board; further delegations are also listed and it is clearly stated if a power cannot be sub-delegated.

A further Delegations of Authority Document defines financial, contractual and human resources delegations and authority to engage solicitors. This document defines four levels of delegation down from the Council, Vice-Chancellor, Senior Management to Heads of units.

The Panel also reviewed the terms of reference for Academic Board and its committees. Council has delegated a number of powers to Academic Board, which is defined as the foremost body “for the academic decision-making process”.<sup>11</sup> Academic Board can approve and/or adopt proposals to introduce new academic qualifications, new subjects, new majors; introduce new academic policies and procedures or changes to academic policies and procedures; respond to NZVCC or NZQA on any matters relating to the qualification framework; confer degrees and award diplomas and certificates, including the power to revoke awards. Subcommittees of Academic Board are deemed to be committees of Council and all delegations to subcommittees are deemed to be delegations by Council to its committees. College Boards are considered to be subcommittees of Academic Board.

The Academic Committee of Academic Board has authority to approve all minor Calendar changes and changes to existing programmes and papers that do not require CUAP approval; approve proposals for community education proposals from Colleges for new papers; approve key dates for

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<sup>10</sup> SR, p1.

<sup>11</sup> Academic Board Terms of Reference, p1.

the academic year; accept qualification review reports from the Colleges (including progress reports on implementation) and Graduating Year Reviews required by CUAP. The Academic Committee has delegated some functions, such as non-Calendar changes to papers, to College Boards. The Academic Committee makes recommendations to Academic Board on proposals from College Boards; it also drafts formal responses to NZVCC/CUAP and NZQA when required.

College Boards generally advise the Academic Board on academic matters including academic policy, the regulatory framework and content of College qualifications, and College prizes and scholarships. Each College Board has terms of reference which include the delegations to the Board. There appears to be some variation between Colleges in these delegations. Some College Boards delegate further to College Academic Leaders or Programme Directors the responsibility for programme management within the regulatory framework, e.g. approval of courses of study, and examination results for individual students; review of curricula; changes to papers. College Boards can also delegate tasks to their standing committees. Differences between Boards and processes may present challenges in achieving a “one university” response as individual staff may need to understand the processes and practices of multiple Boards.<sup>12</sup>

Matters related to research supervision are delegated to the University Doctoral Research Committee and Colleges.

While the higher level delegations (from Council, the Vice-Chancellor, Academic Board and Academic Committee) are clear, the delegated responsibilities of College Boards are less clear. In its discussions with College Pro-Vice-Chancellors the Panel heard that while there is some commonality between College Boards there is also quite a lot of divergence. Other staff who were interviewed also reported an array of different systems or processes for authorising academic decisions.

The Panel could find no formal schedules or registers which might advise staff who has authority to make such academic decisions as waiving a prerequisite or approving an aegrotat, or giving an extension (see also section 3.6). There is a reference in the documentation to College Academic Leaders but it was not clear to the Panel who these are or what their authority is or how such academic decisions are made, and the phrase does not appear in all delegations. One College Board delegates responsibility for quality assurance of academic programme delivery “as appropriate” but it is not clear who this is to. While processes might work adequately within Colleges, the Panel found it difficult to discover how cross-College decision-making (for example, concerning a programme spanning more than one College) is managed when responsibilities lie with different roles or committees. Lack of clarity or consistency has the potential for conflicting decisions when these are made by people holding different roles in different Colleges; it might also mean it is unclear to students who they should approach for advice or academic decisions.

The Self-review Report states that the University relies primarily on chairs and committee members to communicate their decisions and outcomes to other areas.<sup>13</sup> Having responsibility to

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<sup>12</sup> The Road to 2020, p6. “Our priorities in achieving our research-led mission are to:... harness the dynamics of research and scholarship to build a stronger ‘one-university’ culture and robust academic citizenship, both in disciplines and in geographical location.”

<sup>13</sup> SR, p5.

communicate these matters does not, however, necessarily imply that chairs and committee members have the authority to make the academic decision at issue.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University documents and communicates to staff with greater clarity its delegations for academic decision-making, in particular at the College level.

### **1.2 Strategic and operational planning**

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

The University's Strategic Plan "The Road to 2020" is founded on values of creativity, innovation and connectedness.<sup>14</sup> It is formulated around seven "Big Goals" of:

Research and scholarship  
Teaching and learning  
Connections  
Internationalisation  
Responsibility  
Generating income  
Enabling excellence.

Within each Big Goal are associated goals. Activities and objectives in support of students appear under several different Big Goals. Among the associated goals and strategies related to the scope of this audit are:

- Internationalise the academic environment and student learning experience ...
- Provide a rich, quality-assured experience for international postgraduate students.
- Provide exemplary international student support.
- Promote and value citizenship and leadership in Massey staff and students ...
- Continually develop and align student learning and life services across ... campuses and among distance students ....
- Improve responsiveness to student feedback.
- Offer students continued opportunities to contribute to academic decision-making.
- Strengthen academic advice, learning support and pastoral care services to students.
- Exploit the opportunities that new digital media offer for learners ... and extend capabilities and expertise in blended and distance learning.<sup>15</sup>

The Road to 2020 is supported by the Investment Plan 2013-2015 which includes the targets and KPIs by which The Road to 2020 will be monitored. The University is currently in the process of

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<sup>14</sup> The Road to 2020, p2.

<sup>15</sup> The Road to 2020, pp 11; 23; 29; 41.

developing The Road to 2020 so that it covers the period to 2025.<sup>16</sup> The targets in the Investment Plan are reported against in the Big Goal Dashboard, an online monitoring tool.

Underpinning The Road to 2020 and the Investment Plan is a suite of strategies. Those particularly relevant to this audit are:

- Research Strategy 2012-14
- Internationalisation Strategy 2011-15
- Student Success Strategy 2013-2015
- Pasifika@Massey Strategy 2020: Growing Pearls of Wisdom
- Māori@Massey Strategy 2020: Kia Mārama
- Professional and Continuing Education (PaCE) Plan 2012-14
- Draft Digital Teaching and Learning Strategy 2013-15
- Draft Applied Learning Strategy 2013-15.

The Panel reviewed these strategies, which are referred to in following chapters of this report. The Panel noted the associated targets and performance indicators or “deliverables” and considered these appropriate given the University’s overall objectives. In particular, the draft Digital Teaching and Learning Strategy and the draft Applied Learning Strategy reflect the University’s aim to be distinctive with respect to distance, digital, and applied learning. The Investment Plan notes that distance education will facilitate expansion of international delivery, in parallel with the University’s intention to increase the number of international students studying in New Zealand.

The Panel considered the high level documents (*viz* The Road to 2020 and the Investment Plan 2013-2015) and the Big Goal Dashboard are appropriate, comprehensive and, for the most part, well aligned. It was not clear to the Panel how the information reported in the Big Goal Dashboard fed back into strategy development. However, Council members told the Panel that they were satisfied with the reports and data they receive to enable Council to discharge its governance responsibilities.

The strategies evolving from or supporting the high level strategic documents vary in form and the degree to which staff are familiar with them. Academic staff reflected familiarity with the University’s Strategic Plan and various degrees of engagement with its objectives. Support staff appeared to be more aware of how their work areas fitted into the overall objectives of the University.

The Panel was told that College Boards ensure all College plans align with University strategy. Pro-Vice-Chancellors reported an iterative process whereby KPIs in the Investment Plan “drop down” to Colleges through discussion within the Senior Leadership Team. They are responsible for monitoring KPIs as they pertain to their Colleges, for example retention and completion statistics. Staff said that some of these KPIs drop down to Schools. Somewhat contradictorily, however, the Panel also heard that the only performance measure applied to PVCs for their own performance was budgetary. This may be a difference in perception of the attention paid to various measures, but suggested to the

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<sup>16</sup> The Road to 2025. SR, p7.



Panel that the procedures for aligning strategies and treating all of the Big Goals as equal may not be as embedded as the University described or desires.

The Panel explored how staff contributed to the development of plans and processes that flowed from strategic developments. It heard from staff that they were informed and did not “feel distanced”. The Panel heard about meetings held on all campuses and other forms of consultation and formed the view that there was adequate opportunity for staff input to planning. Staff on all three campuses reiterated appreciation for the communication provided personally by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Panel notes the significant amount of work which has been undertaken within the University over the last three years, developing and reviewing policies, strategic plans and frameworks to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and rigour of academic and administrative processes. The University itself notes in its Self-review Report that “as the University has become more strategy-driven the processes for monitoring strategic developments and ensuring appropriate alignment with related policies and regulations have become more complex”. It identifies the process for sub-strategy development and implementation as an area for further enhancement and is in the process of developing a Guide to Policy and Strategy Definitions to outline the purposes, approval pathways and differences between strategies, policies, procedures, rules and regulations.<sup>17</sup>

The Panel endorses this approach. It agrees that there is a risk of proliferation of strategies and policies which are not well connected. The immediate challenge for the University is ensuring that its policies are implemented consistently, but in a way that is also meaningful across its range of Campuses, Colleges and Schools. The Panel also believes that the implementation of new strategies, plans and processes must be carefully managed to ensure that strategy fatigue is minimized while momentum is maintained. The Panel is concerned that many of the strategies, plans and processes are relatively new and staff engagement with them is essential if their objectives are to be met.

In the course of the audit the Panel explored the overall academic quality management processes. The University’s academic quality assurance is supported by the Office of the AVC (Academic and International) who develops policy, manages the Academic Policy and Regulations Unit (APRU), and chairs the Academic Committee of Academic Board. Academic Board has an approval role for regulations and proposals. Some academic responsibilities (e.g. minor course changes) are delegated to Colleges which report back to Academic Board on these.

Within Colleges, responsibility for the quality of academic programmes lies with different roles – the Panel heard that in one college the Director of Academic Programmes was responsible; in another, the Teaching and Learning Director, and in another, the Programme Committees for each degree. In at least one College, one individual filled more than one role.

While the role titles for those with programme responsibility appear to vary, academic staff also had different ideas as to who, other than the Vice-Chancellor and Council, has overall responsibility for academic quality. Some Heads of School suggested it was them; other staff referred to relevant

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<sup>17</sup> SR, p7.

committees, Colleges, PVCs, and APRU. The variety of responses to some extent reflects the College model with many different groups and individuals with different roles involved in quality management across the University. The role of Academic Board and its Academic Committee as having responsibilities for approval of regulations and new programmes and consultation on academic policies was understood by staff who were interviewed about it, as was the management responsibility of the Office of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International).

The identification of academic quality support staff as the Academic Policy and Regulations Unit (APRU) since the last audit appears to have helped create visibility and consistency for academic quality. APRU staff see their role as supportive and responsible for ensuring key academic processes (for example, reviews; new or revised regulations) are developed and operationalized. The Panel viewed a framework used to propose new policy which addressed such issues as evidence of need. Monitoring of effectiveness was seen by APRU as primarily a College responsibility. The Panel heard positive assessments of APRU by academic staff who had sought their advice and support. APRU staff on the other hand, indicated they could do much more in assisting staff but felt their reliance on being invited to do so meant they were more reactive than proactive at present. Academic staff told the Panel that interaction with APRU varied from College to College.

The University's self-review process appears to have been effective and inclusive.<sup>18</sup> The Panel noted that the staff who were interviewed appeared well-versed in the purpose and scope of the audit and understood the University's self-review documentation.

The University has proposed 33 enhancement initiatives emerging from its self-review process.<sup>19</sup> A number of the initiatives are works in progress. Nevertheless the list implies a significant work plan for the University which will need to be managed alongside the major strategic initiatives of the University in College re-organisation and internationalisation.

### **1.3 Student input**

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

In The Road to 2020 the University articulates a goal to "offer students continued opportunities to contribute to academic decision-making".<sup>20</sup> The University has provision for student membership of its key Boards and committees, in particular Council, Academic Board, Doctoral Research Committee, Academic Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee and College Boards. Student input is also sought by reference groups and subcommittees where appropriate, for example by the Student Success and Engagement subcommittee. There is an annual opportunity for particular student representatives to make presentations to the Council. Subsequent to the Voluntary Student Membership legislation (2011), formal avenues for involvement of students have been challenging for the University. The Panel heard that the University is addressing such challenges by endeavouring to maximize the consultation routes which they do have, for example, Vice-

<sup>18</sup> SR p59.

<sup>19</sup> SR pp 54-58.

<sup>20</sup> The Road to 2020, p11.

Chancellor's and Council forums, regular meetings with campus Registrars, student representations to Council, the class representative system, structured by-invitation meetings and "food-driven" forums<sup>21</sup>. Student input to the review and monitoring of academic activities is facilitated through input to programme reviews and participation in survey evaluations.

The University is aware that practices for involving students in decision-making vary across campuses and Colleges, and it is mindful that mechanisms for obtaining input are more limited than they might previously have been. Staff also commented on the difficulties in gaining student input when over half of the students are off-campus. Others told the Panel that Colleges were better served by student input than the University was at a central level. In that context the University has initiated discussion about other ways in which students might be involved in decision-making processes informing research, teaching and related academic processes.<sup>22</sup> A revision to the Student Engagement Policy also addresses more extensive means of obtaining student input. Greater use of social media has been proposed.

**Affirmation:** The Panel **affirms** the University's review of ways to enhance student involvement in and input to academic policy development, monitoring and decision-making.

#### **1.4 Infrastructure**

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

The formal process for ensuring the University's teaching and learning spaces are appropriate has been overseen by the General Teaching Rooms Advisory Group, a sub-committee of the Teaching and Learning Committee. The General Teaching Rooms Advisory Group is now disestablished with the work integrated into the project to manage University learning spaces. The University has placed a high priority on improving its learning spaces, including its virtual space. It has developed video-linked teaching facilities and undertaken a Learning Spaces Project (completed in 2012) which considered existing spaces, emerging pedagogical needs and future opportunities. Availability of digital media and support was evaluated as part of the project.<sup>23</sup> The University has also added questions about learning spaces to its Student Experience Survey.

The Panel was told by senior management and staff that a number of University teaching spaces were no longer fit for purpose. The University has noted it "is now experiencing an increase in requests for spaces that support collaborative styles of learning and that support multiple teaching styles. Campus tours held in 2012 noted that the range of spaces that suit this style of learning are currently quite limited. Blended learning is becoming more widely adopted and as a result there is a need to consider virtual spaces and how they interact with physical spaces as part of longer term planning".<sup>24</sup> Staff told the Panel that lecture theatre types of teaching space were often unsuitable for the problem-based and other forms of active learning which are central to the Massey

<sup>21</sup> Forums where food is provided as an attendance incentive.

<sup>22</sup> Memo re student representation in decision-making processes, 13 August 2013.

<sup>23</sup> Learning Spaces at Massey University: Discussion Paper 2013.

<sup>24</sup> Learning Spaces at Massey University: Discussion Paper 2013, p1.

pedagogical model. Given that the construction of suitable learning spaces is expensive and can take from months to several years to achieve, the University has argued that a strategic and iterative approach is required, rather than an individualised approach where responses are made to specific space needs on an *ad hoc* basis.<sup>25</sup>

The Panel heard that the conversion of some learning spaces to more appropriate spaces was already taking place and Panel members saw some of these developments at Manawatu, Albany and Wellington. Panel members were told that while space reorganisation at Albany was prompted by a need to house a new unit, the drivers around better use of space resulted in relocation of other units. The Panel was told that as space is progressively being refurbished, attention is being given to the provision of appropriate space for postgraduate students, including dedicated space in the libraries. (See Chapter 7, section 7.2)

The students who were interviewed reported they were satisfied with the kinds of spaces in which they studied but several commented that the space available was insufficient. Some also argued that there were insufficient computers and printer connections available.

Staff appreciated the opportunities provided by video-links to deliver a paper in more than one location contemporaneously. However some students commented that video-linked teaching was not always well supported by the teaching staff. It was not clear to the Panel whether the pedagogical implications of delivering video-linked learning resources to students operating in different modes had been fully considered by all staff who used that resource. (See also Chapter 6, section 6.4)

The Panel is aware that the University has made a significant investment in its online learning management system, Stream. Later chapters in this report comment on its use and effectiveness. The Panel learned that the new (Draft) Digital Teaching and Learning Strategy will provide an overarching strategic framework for digital developments in teaching and learning, and student administration, which aims to enhance the quality of the “Massey experience” for students. In addition to providing support for staff and students, the Strategy is intended to develop infrastructure and functionality of both the physical and online learning environments to support innovative and effective use of new digital media.

**Affirmation:** The Panel **affirms** the University’s processes for planning development of teaching and learning spaces, in particular its efforts to ensure that spaces are aligned with pedagogical developments which reflect the University’s distinctive character as well as with capital planning and financial allocation.

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<sup>25</sup> Learning Spaces at Massey University: Discussion Paper 2013, p1.

### **1.5 Information resources**

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

In its Self-review Report the University has defined information resources as those resources and services provided by the Library, the Centres for Teaching and Learning, and study resources.<sup>26</sup>

The responsibilities and priorities of the Library's collection activity are governed by the Library's Collection Development Policy. Its service activity is described by the 2011 Service Standards document. The Library benchmarks itself via Insync surveys which in 2012 placed Massey University in the top 25% of those libraries surveyed in the benchmark group. The survey reported that five factors in the top 10 performance list related to library staff: their fairness, approachability and helpfulness, their availability to assist, their provision of accurate answers to enquiries, and the quality of face-to-face enquiry services.<sup>27</sup> It is relevant that 44% of Massey University students surveyed rarely or never visited the (physical) Library; only 6.4% rarely or never accessed the Library online.

Panel members received a presentation of the Wellington Campus Library development, including the co-location of the Centre for Teaching and Learning and IT support, which demonstrated the ways in which the University is addressing future needs and synergies in the provision of information services to staff and students. The Panel heard praise from staff and students on all campuses for library services and the mechanisms for ensuring books are provided from any campus, and from an Australian partner, in an efficient manner and at no additional cost to the user. Students described the Library and its services as "awesome", "excellent" and "very good". The Library invites student suggestions for improvement and posts its own feedback comments online.<sup>28</sup>

The strategic objectives of the National Centre for Teaching and Learning are aligned to the University's strategy in The Road to 2020. Centres provide professional development services and resources for staff and students on all campuses and in all modes of study. These support curriculum development, development and use of digital tools, evaluation and research activities, enhancing student engagement and learning support and promoting the scholarship of teaching and learning.

The Panel heard of different processes being used across Colleges for managing information about papers and study resources for papers. One college was reported to be mandating templates for Stream material and another was reported to be trying to standardize material. The Panel heard from students and staff that quality assurance of material for Stream and inconsistency of Stream material was sometimes an issue as staff had increased freedom to design their own material. The Panel was told that the Centres for Teaching and Learning were very helpful if they were approached by staff for guidance.

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<sup>26</sup> SR, p10.

<sup>27</sup> Massey University Library Client Survey (2012) by Insync surveys, p4.

<sup>28</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/library/library-services/suggestion-replies/suggestion-replies\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/library/library-services/suggestion-replies/suggestion-replies_home.cfm) downloaded 06.12.13

The University has a Policy Relating to Paper Information and Study Resources which applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate taught papers. This policy sets out the resources which will normally be available to students to support their decision-making and learning – for example, paper descriptions, contact and assessment requirements, practical components. The Policy states that it is expected that most students will have access to the Internet. However the University expresses a commitment to supplying core study resources in alternative formats to the students who request them.<sup>29</sup> The University’s Self-review indicates that implementation of this policy has been slower than anticipated. It attributes this to the extent of changes required in the information technology supporting the database and website.<sup>30</sup> The Panel would reinforce the need to ensure infrastructure capability is in place before mandating implementation of processes which are dependent on it.

**Commendation:** The Panel **commends** the Library for continuing to provide the excellent level of service which earned it a commendation in the previous 2008 academic audit.<sup>31</sup>

## **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.

The University reports that it has adopted best practices in management of business continuity, including continuity of teaching and learning. This is being achieved through an integrated programme of work aimed at improving organisational resilience. The work programme is intended to ensure emergency management (including emergency communications), information technology disaster recovery and business continuity. Organisational resilience will also safeguard the University’s reputation and public image.

The University’s Business Continuity Policy and Business Continuity Management Framework form part of the University’s Risk Management Framework, as does the Information Technology Disaster Recovery Plan.<sup>32</sup> The Emergency Management Policy describes the emergency management function at Massey, including an overview of the delegated authorities that exist during an incident or emergency. Emergency Management Response Plans exist for the whole University and for each campus.

The Panel explored the provisions and plans for emergency management on each campus. Members of the Panel were shown the facilities at Wellington where the University benefits from having its National Centre for Disaster Management on campus, with a designated facility ready to function as emergency management headquarters. Its computers plug into satellites and are mobile and there is a bunker with supplies for sustenance, etc. The Wellington Campus has a designated area for student welfare and communication between the incident controller and the campus community. The Panel was told that the staff, plans and facilities at Wellington had been tested more than once, in different circumstances (flooding and earthquakes), and that these “worked well”.

<sup>29</sup> The Policy Relating to Paper Information and Study Resources 2012, p1.

<sup>30</sup> SR, p11.

<sup>31</sup> Massey University Academic Audit Report, Cycle 4, December 2008, p14.

<sup>32</sup> Business Continuity Management Framework 2012.

The Panel heard that emergency management had also been tested at both the Manawatu and Albany Campuses and found satisfactory. It was told that physical provisions at Albany and Manawatu are under further development. The University benefits from its experience in distance delivery and in having back-up campuses in the case of systems failure or absence of key response staff on any one campus. The campus registrars are designated incident controllers on each campus. From its interviews the Panel was assured that the managers who have responsibilities under emergency management provisions are intimately familiar with the requirements of them and the University in the event of an emergency. Staff and students were less familiar with responses expected, although Panel members were told that all staff had emergency back-packs and “buy-in” from staff to emergency management procedures was good. Students had been briefed on fire drills, lab safety and earthquake response. Staff, however, were less confident with respect to business recovery in the event of an emergency, some saying only that they thought they would know who to contact.

**Commendation:** The Panel **commends** the University on its comprehensive and effective emergency management provisions and its clear definition of business continuity expectations and encourages the University to continue its efforts to ensure these are communicated well to both staff and students as appropriate.

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

Massey University's student profile in 2012, as headcount, was

	New students <sup>33</sup>	All students <sup>34</sup>
Domestic students under 25	4,161	12,141
Domestic students 25 and over	3,398	18,134
International students <sup>35</sup>	1,575	3,223
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,134</b>	<b>33,491</b>
Māori students	991	3,336
Pasifika students	376	1,102
Distance students <sup>36</sup>	3,706	15,627
Internal students	5,428	17,864

The diverse student background indicated in the table above is likely to have implications for the University in terms of admission and enrolment, particularly when some students fall into more than one “priority” group (see Section 2.2 below). For some students, in particular Māori, Pasifika and potentially some distance students, access and transition might pose a need for specific consideration by the University.

Massey University has the largest number of Māori students of all New Zealand universities. Of these, over half are aged over 25, over half are part-time and over half study by distance.<sup>37</sup> Māori and Pasifika students might also be “first in family” to attend university.<sup>38</sup> The Panel learned that Māori students are likely to come from provincial or rural areas.

### 2.1 Admission and selection

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

The University's Admission Regulations are clear and publicly available in the Calendar and on the University website.<sup>39</sup> The webpages include admission requirements for pre-degree and postgraduate as well as undergraduate qualifications, providing links for information specific to

- New Zealand citizens and permanent residents
- Australian students

<sup>33</sup> New students include students new to Massey who might have enrolled previously elsewhere. Annual Report 2012, p79.

<sup>34</sup> Annual Report 2012, p 88.

<sup>35</sup> Full-fee paying students; excludes foreign wholly research students.

<sup>36</sup> Defined as the primary mode of delivery.

<sup>37</sup> Annual Report 2012, pp 91-92.

<sup>38</sup> Investment Plan 2013-2015, p40.

<sup>39</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/admission/entry-requirements/](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/admission/entry-requirements/) downloaded 26.11.13.



- International students with admission standards by country of education (for selected countries)
- Students under 16 years of age who wish to study at university
- Students wanting to study university papers whilst at high school
- Students returning from overseas exchange
- Home schooled students.

Other requirements, such as criteria for adult admission, specific requirements for some programmes (e.g. Design) and English language requirements for international students are spelt out clearly, as are the selection processes used for preferential admission where this might apply. The website notes the date of the most recent update and the authorising staff member.

The University notes that there are no enrolment caps on any courses except Veterinary Science and Aviation. The preferential admission protocols are untested and likely to remain so in the immediate future.<sup>40</sup>

Processes for credit transfer, cross-credit and recognition of prior learning are clear.<sup>41</sup>

The University is confident its admission processes are clear and are communicated clearly. Its student experience surveys indicate high levels of agreement (76% in 2011) with the statement that “communication about entry requirements was clear” and 87% of students rated the University’s website as good or very good.<sup>42</sup> The undergraduate students who were interviewed by the Panel had mixed views about admissions and enrolment, some of them indicating information was hard to find initially but once found it was easy to follow. Some distance students said that the online processes had improved in the last two years. Senior undergraduate and Honours students who were interviewed all said the admission regulations and processes were clear to them. Some staff indicated that they considered requirements for postgraduate admission were complex and “students must read between the lines as to what [the word ‘appropriate’] means”. Some postgraduate students concurred, saying that requirements were not as clear as they would have liked. The Panel heard that students’ decisions to enrol in Honours programmes were largely individual initiatives, rather than by invitation or encouragement from academic staff.

The University’s Investment Plan commitment to “information for learners” includes an intention to ensure information for students is comprehensive, consistent, relevant and accessible.<sup>43</sup> In the Panel’s view the format of the website pages is effective in ensuring requirements are presented consistently, are transparent and easy to follow. The University notes that further work is being undertaken to extend this approach to the development of a consistent template to qualification regulations, in accordance with the University’s Qualification Policy and Framework.<sup>44</sup> The University

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<sup>40</sup> The University attributes this to a downturn in university sector enrolments. SR, p15.

<sup>41</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/statutes-and-regulations/recognition-of-prior-learning.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/statutes-and-regulations/recognition-of-prior-learning.cfm) downloaded 16.11.13.

<sup>42</sup> SR, p15.

<sup>43</sup> Investment Plan 2013-2015, p45.

<sup>44</sup> SR, p15.

might note that its webpages do not render well on mobile devices; given the increase in mobile devices being used to access the internet, the University may wish to address this.

The University operates a shared services model for admissions oversight and administration. The Panel heard that there was “some tension” about relocating admissions administrators away from the Colleges and into central Student Administrative Services. It was suggested that the previous model located the administrative decision alongside the academic decision. While the shared services model was accepted, it was seen as most appropriate for undergraduate decisions; staff suggested that consideration of postgraduate admissions should still make greater reference to the Colleges.

**Affirmation:** The Panel **affirms** the University’s work in developing consistent formats for the presentation of regulations on the web, noting the intention to extend this to qualification regulations through use of a common template.

## **2.2 Access and Transition**

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

The University defines “priority groups” as Māori, Pasifika, distance, international, new migrants and high achievers.<sup>45</sup> The University’s regulations do not privilege these groups with respect to admission. Its Equity of Access to Educational Opportunities Policy states that the University will “encourage enrolment from under-represented groups: specifically Māori, People with Disability, and Pacific Peoples, and men and women in particular areas of specialisation where they may be underrepresented” and will be “pro-active in providing access and equitable opportunities for success for groups that are under-represented”.<sup>46</sup>

The University’s Student Success Strategy 2013-2015 has been developed to help facilitate the admission of students who are likely to succeed at university and to provide the support needed to enhance their success. The Strategy is predicated on a conceptual model which identifies critical entry and exit points to study and which recognizes that not all students have similar needs. The steps defined as “thinking about study”, “making choices”, “enrolment” and “first weeks” should guide transition.<sup>47</sup> It is argued that the model allows the University to determine information needs for particular groups of students, for example ethnic groups. The strategy has been trialled in one College. Its application across all Colleges will need to be managed and monitored carefully to ensure implementation is appropriate.

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<sup>45</sup> SR, p15.

<sup>46</sup> Equity of Access to Educational Opportunities Policy 2011.

<sup>47</sup> Student Success Strategy 2013-2015, p2; pp5-8.

The University provides a variety of activities to assist students with transition to university, including an orientation programme on each campus, university skills programmes, mentoring and events for international students.<sup>48</sup> (See also Chapters 4 and 5).

The Māori@Massey 2020 Strategy, Kia Mārama refers specifically to Māori school leavers, noting that significant increases in Māori enrolments are frustrated by the low numbers of Māori school leavers who are eligible for admission to university and that these are largely concentrated in non-science disciplines. A similar observation is made about Pasifika students in the 2007 Pasifika@Massey Strategy.<sup>49</sup> Staff on the Albany campus were sensitive to the transition and support needs of new migrants. Specific sessions are held in the Albany Orientation programme for new migrants, as well as for international, Māori, Pasifika and mature students. The University has dedicated web pages for distance, international, Māori and Pasifika students.<sup>50</sup>

The University claims that it “understands its Māori and Pasifika student profile” and that many mature Māori and Pasifika students prefer to study part-time and as distance students.<sup>51</sup> Activities to support recruitment and transition include pre-tertiary learning communities in Wellington and Auckland to engage whanau support with parents, grandparents and Pacific leaders and an “Accelerated Academic Achievement” strategy for Māori student advisers.<sup>52</sup> The University cites as evidence of effectiveness of its policies and strategies increased numbers of Māori and Pasifika students enrolling over the five year period to 2012, alongside declining numbers (headcount) but increased EFTS for international and distance students.<sup>53</sup>

The Panel supports the initiatives identified for implementation in 2013, namely the Student Readiness Project to provide resources which will help students make informed choices and an extended student orientation programme that will be embedded in students’ courses of study wherever practical and cover a six week period starting 2-3 weeks prior to commencement and continuing until week 3-4 of the semester. The University has noted issues regarding a lack of alignment between orientation programmes on the three physical campuses which prevents the articulation of a clear set of priorities for orientating students. The lack of alignment also creates challenges in resourcing, assessing and evaluating orientation against best practice models. The extended orientation project is expected to address the alignment issue.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/student-life/starting-university/starting-university\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/student-life/starting-university/starting-university_home.cfm); [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/student-life/events/orientation/orientation\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/student-life/events/orientation/orientation_home.cfm); [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/student-life/services-and-resources/international-student-support/orientation-and-other-events/orientation-and-events\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/student-life/services-and-resources/international-student-support/orientation-and-other-events/orientation-and-events_home.cfm) downloaded 07.12.13.

<sup>49</sup> Māori@Massey 2020 Strategy, Kia Mārama, p7; Pasifika@Massey Strategy 2007, p8.

<sup>50</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/maori/maori-student-services.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/maori/maori-student-services.cfm); [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/students/pasifika-student-services/pasifika-directorate\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/students/pasifika-student-services/pasifika-directorate_home.cfm); [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/international/international\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/international/international_home.cfm); [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/distance-learning/distance-learning\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/distance-learning/distance-learning_home.cfm) downloaded 27.11.13

<sup>51</sup> Investment Plan 2013-2015, p40.

<sup>52</sup> Investment Plan 2013-2015, p41.

<sup>53</sup> SR, p16.

<sup>54</sup> Student Success Strategy Implementation Extended Orientation Programme 2013, p1.

The Panel notes the University's strong commitment to its priority groups. It encourages the University to proceed with the plans outlined in the Investment Plan and the enhancement initiatives proposed in the Self-review Report.<sup>55</sup>

### **2.3 Academic advice**

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

The University's strategic documents include specific goals related to the improvement of academic advice.<sup>56</sup> The main tools for providing academic advice have been electronic, print and personal: the online "box model", Paper Guides for individual papers, the Contact Centre and Portfolio Teams in the Student Advice and Information Units on each campus. Satisfaction rates about confidence in academic advice about study options among students responding to Massey's student surveys have been lower than the University would wish (70% in 2011 and 67% in 2012).<sup>57</sup>

The Panel spoke to a number of students about where and how they obtained academic advice, be it about programmes or other academic processes (e.g. gaining special consideration because of illness). Responses varied, both as to the source of advice and to satisfaction with that advice. With respect to programmes or degree information, students had sought online advice, telephone advice via the Contact Centre, advice at a "road show" seminar, advice from academic staff and other staff by telephone, Skype, email, Facebook, internet and in person. It is difficult to draw a general conclusion from the student responses except to note the considerable variability in source and usefulness, and to observe that it appeared that students at or considering postgraduate study generally found it more difficult to obtain accurate and timely advice or to find "the right person" to provide the information they needed.

The move to a shared services model for course advice has presented some challenges to both staff and students on continuity in knowing where students should access advice. Some students commented that they used to have a person who gave advice in their College but that person is no longer there. Another senior student commented that the Colleges seem to have better information than the University-wide units but that a student "need[s] to be fairly assertive to get advice". Such comments appear to relate directly to the recent (2013) decision made by the University to establish single campus Student Advice and Information Units, a shift which was being experienced by students but not well understood by them.

The Panel explored this development with staff. It was told that the Contact Centre answers questions where the information is available on the web. The Student Advice and Information Units provide information which is not on the web. The Panel heard from staff that while the shared

<sup>55</sup> Investment Plan 2013-2015, p42; SR, pp 16-17; 55-56.

<sup>56</sup> Investment Plan 2013-2015, pp46, 47; The Road to 2020 (2013 update), p11.

<sup>57</sup> SR, pp17-18. The "Box model" is an online graphical representation tool which enables prospective students (and advice staff) to select specialisations and "build" a model of the qualification showing all of the papers required. This tool is provided for most of Massey's undergraduate degrees and is also available to students as part of Massey's online enrolment system for the purposes of planning their study. (SR p17)

services for admissions and enrolment were not generally problematic, the shared service delivery of academic advice created issues. The range of concerns reported to the Panel by College staff included: the loss of institutional (i.e. College/programme) knowledge as advice staff shifted from places of specialisation to the centralised units; lack of communication between the Colleges and the Unit; confusion for students (and staff) about where to go for advice; lack of face-to-face contact and relationship building; and lack of specific and detailed knowledge by Unit staff on the particularities of College programmes. The issues were seen to be heightened with respect to postgraduate advice. Some initiatives had already been taken to try and resolve the perceived problems (for example, formalised meetings of Unit staff with a College representative; introduction of a reporting system to pick up problems identified in the course of giving advice).

The Panel is concerned that Colleges appear to be responding to the particular problems they see with this shared services model in their own ways. The Panel believes there is a willingness to work with the model and the problems must be addressed jointly and consistently across the Colleges. Development of different approaches or solutions might not necessarily be a problem in itself but as students and the advice they require span more than one College some consistency is desirable. The respective roles and linkages between the Contact Centre, the Student Advice and Information Units and the College staff responsible for programmes need to be clarified and communicated and a forum created to encourage all parties to work towards some generic solutions.

The Panel was told that Programme Manuals are being developed to assist with provision of advice by Student Advice and Information Unit staff. The manuals are expected to include links to key contact people in the College programmes and to include the “soft rules” which operate informally. Currently, some academic staff perceive an academic/administration “divide” in the provision of academic advice. The Self-review Report indicates that the effectiveness of the new Student Advice and Information Units is being monitored by the AVC (Academic and International). The Panel hopes the above comments will assist with the ongoing review.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that as part of its overall monitoring of the effectiveness of the shared service model of student advice and information, the University engages College staff in exploring how perceived difficulties with the model might be overcome and, in particular, how to resolve the perceived disadvantages of distancing academic advice from those providing the academic service.

### 3. Curriculum and Assessment

Massey University describes its curriculum portfolio in terms of “signature platforms” which are intended to clarify the University’s “distinctive and complementary academic profile”. These fifteen platforms span the three physical campuses (Albany, Wellington and Manawatu) as well as the virtual distance campus. At the same time, each physical campus is described as having a distinctive profile: Manawatu leading in agri-food and related industries; Albany leading in innovation; and Wellington leading in design and creativity. In each case the campuses establish the designated profiles by bringing together allied and complementary disciplines. The distance portfolio draws from the signature platforms, with the exception of Design, Fine Arts, Engineering and Food Technology and the Natural and Fundamental Sciences, all of which have significant practical components.<sup>58</sup> The University also offers Professional and Continuing Education, PaCE, which includes professional development courses and international study tours as well as preparatory, English language and “Campus Passport” taster courses.<sup>59</sup>

#### 3.1 Programme approval

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

The University’s Qualifications Policy sets out the overall requirements for the design, approval, implementation, delivery and review of qualifications. The Policy defines the general principles to which all Massey qualifications must adhere:

- Coherence ensured by appropriate regulations
- Consistency in regulations
- Relevance, aligned to student and stakeholder needs and expectations
- Efficiency, including defined pathways to completion and efficient use of resources
- Integrity, being fit for purpose, research-informed with clear outcomes, subject to review
- Sustainability
- Equity, including parity of admission, progression and workload across Colleges
- Treaty of Waitangi principles as pertaining to needs of Māori students and scholars
- Alignment with the University’s Qualifications Framework
- Alignment with the University’s strategic direction.<sup>60</sup>

The University’s Qualifications Framework provides an overview of how Massey qualifications meet the requirements of the Education Act 1989, the obligations of the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) acting for the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors’ Committee in accordance with the Act, and the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. This policy also describes

<sup>58</sup> The Road to 2020 (2012 update), pp12-13.

<sup>59</sup> Campus Passport provides access to learning for personal interest or in preparation for future study without exams or assessments. See [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/departments/pace/short-courses/campus-passport/campus-passport\\_home.cfm?q=Campus%20passport](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/departments/pace/short-courses/campus-passport/campus-passport_home.cfm?q=Campus%20passport) downloaded 07.12.13.

<sup>60</sup> Summarized from the Massey University Qualifications Policy, pp1-2.

articulation pathways, provides definitions of terms such as “paper”, “EFTS”, “endorsement” and “block mode”. It outlines which academic regulations apply to all qualifications and which may apply to specific qualifications; it also covers such matters as standard minimum admission criteria for different types of qualification.

The Qualifications Framework is a thorough compendium covering all qualification requirements. It identifies the Academic Policy and Regulations Unit as a source of advice and support to staff in developing proposals to ensure they are designed in accordance with the principles listed above. The Self-review Report highlights APRU’s responsibility “for upholding the integrity of the qualification framework and the academic decision-making process, and managing risk through creation of internal procedures and compliance with external regulatory requirements including CUAP/NZQA”.<sup>61</sup>

As presented in the Qualifications Policy and the Qualifications Framework, the University’s programme approval processes are robust and meet national expectations. It is noted that the requirements for business cases in support of proposals are for Colleges to determine, though the Qualifications Framework advises on the minimum requirements for a business case.<sup>62</sup> Similarly, the Framework advises on good practice in stakeholder consultation, including the major stakeholders who should be involved.<sup>63</sup> The Panel heard of different strategies in the Colleges for obtaining stakeholder input, ranging from formal advisory boards and committees, to informal interaction “from time to time”, reliance on staff networks to gain stakeholder perspectives, and the use of an external agency to conduct market research.

It is noted that the Qualifications Framework is relatively new (approved in 2011). Academic staff who were asked about programme approval knew about the Framework and indicated that both APRU and College administrative staff were helpful in this process. A review of the Policy and Framework in 2012 revealed a number of areas for improvement, including instances where qualifications were non-compliant, whether with Massey University’s requirements or with CUAP requirements (for older qualifications pre-dating changes to CUAP and NZQA definitions). A trial of qualification templates also drew a number of criticisms. The workplan arising from the review is intended to address the concerns.<sup>64</sup>

The University is in the process of developing a register of articulation pathways which will document credit recognition and admission decisions.<sup>65</sup> Staff said such articulation decisions which previously had been the prerogative of Colleges were often based on trust and/or had a lot of unwritten rules. The current task is to document pathways as the basis for a register. The Panel supports this work as a prerequisite for institutional quality assurance of admission and credit recognition.

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<sup>61</sup> SR, p19.

<sup>62</sup> Qualifications Framework, p38.

<sup>63</sup> Qualifications Framework, pp39-40.

<sup>64</sup> Qualification Policy and Framework Review 2012.

<sup>65</sup> SR, p17.

**Affirmation:** The Panel **affirms** the implementation of the Qualifications Policy and the Qualifications Framework and the development and implementation of the Articulation Register.

### **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.

Massey University does not currently have a formally articulated set of institutional Graduate Attributes.

The Panel was told that the University had made an attempt some time previously to establish an over-arching Massey University graduate profile but that there was a belief at the time that gaining agreement from Colleges would be difficult. Currently, in its strategic documents, the University argues that its distinctiveness arises, *inter alia*, through its connectedness, innovation and creativity and that its graduates will develop these characteristics as graduate attributes.<sup>66</sup> If this intention is to be realised and communicated widely then there would be some benefit in the University ensuring these attributes are articulated down through its qualifications and programmes.

The University states that by 2015 all qualifications and/or specialisations will have publicly available Graduate Profiles which articulate the aims, capabilities and attributes of graduates of those qualifications and/or specialisations, and which will inform curriculum design and qualification review. It does have a Guidance Document to assist with the process of developing Graduate Profiles.<sup>67</sup> Staff who were interviewed indicated there is some progress on this task. In some cases, viz. for professional programmes, attributes will align with those required for accreditation. For some schools and programmes attributes are being developed in tandem with curriculum mapping being carried out in accordance with the Qualifications Framework.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University completes the work on graduate attributes of qualifications and specialisations and that it considers stating formally an institutional graduate profile which reflects its strategic aspirations and which should be reflected in the attributes and outcomes of qualifications and specialisations.

### **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.

Given the University's current status with respect to the development of institutional graduate attributes, progress against this Guideline Statement is not well advanced. However it is noted that the University does monitor achievement of other outcomes, via discipline reviews and also via

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<sup>66</sup> The Road to 2020, p2.

<sup>67</sup> Massey University Graduate Profiles, SR p 19.



surveys, such as the AUSSE<sup>68</sup>, which seek student feedback on achievement of specific kinds of learning outcome (e.g. higher order thinking).<sup>69</sup>

If the University formalises institutional graduate attributes as recommended in 3.2 above then it will also need to ensure that students have the opportunity to acquire those attributes and that it has processes for assessing these have been achieved.

#### **3.4 Programme review**

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

The Panel reviewed the University's policies and procedures related to course and programme review as well as its accreditation register, samples of CUAP Graduating Year Review reports and outcome reports. From the documents perused the Panel was satisfied the review processes are robust.<sup>70</sup>

The Panel heard that the review cycle had lapsed for a time while the academic reform project was being undertaken, but was now active again. Comprehensive qualification reviews are expected every four to seven years.<sup>71</sup> Normally subjects contributing to a qualification will undertake a subject self-review to feed into the qualification review. Reviews, including those required for accreditation, are managed centrally through APRU. The Panel was told that there is external input to reviews from stakeholders such as employers but much of this seemed to be informal. (See section 3.1).

Reviews and the Colleges' responses to reviews are reported centrally, to the AVC(A&I) and thence to the Academic Committee of Academic Board. While the Panel was told how review reports and follow-up to reports are managed within Colleges, it could not see a clear mechanism for review findings to be shared between programmes across Colleges in any systematic way. Opportunities for sharing good practice or common issues do not seem to be optimised. The University is encouraged to explore ways of making better use of its reviews in this way.

#### **3.5 Benchmarking programmes**

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

Interviewees referred to curriculum benchmarking as an outcome but not necessarily an intention of programme review or development of a proposal. External reviewers are assumed to provide this

<sup>68</sup> Australasian Survey of Student Engagement.

<sup>69</sup> SR, pp21-22.

<sup>70</sup> Qualification Review Policy; Qualification Review Procedures; Qualification Review Schedules 2013 and 2014.

<sup>71</sup> Qualification Review Policy.

dimension. Accreditation reviews which involve professional standards intrinsically provide a basis for benchmarking.

The University accesses the services of a market research organisation whose services include “programme-based benchmarking”.<sup>72</sup> From the services outlined on its website this company does not seem to explore curriculum quality, or issues such as assessment. The Panel did not hear of any College or Department use of these services for curriculum benchmarking.

As with those activities which might involve stakeholder input, the University relies significantly on staff networks to ensure that its academic activities are appropriately benchmarked. The Panel believes that there is an element of benchmarking involved in curriculum development and review and the standard of assessment, but that there needs to be more systematic attention to ensuring these activities are maintained at an acceptable national and international standard.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University reviews the ways in which staff ensure undergraduate and taught postgraduate programme curricula and assessment are benchmarked to national and international expectations, and endeavours to develop University-wide Guidelines on programme benchmarking which take account of the different requirements for professional and other disciplines.

### 3.6 Assessment

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

Regulations and procedures relating to all aspects of assessment, including thesis examination, aegrotat provisions and provisions for remarking of scripts, are specified in the Calendar on the University’s website.<sup>73</sup> Expectations regarding assessment practice are outlined in the Assessment Strategy, Principles and Guidelines document. These Guidelines are comprehensive, covering all key aspects of assessment principles and process, including consideration of both staff and student workload, assessment design, the respective responsibilities of academic staff, Heads of School and students, and expectations of feedback (to and from the student), and moderation. The Self-review Report states that the Assessment Strategy, Principles and Guidelines, adopted in 2012, are still being embedded.

The Assessment Strategy, Principles and Guidelines state that responsibility for ensuring assessment conforms to the Strategy and Principles rests with Heads of School. The Panel heard that some Colleges operate peer review of examination papers; in some Colleges subject convenors are expected to play that role; in another College exam committees are expected to identify inconsistencies but these are not identified until results are considered. The Panel heard that students sometimes take staff to task for what they perceive as inconsistencies in assessment. The

<sup>72</sup> SR, p23. See [www.hanoverresearch.com/?i=higher-education](http://www.hanoverresearch.com/?i=higher-education).

<sup>73</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/statutes-and-regulations/assessment-and-examination-regulations.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/statutes-and-regulations/assessment-and-examination-regulations.cfm)

Panel was assured that no student would be disadvantaged because they had pointed out such inconsistencies.

The Panel identified a number of issues related to assessment. In particular it has a concern about parity of grading across the University. The Assessment and Examination Regulations define the University's grading system relating letter grades to type of pass (i.e. first class; restricted pass; aegrotat pass, etc.). However the Panel noted that the grade/mark relationship is inconsistent across the University and was not convinced that staff had confidence that the same grade in different programmes represented equivalent standards of achievement. It heard that in some cases marking was done to a bell curve (normal distribution). In its Self-review Report the University itself has queried whether there should be one set of University grade-mark or grade GPA guidelines and expected grade distributions. The Panel was told that there is "disquiet" in parts of the University about grade equivalence and relativity. The Panel urges the University to proceed with this discussion.

The Panel heard from staff that there is inconsistency in the application of the aegrotat provisions. It also heard that different Colleges have different systems for receiving and considering aegrotats. Some staff were unsure who was responsible for the process; two said that aegrotats are "too lenient", that "there appears to be pressure to pass the student". While the Panel is aware that the University's Assessment Strategy, Principles and Guidelines state clearly that it is Academic Board or its delegate who has authority to approve the eventual aegrotat grade, the staff comments alert the Panel to the possibility that practices in making the grade recommendation to the Academic Board might vary, and that the overall responsibility might not be well understood.

**Affirmation:** The Panel **affirms** the University's Assessment Strategy, Principles and Guidelines and encourages the University to explore strategies to enhance staff awareness and understanding of the principles and expectations and ensure that implementation is appropriately monitored.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University as a matter of urgency undertakes an assessment of grading practices across the University with an objective of removing inconsistency in grading practices both within and between Colleges and ensuring equivalence of marks and grades between different programmes.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University investigates practices related to consideration of aegrotat applications, including defining responsibility for recommendations and decisions, communicating expectations to staff and students and undertaking an analysis of aegrotat outcomes.

### **3.7 Equivalence of learning outcomes**

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

The Panel explored whether a particular challenge for Massey University might be how to ensure quality of learning outcomes across different modes of delivery and across different campuses.

The University's Equivalence Policy, which applies to all undergraduate and taught postgraduate courses, addresses expected learning outcomes and "equity and parity of the student learning experience" regardless of the mode or place of delivery. The Panel noted the policy had been reviewed in 2011-12, at which time there had been considerable discussion on the extent to which the Policy imposed compliance. In the revised (2012) Policy paper prescriptions, expected learning outcomes, assessment item weightings and course texts are expected to be identical in all offerings of a paper in any given semester.<sup>74</sup> However assessment tasks are only expected to be "equivalent". Colleges may impose additional requirements specific to themselves. Programme leaders and/or paper coordinators are responsible for ensuring equivalence of papers taught at different times, in different modes or at different locations. Responsibility for mediating any disputes lies at the next academic management level (various roles) and overall responsibility for ensuring the Policy is adhered to lies with College PVCs.<sup>75</sup>

Staff interviewed by the Panel had varied responses when asked how equivalence was ensured. Some examples given to the Panel indicated a clear breach of the Equivalence Policy. The Panel was told that some staff still wished to determine the content of the papers they teach "regardless of a need for equivalence". Other staff said equivalence was a matter of trust between colleagues. Another comment was that if only a single course prescription was approved initially then it was assumed equivalence would apply if this course was taught in different modes or places. Other staff commented that a focus on learning outcomes was appropriate since there needed to be room for staff to "be creative" and reflect their own knowledge, interests and experience in how they taught provided learning outcomes were equivalent.

The responses indicated some variability in what is understood by "equivalence" of overall learning experience. There appeared to be considerable reliance on paper outlines to indicate equivalence of learning outcomes and assessment weighting. None of these responses addressed equivalence of assessment tasks and how this was quality assured. In one School moderation of assessment tasks is used to assess equivalence, but such practices were not suggested by other staff.

The Panel investigated the learning situation in Singapore, where the University teaches a programme on the Singapore Polytechnic campus. It was told that students at the two campuses (i.e. Singapore and Manawatu) might not necessarily have the same exam. However the same staff mark both sets of exam papers.

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<sup>74</sup> Pro-Vice-Chancellors have authority to make an exception for course texts if they agree to different requirements.

<sup>75</sup> Equivalence Policy 2012.

The Panel considers that confidence in equivalence of learning experiences and learning outcomes across different offerings of the same paper in the same semester is fundamental to the University's stated principle of "one university". In the Panel's view the equivalence requirement should extend to assessment tasks.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University continues to promulgate and explain the Equivalence Policy to ensure it is well understood and is implemented effectively across all Colleges. The Panel suggests that the University revisits the issue of equivalence of assessment tasks and explores ways of quality assuring these. The University is urged to find ways of monitoring adherence with the Policy and addressing any implementation breaches.

### **3.8 Academic misconduct**

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

The University's policies and regulations on academic misconduct are set out clearly in the Calendar.<sup>76</sup> The University also has comprehensive guides and resources for staff with respect to academic dishonesty and use of Turnitin.<sup>77</sup> Documents available to staff and students which brief them on the definition, detection and management (including penalties) of academic dishonesty, include:

- The Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures
- Procedure for Managing Breaches of Academic Integrity
- The Academic Integrity website which includes information about academic integrity
- Academic integrity officers
- Academic misconduct register
- Academic integrity resources for staff
- Academic integrity guide for students
- Frequently asked questions
- Contact information
- The Academic Integrity Student Guide.<sup>78</sup>

All students who talked with the Panel were well aware of plagiarism, one commenting that every lecturer talked about it and "if you don't know about it then it means you don't go to class". Staff referred to "cut and paste" practices, poor referencing, collusion and paper recycling (reusing assessment items that have been submitted previously) as issues they needed to be alert for in student assessment. Students also referred to paper recycling. Staff told the Panel they were well aware of the processes to be followed if a case of academic dishonesty was suspected. However

<sup>76</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/statutes-and-regulations/assessment-and-examination-regulations.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/statutes-and-regulations/assessment-and-examination-regulations.cfm)

<sup>77</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/teaching-and-learning/centre-academic-development-elearning/professional-development-for-teaching/teaching--massey/teaching-resources/teaching-with-technology/turnitin/turnitin\\_home.cfm#Massey](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/teaching-and-learning/centre-academic-development-elearning/professional-development-for-teaching/teaching--massey/teaching-resources/teaching-with-technology/turnitin/turnitin_home.cfm#Massey) downloaded 30.11.13.

<sup>78</sup> SR, pp25-26. [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/university-management/avc-academic/academic-integrity/integrity-home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/university-management/avc-academic/academic-integrity/integrity-home.cfm) downloaded 30.11.13.

they also said that they believed some staff did not detect plagiarism. Learning support staff concurred that the policy and procedures are well known among academic staff.

The University emphasizes the educative nature of its policy on plagiarism. This is demonstrated by the contact letter which is sent to a student who commits a minor (Level 1) breach of integrity. The letter advises the student to make an appointment with the lecturer concerned or with a writing consultant at the Student Learning Centre to discuss these issues.

The Panel heard from staff that most use the Turnitin software for plagiarism detection; academic staff said there was not an obligation to use Turnitin, but an expectation to do so. Using the Stream learning management system for submission of assignments has helped facilitate use of Turnitin, but does not guarantee it. Those who used Turnitin did not necessarily rely solely on the detection software.

Students told the Panel that assessment could be submitted via Turnitin, but in reality this does not always happen. Students who discussed this showed some confusion as to why some staff used Turnitin and others didn't, and why some staff used it in quite a perfunctory manner while others used it in ways which were educative.

Academic integrity transgressions are recorded centrally in an Academic Misconduct Register but only once they reach a certain level of seriousness (i.e. first time breaches, or low level transgressions are not recorded). The Panel has a concern that if this is the case then repeated low level breaches would not be identified as recidivist behaviour and would escape penalties which might be appropriate. The Panel encourages the University to explore how low level instances of proven dishonesty may be recorded without jeopardizing a student record if there is no repeat offence.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University reviews its guidelines for the use of Turnitin plagiarism detection software and other electronic forms of detection to ensure staff and students receive and use consistent information and experience consistent use of the detection procedures. Guidelines should include an outline of the scope of use, procedures to be followed and the information to be conveyed to students about application of Turnitin to the assessment in particular papers.

### **3.9 Assessment in te reo Māori**

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

The University's policies and regulations on assessment in te reo Māori are set out in the Calendar.<sup>79</sup> Over the period 1999-2011 only seven requests were made to complete taught paper assessments in te reo Māori. In its Self-review Report the University comments that its processes are not well

<sup>79</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/statutes-and-regulations/assessment-and-examination-regulations.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/statutes-and-regulations/assessment-and-examination-regulations.cfm) downloaded 29.11.13.

communicated to staff or students and that both groups need more support to engage with the processes.<sup>80</sup>

The Panel heard that Māori students engaged in postgraduate study tend to be strongly targeted in “niche areas” (for example Māori mental health; waiata; moko) and the University is endeavouring to meet demand in this area. The University notes that the number of theses being presented in te reo Māori has been increasing.

The Panel was made aware of a proposal intended to promote and enhance student submission of assignments and examinations in te reo Māori. The Panel supports the University in developing a proactive approach to the promotion and use of te reo Māori.

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<sup>80</sup> SR, p27.

## 4. Student Engagement and Achievement

This chapter focuses on monitoring and enhancing engagement with study and learning, and on the University's management of potential high achievers and of students at risk of underachieving. Services provided by the University to support student learning are reviewed in Chapter 5.

A key project being implemented by Massey University is its Student Success Strategy (see also Chapter 2, section 2.2). This Strategy, approved in 2012, takes a student life-cycle approach to providing support for engagement and success. It is a work in progress, with activity to date emphasizing student experience in the first year of study. The fourth, fifth and sixth strands within the Strategy - i.e., first weeks; progression; completion - relate to all Guideline Statements within this chapter.

The Panel interviewed students studying on campus at Wellington, Albany and Manawatu and also students studying by distance, almost all of whom indicated that they are happy with their educational experience at Massey University.

### 4.1 Student engagement

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

The University has used the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE) as a key pan-university evaluation instrument. Longitudinal analysis of AUSSE responses has indicated some improvement in Engagement Scale scores since 2009.<sup>81</sup>

The University has recently introduced and evaluated a student engagement initiative specifically for first year students. This initiative, piloted in the College of Sciences, incorporated "proactive communications, early assessments, formative feedback and the diagnosis of particular learning needs."<sup>82</sup> The 2012 evaluation concluded that the initiative had resulted in "small improvements" in reducing the numbers of non-completions and enhancing student engagement. Following changes in 2013, there have been documented cases of students who might otherwise have been withdrawn (because of non-completion of required work) being retained in the course after they had been contacted.<sup>83</sup>

The evaluation noted that appropriate course choice is a key success factor. It also notes that distance students do not have the same in-course opportunity to gain support from peers or tutors. Activities are being planned in 2013 to target distance students in key programmes and papers, including a pre-semester phone call to establish students' readiness for study. If this approach proves effective then the University suggests that consideration should be given to how this advice

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<sup>81</sup> SR, pp28; 29.

<sup>82</sup> SR, p28.

<sup>83</sup> Outcomes of the Student Engagement Pilots in 2012.



can be provided at the time of enrolment (i.e. rather than waiting until the start of semester) to ensure students have an opportunity to address any gaps in their knowledge.<sup>84</sup>

As part of the Student Success Strategy the University is developing its tools for monitoring student engagement. The Panel heard how intervention points were linked to “triggers”, for example not being logged in for a fully online course; first assessment item incomplete. Staff have been encouraged to use opportunities facilitated by Stream to monitor engagement. Staff reported that a major strength of the Strategy was that it provides a framework for identifying and targeting those students who might be most at risk of not succeeding. One effect reported to the Panel was a change in summer school dates, to separate offerings of papers as either before Christmas or after Christmas (rather than spanning Christmas), in recognition that the Christmas period is a “risk point” for students dropping out. At this stage in its development a best assessment of the Student Success Strategy is that it shows promise but is yet to be implemented more widely. The University is encouraged to persist with the roll-out across more courses and programmes.

The Panel deduced that from a student perspective the activities which might enhance their engagement with their study are often linked closely to course delivery and interaction. Students interviewed by the Panel were mostly enthusiastic about their study opportunities and activities. They cited various different ways in which they were supported, often highlighting interaction with teachers, contact by email, teachers who are happy to talk “even if [that talk is] not related to the course”. Others said that practical work, e.g. labs, projects and experiments were good for getting them involved (i.e. engaged). It is likely that involvement in or use of learning support services (see Chapter 5, section 5.2) also facilitates – or reflects – engagement.

**Affirmation:** The Panel **affirms** the development and implementation of the Student Success Strategy and encourages the University to ensure there is ongoing evaluation of both intervention effectiveness and overall outcomes of achievement.

#### **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.

In The Road to 2020 the University highlights “student success, retention and progression to postgraduate study” as an objective of its Student Success Strategy.<sup>85</sup> Massey University is mindful that its retention and completion statistics fall below those of other New Zealand universities. It is also aware that these aggregate measures reflect the impact of the proportions of (i) distance students and (ii) mature-aged students. The Panel was told that the University’s retention and completion rates for these two groups do not fall below those for similar groups internationally.

Given its identification of distance and mature-aged students as influences on aggregate statistics, it is appropriate to include distance students and mature-aged students as “priority groups”, as well as

<sup>84</sup> Outcomes of the Student Engagement Pilots in 2012.

<sup>85</sup> The Road to 2020, p11.

Māori, Pasifika, international students and new migrants, when considering processes to support retention, academic success and completion. It is understood that a student may fall into more than one of these priority categories.

The University reports extensive research and analysis as a basis for the Student Success Strategy, enabling it to identify which groups of students are at risk of poor retention and completion, and what the risk points and/or factors might be.<sup>86</sup> This research is also the basis for the Academic Standing Model, approved in 2013, which will take a semester by semester approach to monitoring student performance for the purpose of improving course completions, providing timely and appropriate interventions and encouraging excellence.

Given the importance of retention and completion as formal measures of university performance, the University has high level oversight of trends by the Senior Leadership Team and by the Teaching and Learning Committee.<sup>87</sup> The Panel was told that programme directors are responsible for monitoring completion and that any variations from what is normative in a College will see the PVC “involved very quickly”. Council members interviewed by the Panel also discussed the issues of retention and completion, in particular as related to distance students. Some staff indicated that one benefit to come from the Student Success Strategy is the improved availability of appropriate data. Student Success Advisors support the Student Success Strategy by working with staff and students across the University to facilitate and encourage referrals to appropriate support services. In addition, learning advisers provide assistance, as do designated Māori Student Advisors (Te Rau Whakaara) and Pasifika Learning Advisers. Staff indicated that students who self-identify as Māori, Pasifika or international are directed to appropriate support services but the University “can’t force students to accept support”. The Panel was told that work is needed on developing services for Pasifika students and that their needs are not necessarily identical to those of Māori students.

The University does not appear to have any specific services for new migrants.<sup>88</sup> The Panel was told that these students have needs similar to those of international students but commonly have additional challenges, for example health needs and/or displaced families to settle. Such students may seek advice from the International Student Support Office, as can domestic students for whom English is not a first language. Orientation activities are provided on each campus and particular sessions may be offered for priority groups.

The University provides an array of other services and activities which are intended, directly or indirectly, to assist students to succeed. These are well documented on the University’s website.<sup>89</sup> They include normal course material, individualised support, study groups, electronic resources such as the Online Writing Learning Link (OWLL) and the Maths First website. Students referred favourably to the use of Stream in gaining support, via forums or chat groups; for some students,

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<sup>86</sup> SR, p30.

<sup>87</sup> See Big Goal Dashboard, pp 23-25.

<sup>88</sup> Subsequent to the submission of the Self-review Report, the Panel noted that the University advertised a Director – New Migrants position, to be based on the Albany campus, which will be responsible for developing, monitoring and implementing the New Migrants@Massey 2020 Strategy.

<sup>89</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/student-life/services-and-resources/academic-skills-support/](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/student-life/services-and-resources/academic-skills-support/) downloaded 29.11.13.

Massey course Facebook pages provided better functionality for peer interaction and support. A number of students spoke of using the pre-reading service, in most cases gaining helpful feedback. Other students reported using video resources and the University's YouTube channel. Staff said that some students, in particular Pasifika students and mature-aged students, are less likely to use online resources. It was reported that face-to-face support may also be provided. (See also Chapter 5, section 5.2).

Both the Māori@Massey 2020 Strategy and the 2006 Pasifika@Massey Strategy highlight poor completion rates as critical areas for attention.<sup>90</sup> The June 2013 revision of the Pasifika strategy reports improvements for Pasifika students over time. The Māori Strategy identifies poor course advice on enrolment and late recognition of poor performance as being key determinants of lack of success, and the University has taken steps to rectify this. In the Panel's view the Student Success Strategy should assist. The Panel notes the PWC report comment that the University appears to over-emphasize recruitment and should pay more attention to retention.<sup>91</sup> Some senior staff reiterated this observation.

The Panel was told that one outcome of the Student Success Strategy had been the ability to "filter" support initiatives to identify (and enhance) those which are most effective and most sustainable. The Panel was also told by senior management that the Strategy now had staff buy-in.

The Panel interviewed, individually by telephone, a group of distance students. Some students in the face-to-face groups had also studied by distance. A number of issues were raised by students which the Panel draws to the University's attention. These students appreciated the opportunity to study online but noted variability in the quality of delivery, in particular regarding staff use of Stream. It would appear that some staff use the facility for little more than posting material. Distance students, who have no other interaction with staff, deemed this to be inadequate. Those students who had accessed online forums and Facebook pages (usually set up by students) appreciated the opportunity for interaction. Distance students also spoke of their need to have some printed material provided automatically (rather than having to request it). They told the Panel of problems using Stream on different devices, such as smart phones, tablets and other mobile devices. Other services won praise from students, in particular the pre-reading service and the Library. Staff at Albany who offered a one day face-to-face workshop for distance students believed this was appreciated by the students. Albany staff also note that distance students who live locally use the campus facilities.

The over-riding concern for many distance students, however, was their feeling of isolation, which seemed to be exacerbated if there was sole reliance on electronic delivery and assessment and limited interaction with the academic staff. While their choice to study by distance was usually due to a range of personal circumstances, the distance students who spoke to the Panel sought greater empathy with their situation and more human interaction than they felt they got currently. The Panel is aware that the Cycle 4 audit recommended that the University "recognises the pedagogical

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<sup>90</sup> Pasifika@Massey 2020, p8; Māori@Massey 2020, p8.

<sup>91</sup> PWC, Review of Māori, and Pasifika student recruitment, retention and completion strategies, 2013, p6.

challenges for distance learners and implements supports and services as appropriate”.<sup>92</sup> The Panel notes developments made to enhance the delivery mechanisms for distance students, and is mindful of the range of policies and processes being put in place to provide or enhance access to support services. However the Panel remains concerned that the human element of interaction is, for many students, under developed and it is concerned that increased financial constraints might pressure the University to further reduce the personal contact that distance students have with staff and other students. If Massey is to raise the retention, success and completion rates of its students overall, it must give serious attention to the issues that most impact on the learning experiences of distance students.

#### **4.3 Feedback to students**

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

The formal student feedback systems reported by the University span those which might be considered normal in a university, and in particular include comment on course work assessment and assignments. The University’s Assessment Strategy, Principles and Guidelines indicate that students should be given “timely feedback about their performance”, and point to the value of feedback on formative assessment being provided before a major assessment task is undertaken. Students referred to a “3 week [turnaround] policy” on assessment feedback. They reported that this is usually achieved. Distance students had more concern about the nature of the feedback than about its timeliness. These students reported a range from “ticks” to pages of personalised comments. In one case the student said s/he had no idea who marked the work. Another said that minimalist feedback is “not helpful if you are seeking excellence”. For distance students with no other form of interaction the need for feedback commentary is possibly more critical than it is for students studying face-to-face. As noted above, this is something staff who teach distance students should be mindful of.

The University’s Academic Standing Model will also provide for feedback to students on their progress and achievement. Aims of the model include making students aware of their academic progress and enabling them to make better decisions about their study. The model proposed will attribute multiple statuses to students, namely

- Programme status for programmes with specific requirements (e.g. those which are professionally accredited), describing overall progress with respect to qualification specific regulations;
- University status describing overall progress with respect to the general regulations;
- The Model will differentiate progress as “excelling”, “good”, requiring “academic management” (passing less than 100% of credits in the most recent semester), at “academic risk” (passing less than 50% of credits), as well as degrees of exclusion from the qualification or the University.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Massey University Update Report on the Cycle 4 Audit, 2013, p5.

<sup>93</sup> Academic Standing Model, pp10-11.

The process of development of the Academic Standing Model appears to have been careful and thorough. It is a cohesive framework, applied from initial enquiry to graduation. It also represents a cultural shift from focusing on failure to emphasizing success. The Panel was told by support staff that the Model is accepted by academic staff and that “readiness [has] come through awareness”. However several academic staff who were interviewed seemed to be unaware of the project.

Implementation of the Academic Standing Model is dependent on business information systems to provide the data required. Implementation is planned for 2014. The Panel believes the Academic Standing Model is a positive initiative to manage student progress systematically and consistently. Its main concern is whether the University has the capacity to respond to the large amount of data that is likely to be produced in support of the model. (See also section 4.4).

#### **4.4 Under-achieving students**

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

The University has had wide-ranging discussion on what is meant by “at risk” and “under achieving”. Research undertaken as part of the Student Success Strategy identified that a student becomes at risk (of underachieving) as soon as they have failed a paper.<sup>94</sup> The University cites a decline in the number of exclusions (against a consistent number identified as not making satisfactory progress) since 2008 as being evidence of improved processes for providing assistance to at risk students.<sup>95</sup> However the University has not reported in its Self-review Report any support services for “at risk” students additional to those available to all students (see sections 5.2).

A stocktake in 2012 prompted reconsideration of current processes, which resulted in the proposed Academic Standing Model (see section 4.3). At an institutional level, the Academic Standing Model will help identify students in need of support and should thereby enhance completions.<sup>96</sup> The Academic Standing Model provides a comprehensive overview of the kinds of situations which signal a student is at risk. The Model spells out the consequences of defining underachievement and interventions, including the negative connotations attached to identifying withdrawals which might be for legitimate reason as non-completions.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University carry out thorough systematic monitoring of the application of the Academic Standing Model to students who are identified as making poor progress or being at risk of under-achieving, and evaluate the adequacy and appropriateness of the assistance available to such students.

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<sup>94</sup> Academic Standing Model, p5.

<sup>95</sup> SR, pp31-32.

<sup>96</sup> Academic Standing Model, p13.

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

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

Students told the Panel that there was no special recognition of high achievement, apart from scholarships or exchange visits for those who were eligible. However the University does provide other forms of recognition, for example letters of congratulations and awards. The Massey University Sports academy is cited as a mechanism for both recognising excellence in sport and academically and for providing support for those students.

As outlined in section 4.4 above, the Academic Standing Model will enable the University to identify students who are excelling. The consequential step is what action, if any, the University will take to respond to this information and find ways to provide support and/or further opportunities.

The University has identified the identification and support of high-achieving, students, or potentially high-achieving students, as an area for enhancement.<sup>97</sup> The Panel supports this objective.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University explores how it might use the Academic Standing Model to enhance its recognition of high-achieving and potentially high-achieving students, engages with students to identify further opportunities to support such students, and communicates these developments to students.

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<sup>97</sup> SR, p33.

## 5. Student Feedback and Support

Massey University's strategic plan, The Road to 2020, states that:

"Massey University students can expect to receive high-quality services that support their lifelong learning, personal and professional needs. We [i.e. the University] recognise the diversity of the student community, and aim to ensure that our services meet the many needs of undergraduate, postgraduate, domestic, international, on-campus and distance students, including the diverse range of student cultures in the University."<sup>98</sup>

This chapter refers to the ways in which the University endeavours to meet the actual and potential personal, pastoral and social needs of students, including how student opinion is obtained and how feedback from their input is used.

### 5.1 Academic appeals and grievances

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

In the Panel's view the University has a clear policy and clear procedures for the management of academic grievances.<sup>99</sup> At the time that the audit report was written an advocacy service was provided by the Massey University Students' Association. From its interviews with students, however, the Panel came to the view that the grievance processes are not well understood and need to be communicated more effectively. The Panel recognizes that for many students the processes might be considered on a "need to know" basis. The Panel was also told that while there was a need for better clarity about the process among staff, staff do have access to training through the National Centre for Teaching and Learning.

The grievance processes were reviewed in 2011 and as a result a number of enhancements have been suggested.<sup>100</sup> The Panel endorses the enhancements proposed.<sup>101</sup> In particular, the development and dissemination of resources to staff and students to support informal resolution and explanation of the process in plain simple language should go some way to addressing any current lack of understanding by students.

Procedures related to academic appeals are included in the Assessment and Examination Regulations for aegrotat and impaired performance decisions, and in the Discipline Regulations for discipline decisions. The University does not appear to have a formal appeal provision for assessment grades, relying instead on an application for re-mark of a final examination script.

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<sup>98</sup> The Road to 2020, p41.

<sup>99</sup> SR, p34. Student Grievance Procedures. See [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/statutes-and-regulations/student-grievance-procedures.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/statutes-and-regulations/student-grievance-procedures.cfm) downloaded 07.12.13.

<sup>100</sup> Student Grievances Process Enhancement Project 2011.

<sup>101</sup> Project Proposal Student Grievances 2013.

## **5.2 Learning support**

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

Massey University provides a wide range of learning support services for its students, both via its Centres for Teaching and Learning and through other units (e.g. the Library). These include

- A pre-reading service for help with essay drafts
- Mentoring
- Library tours and workshops, both on campus and on line
- OWLL (Online Writing and Learning Link)
- Study skills videos
- Maths First website
- Student facilitated support groups
- The Stream for students website
- Academic writing and learning support service
- One-on-one support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

The University states that analysis of AUSSE results indicate that Massey students are more likely to use student support services than are students in other universities with which Massey benchmarks itself (those universities which are also distance providers). The University also cites high or improving levels of satisfaction by students responding to its own Student Experience surveys and to the International Student Barometer.<sup>102</sup> However the Panel heard that the University's recent student services stocktake identified that traditional forms of face-to-face workshops are not meeting student needs.

The Panel was told that the University is endeavouring to ensure its student support services are aligned with student needs. The University's usual approach to the introduction of a new initiative across the whole University is for it to be piloted and evaluated on one campus. A major current focus has been development of resources to help improve student numeracy, an issue which has been identified by staff as a problem.

In addition to the above University-wide services, individual programmes and Colleges also offer learning support activities. For example, the Panel heard of one College running workshops on evidence use in essays for the programmes taught in that College.

Academic staff discussed the ways in which they encouraged students to seek support, for example by asking students to identify their likely needs at enrolment; by using Stream to monitor students who might need help and intervening if necessary. Staff also said that international students are well provided for. The Panel observed that spaces such as the virtual halls, in Wellington and the Christian Centre at Manawatu and some of the new learning spaces enable students to provide support for each other.

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<sup>102</sup> SR, p35.



Māori and Pasifika students are offered additional support, in particular to cater for those entering the University after extended time in the work force and/or caring for family. Such students are often part-time. Extra assistance is available through, for example, whanau and other group support programmes, opportunities to study together and have children cared for, mentoring and tutoring. The University also provides support for Māori and Pasifika students preparing for doctoral studies.

Students reported favourably on most of the services they had used. In particular the Library services, the pre-reading service and various mentoring “schemes” were mentioned by several students. The Foundation Studies programme was also mentioned, not for its English language component but for the study skills learned. Overall the Panel received positive reports both of the range of services and of the ways in which the University has responded to feedback to try and ensure they continue to meet student need.

**Commendation:** The Panel **commends** the University on its extensive range of learning support services across campuses, which are valued by students, and in particular commends the pre-reading service initiative, the services provided by the Library and the Centres for Teaching and Learning and the attention being paid to support for Māori and Pasifika students. The Panel also notes the University’s initiatives which enable students to support each other and its efforts to improve services, focusing on support provided in different modes (e.g. face-to-face, online and virtual).

### **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.

Massey University provides the range of services to support students and cater for their wellbeing which is normal for New Zealand universities. The University pays attention to providing these services to students studying in all modes. Massey University runs a Student Leadership programme on each campus which in turn provides mentoring to first year students.<sup>103</sup> It has a Code of Student Conduct which is intended to encourage courtesy, safety and respect amongst students and between students and the University, as well as to encourage integrity, respect and ethical conduct in teaching, learning and research.<sup>104</sup> The University aims to strengthen its pastoral care, careers advice and employment preparation services for students.<sup>105</sup>

With respect to Māori and Pasifika students, the Panel heard that the University considered it important to have learning and pastoral support activities in a physical environment that provides cultural affirmation. The Panel was told that the major challenge was to ensure support of Māori and Pasifika students at College level, while retaining the Marae and Fale Pasifika centrally on the campuses. A number of steps to achieving this were outlined to the Panel. The Panel was aware of

<sup>103</sup> SR, p36; [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/student-life/services-students/](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/student-life/services-students/) downloaded 02.12.13.

<sup>104</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/statutes-and-regulations/code-of-student-conduct.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/statutes-and-regulations/code-of-student-conduct.cfm) downloaded 02.12.13.

<sup>105</sup> The Road to 2020, p11.

the recommendations made by the 2013 review of Māori and Pasifika strategies and encourages the University to proceed with addressing these with some urgency.<sup>106</sup>

Apart from specific issues pertaining to Māori and Pacific students, students at Massey University are generally catered for well with respect to their personal and social needs. The Panel notes that the University has processes for assuring itself that it does so, in particular via service reviews and student surveys.

Staff interviewed reported that the University is “transitioning through” recent Government-initiated changes to students’ associations which have impacted on the provision of student services. It is noted that the advocacy service is paid for from the student services levy (see section 5.1).

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

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

Overall, the services outlined under section 5.2 are available to all students irrespective of their campus. The Panel was told though that campuses might request different services to meet identified local need. For example, there is greater University resourcing for distance student support from the Manawatu campus due to that campus being the host campus for distance delivery; the Wellington campus has argued a greater need for disability support and Albany for more support for international students and new migrants. Such requests reflect the different student profiles on those campuses.

Campus registrars hold responsibility for ensuring the needs of students on their campus are met. They said they were able to extract “very specific data” from Student Experience surveys to assess student need, and that discussions would then be held cross-campus and with appropriate services, for example International support. The University noted that student satisfaction with personal support services varies by campus and also by service. Members of the Panel were told that further analysis on one campus revealed that a lower satisfaction report than on other campuses was in part because the service profile on that campus did not reflect the specific needs evolving from the particular student profile. A refocusing and reorganisation of service provision is expected to produce higher levels of satisfaction.

The Panel heard that the Director of the programme in Singapore provides any pastoral support needed by students. Singapore students are also able to access the University’s online resources, as well as the Library of Singapore Polytechnic and other negotiated support services.

On one campus Panel members heard that there is a capacity problem and that staff providing learning and pastoral services would like to see more services – especially study skills support – embedded in courses rather than being an optional “add-on”. Resistance, they said, came from

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<sup>106</sup> PWC: Review of Māori and Pasifika student recruitment, retention and completion strategies, September 2013, pp 31-33.

academic staff not being prepared to relinquish content-teaching time. However an alternative view from support staff is that such a strategy would save time in the long run by improving student participation and achievement.

The Panel was told that the University considers distance students to comprise a fourth campus. In that context, the specific support needs of distance students were investigated. The students who were interviewed noted a number of challenges regarding their engagement with lecturers (see section 4.2). However they appreciated the opportunity to use the Library and its services “in person” and spoke positively about the block courses and contact courses they had participated in, reinforcing distance students’ appreciation of face-to-face connections with the University.<sup>107</sup> Students were unhappy that the University appeared to be cutting back the provision of contact courses.

The distance students said they were confident that if they had a problem they would be able to access the support they needed. Those who had used pastoral services – for instance, disability support, counselling and student services – spoke favourably about them. One student said that “after the [Wellington] earthquakes Massey was really, really good” in addressing students’ needs. Another said the University is “very good at looking after its students”.

The Panel is confident that the University’s policies and procedures provide the opportunity for students on all campuses, including those studying overseas, to access appropriate resources, including some which might be developed in specific ways to meet the needs of a particular campus. The T3 initiative on the Wellington campus, providing a halls-like environment for non-residential students, was described by staff and students as popular with students.

### **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)

The University’s (draft) Student Survey Framework sets out the principles which are expected to guide the University’s surveys, including an objective of reducing survey fatigue and ensuring surveys “are aligned with and inform” the University’s strategy. The Framework defines the University’s core set of survey instruments:

- Student Experience Survey (SES)
- Massey Online Survey Tool (MOST)
- International Student Barometer (ISB)
- Australasian Survey of Student Engagement (AUSSE)
- Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) (from 2012)
- New Zealand Graduate Longitudinal Study (GLSNZ).<sup>108</sup>

<sup>107</sup> Contact courses are designed for distance students to facilitate interaction with other students and to receive face-to-face tuition. They are held on all three physical campuses as well as in Christchurch. See [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/distance-learning/studying/contact](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/distance-learning/studying/contact) downloaded 02.12.13.

<sup>108</sup> Draft Student Survey Framework.

The Framework does not preclude the University or individual units within the University from administering other surveys for specific purposes or from obtaining feedback in other ways – for example, the push button, “just-in-time” feedback a student can give during the online enrolment process; Facebook; using Survey Monkey. Students also reported that they have class representatives who are available to receive and convey feedback on anything related to teaching.

The MOST facility enables overall student satisfaction to be monitored annually. The results are reported biennially on the Big Goal Dashboard. The University reports that aggregated results for 2011 and 2012 show “high levels” of student satisfaction (85-91% in 2012) with individual papers.

The Road to 2020 specifies improved responsiveness to student feedback as an objective towards providing “the best working and learning environment for staff and students” (“Enabling Excellence”).<sup>109</sup> Examples of actions taken in response to student feedback which the Panel was told about included: a major change to the delivery of student services on one campus; enhancements to food outlets, food quality and pricing on one campus; consideration of new Library resources; a focus on Careers Service enhancement; redesign of a programme; a redesign of assessment.

Although the Self-review Report and several staff and students who were interviewed cited such instances of actions which had been taken or considered in response to student feedback, other staff and students said the action taken in response to course surveys was variable. From its interviews the Panel concluded that the University has processes to “close the loop” on survey responses but most students were not well informed of actions taken. The Panel was told that MOST generates a “Student Report” which provides a facility for staff to comment on the student responses. The MOST report is sent to all students who responded to a particular survey. Many students interviewed said they did not know of this report, or, if they did, they did not read it, arguing that if it came after the course was finished they were no longer interested.

The main issue, according to staff involved in managing course surveys, is how best use can be made of the data collected. Data are available on the website but it is perceived they are not well used in “the right places in the Colleges”. The survey staff also noted a need to convince users that they should not rely on a single source of feedback as grounds for making changes. The only major negative comment received by the Panel from students was related to timing, that in most cases evaluations came too late in the course to result in change for that paper. Some staff also commented that waiting until the end of a course to administer a survey risked losing some students from the response group.

Overall, it is clear that the University has multiple methods of collecting feedback from students. It is also clear that information derived from surveys and other forms of student feedback is used to inform change, although this usage could be improved. The University is encouraged to persist with finding ways of ensuring staff make better use of survey data and other forms of student feedback where appropriate.

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<sup>109</sup> The Road to 2020, pp 38, 41.

### **5.6 Feedback from graduates**

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

The University's institutional survey for gaining feedback from graduates has been operational for only one year. The initial analysis from 2012 indicates a desire for more applied learning opportunities, more careers support and more linkages with industry within degree programmes.<sup>110</sup> Such findings indicate the survey is likely to add value to the University's understanding of graduate outcomes and the opportunities needed to achieve these.

The Panel was told that different areas of the University have good links with alumni. Apart from engaging graduates in qualification reviews, it would appear that most of this interaction is informal. It was not made clear to the Panel whether, or how, such linkages might inform changes within the University. Initiatives related to alumni connections appeared to rest at the College or programme level, though there is a central alumni database which can be accessed by Colleges.

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<sup>110</sup> SR, pp 40-41.

## 6. Teaching Quality

One of Massey University's "Big Goals" is to "ensure an exceptional and distinctive learning experience... for all students".<sup>111</sup> Massey's teaching is intended to achieve this distinctive character by being applied, digitally-mediated, research-led and fostering innovation.<sup>112</sup> The Road to 2020 highlights the University's intention to provide staff with professional development opportunities "in support of a curriculum that integrates teaching and research, and that views knowledge-sharing as a negotiated flow of knowledge for collective benefit".<sup>113</sup> The Panel was told that the University considers it important that staff appointees "understand what the University is about", i.e. what its objectives and distinctive characteristics are, and that appointees need to be able and willing to commit to the University's strategic direction.

These objectives have direct implications for the quality assurance of teaching quality, since the objectives imply a specific kind of capability of teachers.

### 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.

In 2012 the University reported a staff profile as (FTE):<sup>114</sup>

Colleges:	
Academic	1,072
Professional service staff	426
Contract and trading staff	367
Centres of research excellence, support services, and administration	1,106
Total staff	2,972

Delegations for recruitment and appointment of staff place responsibility at different levels of the University hierarchy depending on the level of the appointment, viz

Professorial appointments – require Vice-Chancellor approval

Lecturer level and above – responsibility of the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor

Below lecturer level – responsibility with the relevant Head of School or Institute.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>111</sup> The Road to 2020, p3.

<sup>112</sup> Summarized from the Annual Report 2012, p72.

<sup>113</sup> The Road to 2020, p13.

<sup>114</sup> Annual Report 2012, p93.

<sup>115</sup> SR, p42.

The Panel was told that the University is reviewing its recruitment processes, focusing on how potential staff might be attracted to Massey University, the "messages" given about the University, how the University might gain greater exposure in job markets and how more attention might be given to the development of interview questions.

The University has identified induction as an area where improvements are needed and has developed changes to address these. It has introduced a range of induction materials including Guidelines for Managers (manager induction<sup>116</sup>) and an Induction Workbook setting out the experiences which new staff are expected to have had, and knowledge acquired, in the first three months of appointment. New staff are contacted individually to assess their requirements and are invited to participate in a professional development module, Foundations to Teaching and Learning at Massey. (See also Section 6.4.)

The Panel discussed induction experiences with staff who had been appointed relatively recently. Colleagues were seen as helpful, and some staff talked of having staff mentors whom they appreciated. The meetings with the Vice-Chancellor were also appreciated though it was not clear whether this was routine for all new staff. The main criticism by staff about the induction process was that it was not systematic and consistent. Not all staff had been able to engage with induction activities. They also commented that the induction was biased towards administrative matters, such as health and safety requirements. The Panel heard that most new staff had been taken through a "check list" of such matters. Staff commented that the induction didn't help with "how things work", about the culture of the University. One Head commented that she ran her own induction process, to address the organizational and cultural matters.

Heads of School told the Panel that they discuss with appointees the Massey University teaching model which includes, for instance, that most papers are taught by teams and that few have only one person with oversight.

The University plans to evaluate the induction process via an optional staff survey. An early career induction programme was being developed at the time of the audit.<sup>117</sup> From the information provided and the discussions with staff the Panel concluded that the University has the appropriate material to provide a useful induction for new staff but there is unevenness about how this is delivered.

The Panel was told that the induction process introduced for managers had gained "very positive" feedback from those managers who had been through it. The University was currently beginning development of a competency framework for managers. A "Recruitment Skills for Managers" workshop had been well received by managers.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University ensures that its induction activities are available and accessible to all staff, in particular ensuring that staff whose home School is based on another campus are adequately provided for.

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<sup>116</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/national-shared-services/pod/joining-massey/induction/manager-induction/manager-induction\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/national-shared-services/pod/joining-massey/induction/manager-induction/manager-induction_home.cfm) downloaded 05.12.13.

<sup>117</sup> SR, p42.

## **6.2 Research-active staff**

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

Academic managers are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the University's workload policy. The University workload procedures offer guidelines for "nominal allocations" of a minimum of 30% of total academic staff workload devoted to research, and up to 50% total workload allocated to teaching.<sup>118</sup> The Panel was told by senior management that there are "very few" staff on teaching-only contracts, the implication being that degree-level students are taught mainly by staff who are research-active. The Panel was told that when academic appointments are made Heads of School are required to make an assessment of applicants' research rating to ensure they have the requisite research underpinning their teaching. However the Panel also heard that an unspecified number of teaching staff were employed as tutors who were not expected to do research.

The Workload Policy states that departmental mechanisms for allocating workloads should be reviewed at least every three years.<sup>119</sup> The Panel was provided with a report related to the 2012 review of the workloads policy, outlining changes which were made as a consequence of staff feedback. While the Panel heard from some staff that they perceived some inequality and lack of transparency in workload allocations in their school, the Panel was satisfied that the University is well aware of its obligations regarding workload and is continuing to develop policies which guide its workload allocation practices.

## **6.3 Teaching quality**

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

The University's Performance Review and Planning Policy and Procedures are intended to facilitate the assessment of teaching quality and support of individual staff. This process is augmented by the University's Peer Assistance and Review of Teaching Framework. Managers receive training in conducting professional development and performance reviews. Several staff intimated to the Panel that their performance and planning reviews were focussed mainly on research. Such comments indicate that the University needs to be vigilant to ensure that teaching performance is in fact included in all academic staff performance reviews.

The Panel notes that some Heads and some staff commented that provision of useful performance reviews was difficult when the Head and the staff member are on different campuses. In such cases, and also where the number of members of a School or Institute is too large for the academic head to carry out all reviews, senior staff may assist. It is important that all staff involved in carrying out reviews be trained for the task.

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<sup>118</sup> University Workloads Procedures, p4.

<sup>119</sup> Massey University Workloads Policy, p2.



Feedback on teaching from students is gained through MOST student surveys, as well as via the Teaching Evaluation through Student Dialogue tool.<sup>120</sup> The low response rate for teaching evaluation surveys is noted by the University as a concern which it is endeavouring to address. The Panel was also told that a new Policy for Evaluating Teaching was being drafted.

In its Self-review Report the University cites outputs of various surveys as evidence of overall teaching quality; it also notes its maximum rating for teaching in the QS Stars system of institutional evaluation in 2011.<sup>121</sup> The Panel heard from students that teaching quality is variable and it heard from staff that it was very obvious when students experienced different standards of teaching within the same (team-taught) course. However the Panel did not hear of formal strategies whereby under-performing staff are required to take steps to improve teaching. It was told of the strategies used by Heads to monitor and support the teaching of staff who had been identified as needing development. These included observing classes and using formal mentors. Such initiatives appeared to be at the discretion of the Heads.

A review of the Performance Review and Planning Policy and Procedures was initiated in 2013, with the objective of clarifying that employee development is “a critical input to performance”.<sup>122</sup>

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University ensures that its processes for monitoring individual teaching performance are followed in all cases where teaching is a contractual responsibility.

#### **6.4 Teaching development**

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

The University provides support for teaching and learning through its Educational Technology Unit and National Centre for Teaching and Learning at Manawatu and its Centres for Teaching and Learning at Albany and Wellington. Evidence of acceptability of these services was provided to the Panel in the Centre for Teaching and Learning 2012 Brief Highlights Report.<sup>123</sup> The Panel was told that participation in professional development activities has shown marked increase in recent years, partly attributed to the increased number of offerings and partly to staff being asked to identify areas where offerings might be developed.

The Panel was told that sessions on cultural awareness re: international, Māori and Pasifika students are available for staff “on a need-to-know basis” or on request. It also heard that there was discussion currently about compulsory training for all new staff, possibly in the form of a Foundation

<sup>120</sup> SR, pp43-44. The tool is suitable for small classes. Ideally it is used midway through a course in order to gain formative feedback about the course.

<sup>121</sup> SR, p44. QS Stars is a rating provided by the educational benchmarking agency Quacquarelli Symonds. In 2011 Massey University achieved an overall rating of four stars out of five, with maximum scores for student satisfaction with teaching and overall student satisfaction. [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/news/article.cfm?mnarticle\\_uuid=B1BA92FE-DEDB-C9D7-EE7D-799D9648816E](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/news/article.cfm?mnarticle_uuid=B1BA92FE-DEDB-C9D7-EE7D-799D9648816E) downloaded 08.12.13

<sup>122</sup> SR, p44.

<sup>123</sup> SR, p45.

course which might lead into a Certificate. The Panel is aware of the risks, as well as the benefits, of making such courses compulsory. It believes staff who are new to university teaching should be required to undertake some form of teaching induction but that formal credit-bearing courses towards a teaching qualification should remain discretionary.

Given the University's aspirations summarized in the introduction to this chapter, and its goal to be a world leader in distance education,<sup>124</sup> the capability of academic staff in the use of digital technologies is fundamental. The challenge of blended learning, or effective use of digital technologies, was referred to by many interviewees.

The University states that its current approach to teaching development is that it is "largely voluntary" and provided through a "customised" service and "demand-led" projects. It is also driven strategically, as evidenced by the University's draft Digital Teaching and Learning Strategy 2013-2015. "Digital" teaching and learning is one of the defining elements of Massey University's teaching and learning model.<sup>125</sup> The University notes that unless it provides support for staff and students to explore digital media opportunities it "is at risk of losing its ... longstanding reputation for world-class blended and distance education."<sup>126</sup>

As the University upgraded its Stream processes and focussed on staff capability in its use, it offered a number of self-directed and facilitated workshops on the use of Stream. For instance, in 2012 approximately 140 staff participated in a Stream experience course which was offered on all three Campuses.<sup>127</sup> Support of digital teaching is indicated by the establishment of the University's Distance Education and Learning Futures Alliance in 2012. Staff are also leaders in external organisations focused on use of digital media (e.g. ascilite; DEANZ).<sup>128</sup>

As mentioned in Chapter 5, students reported mixed experiences with the use of Stream. Most like the system but reported considerable variability in staff use of the technology and apparent competence to do so. The Panel heard that University staff made a huge investment (of time) in Stream, that it is "core business", and that improvement is best led by "constructive peer pressure" and keen advocates.

Staff said Stream had been relatively easy to learn to use and that the online training provided by the University had been helpful. To some extent ease of use depended on courses having been set up appropriately initially. Staff provided examples of different ways in which they used Stream, from using it as a mere repository to taking advantage of its interactive functions, supporting student comment that this use was quite variable. Support staff considered one of the issues to be dealt with

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<sup>124</sup> See, for example, [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/teaching-and-learning/centres\\_tl/ctl/about-us/national-centre-for-teaching-and-learning/educational-technology-unit/educational-technology-unit\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/teaching-and-learning/centres_tl/ctl/about-us/national-centre-for-teaching-and-learning/educational-technology-unit/educational-technology-unit_home.cfm) downloaded 05.12.13. Reference to "Massey University's reputation as a leader in the use of new educational technologies for online, blended and distance learning". Also Draft Digital Teaching and Learning Strategy, reference to Massey being a "world leader in the provision of online, blended and distance education." p1.

<sup>125</sup> The Road to 2020, pp 12, 13.

<sup>126</sup> Draft Digital Teaching and Learning Strategy, p3.

<sup>127</sup> Stream-related teaching development (SR, p45).

<sup>128</sup> Centre for Teaching and Learning 2012 Brief Highlights Report.

in trying to enhance use of Stream was a legacy of focussing on single papers, whereas optimal use of Stream might be to apply it to whole programmes or portfolios of programmes. They said it had been difficult to make progress with discussions at programme level. Others commented that there might be greater efficiency in using more support expertise rather than expecting less technologically competent staff to develop their own resources. Innovation is a Massey University defining feature, but at least some support staff recognized that not all academic staff have innovative capability with respect to the use of teaching technologies.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University endeavours to support staff more proactively in the uptake of new teaching technologies, as appropriate to their discipline.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University provides consistent and appropriate induction to all staff new to teaching at Massey on the teaching and learning policies, procedures, curriculum design and assessment requirements, modes of delivery and teaching and learning technologies which the University regards as critical in meeting the objectives outlined in The Road to 2020.

#### **6.5 Teaching support on other campuses**

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

The campus-based Centres for Teaching and Learning ensure that staff on all campuses have access to teaching development and support resources and services. National coordination is pursued to ensure support offered is equivalent. Most staff who spoke with the Panel appeared satisfied with the relevance and accessibility of support services provided. The University's guidelines for international course delivery specify the provision of teaching support.<sup>129</sup> This will become more critical if the University extends its international operations as signalled in The Road to 2020.<sup>130</sup>

#### **6.6 Teaching recognition**

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

Massey University promotions criteria require demonstration of appropriate capability in both teaching and research. The University reported that observer reports for its 2012 and 2013 promotion deliberations considered that these were "robust ... equitable, fair, rigorous and consistent" with the procedures.<sup>131</sup> However some staff indicated that a general view persists that teaching is a "second class citizen" (to research), a perception which is being challenged by a review of the promotions criteria and promotions practice.

<sup>129</sup> Guidelines for Distance Education offerings to International Students Overseas, Guidelines 2.5; 4.1

<sup>130</sup> The Road to 2020, p23; pp 25-26.

<sup>131</sup> SR, p47.

The University has a systematic teaching awards framework which is stair-cased to provide a developmental pathway for staff which is intended to:

- Reward teaching excellence
- Recognise and acknowledge good practice
- Recognise and acknowledge those staff who support good practice
- Provide encouragement to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- Provide the opportunities, incentives and support to succeed at a national awards level.<sup>132</sup>

Awards may be made at four levels: College and service unit level; University level; the Vice-Chancellor's excellence awards; and support to be considered for a contestable National Teaching Award. In addition to defining the criteria for each award category the Framework sets out expectations for awardees to share good practice.<sup>133</sup> The University has a TE@M (Teaching Excellence at Massey) group who are winners of Massey University or National Teaching Excellence awards, and is considering establishing a Teaching Academy to recognise a wider range of staff who are leaders in teaching.<sup>134</sup>

Heads told the Panel that they encourage excellent teachers to apply for awards. They also encourage successful teachers to share good practice.

**Commendation:** The Panel **commends** the University on its teaching awards framework which includes systematic stair-cased processes for recognizing and rewarding excellent teachers.

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<sup>132</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/teaching-and-learning/centres\\_tl/ctl/grants-awards--fellowships/teaching-awards/teaching-awards\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/teaching-and-learning/centres_tl/ctl/grants-awards--fellowships/teaching-awards/teaching-awards_home.cfm) downloaded 05.12.13.

<sup>133</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/teaching-and-learning/centres\\_tl/ctl/grants-awards--fellowships/teaching-awards/awards-framework/awards-framework\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/teaching-and-learning/centres_tl/ctl/grants-awards--fellowships/teaching-awards/awards-framework/awards-framework_home.cfm) downloaded 05.12.13.

<sup>134</sup> SR, p48.

## 7. Supervision of Postgraduate Students

The 2012 Annual Report states that Massey University had 1,529 postgraduate research EFTS and 2,513 taught postgraduate EFTS.<sup>135</sup> The University Profile for 2012 identifies 7,295 postgraduate students in total (3,564 EFTS) including 1,325 doctoral students (1,159 EFTS).<sup>136</sup> In line with the University's approach to this section of the audit, the chapter focuses only on research students, i.e. Master's thesis and Doctoral students. Responses from Honours students who were interviewed have been incorporated into previous sections.

Council has delegated the following powers to the Doctoral Research Committee:

1. Receive Doctoral Examination reports;
2. Approve the award of the University Doctoral Degrees where the Committee is satisfied that the University's academic requirements and regulations have been met;
3. Approve failed Doctoral examination results;
4. Approve the appointment of examiners;
5. Approve withdrawals and terminations of candidature;
6. Approve suspensions and extensions of candidature;
7. Approve provisional registration and confirmation of registration subject to requirements being met;
8. Approve minor calendar changes and changes to regulations (other than regulations that require approval of CUAP) with respect to Doctoral Degrees.<sup>137</sup>

Much of the documentation relating to doctoral study is found in the Web Book for Doctoral Study.<sup>138</sup> While at first sight the Web Book appears limited to steps related to progress towards a doctorate from initial application to examination and completion, the web pages leading from the home page include links to all the main requirements, processes and people involved in a student's doctoral study.

While doctoral research is managed institutionally, through the Doctoral Research Committee, Master's programmes are managed at College level.<sup>139</sup> Regulations are included within the General Regulations for Postgraduate Degrees, Postgraduate Diplomas, and Postgraduate Certificates which apply alongside the qualification regulations. College Handbooks for research students also set out procedures which are specific to that College.

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<sup>135</sup> Annual Report 2012, p87.

<sup>136</sup> University Profile, p26.

<sup>137</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/higher-research-degrees/doctoral-governance/doctoral-research-committee.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/higher-research-degrees/doctoral-governance/doctoral-research-committee.cfm) downloaded 08.12.13.

<sup>138</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/higher-research-degrees/choose-doctorate/doctor-philosophy/doctor-philosophy\\_home.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/higher-research-degrees/choose-doctorate/doctor-philosophy/doctor-philosophy_home.cfm) downloaded 02.12.13.

<sup>139</sup> Supervision of Graduate Students Procedure.

### **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.

Supervisors of PhD students are appointed by the chairperson of the Graduate Research School on behalf of the University Doctoral Research Committee as part of the confirmation process for registration in a PhD.<sup>140</sup> The Web Book for Doctoral Study states that main supervisors must:

- Be a member of the Massey academic staff;
- Hold a Doctorate from a recognised institution; and,
- Have prior experience of research supervision.

All doctoral students also have a co-supervisor, who should also be a Massey University staff member. The Panel was told that the Graduate Research School organises staff development programmes for new supervisors; co-supervision also provides experience before a staff member might assume full responsibility as a main supervisor.

Research supervision at sub-doctorate level is covered by the Supervision of Graduate Students Procedure. This document establishes the responsibilities and expectations of sub-doctoral supervisors. It states, for example, that it is the responsibility of supervisors “to have research interests and expertise appropriate for the student’s research”, “to be knowledgeable about the appropriate rules and regulations for the research” and “to be informed about any legal, professional, ethical and safety issues that may concern the research”.<sup>141</sup> The Procedure also addresses supervision of postgraduate students at a distance. Colleges are responsible for ensuring supervisors of sub-doctoral research are appropriately trained and experienced.

The Panel heard from staff that supervisor training for doctoral study is adequate and appropriate. However it was also told by staff that the training and support for Master’s supervision was “weak” and does not compare [favourably] with what is done for PhD supervision. While these staff did not favour centralized management of Master’s supervision they did favour more central provision of support and training. Some Colleges apparently provide workshops, mentoring for Master’s supervisors or use a buddy-type apprenticeship, or ensure a new supervisor has an initial role on a larger supervision committee. Some said that staff who were “early career stage” needed resources to support them. Other comments from staff included reference to Master’s supervision “slipping through the gaps” and that the Master’s programme “needs attention” (e.g. issues of timely completion) in different colleges. Some PVCs acknowledged that they were concerned about the oversight of Master’s supervision in their colleges. One student said that there is some feeling that Master’s students “are a low priority” for some staff.

The conclusion reached by the Panel from a wide range of comments is that the quality assurance of Master’s supervision is left as the responsibility of Colleges, but that Colleges do not necessarily have

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<sup>140</sup> The application document for Provisional Registration as a PhD or DClinPsych Candidate includes a statement from the proposed supervisor.

<sup>141</sup> Supervision of Graduate Students Procedure.

the resources, capacity, or possibly inclination to institute the kind of systematic oversight and training which is assumed by the institution for doctoral supervision. (See also section 7.3).

Throughout its discussion with staff about postgraduate issues the Panel observed that there was not a good understanding of either University expectations or of the expectations or requirements in other Colleges regarding research student activity. The Panel gained the impression that College academic staff involved in the leadership of postgraduate activities lacked a forum to become aware of cross-University procedures, experiences, ideas and good practices, especially in relation to sub-doctoral student research.

## **7.2 Resourcing of research students**

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

The University lists the minimum resources it provides for postgraduate students in the Resource Minima for Postgraduate Students Policy, included in the Web Book for Doctoral Study. The Policy refers to the resources available for all postgraduate students and the additional resources (*viz*, Library interloans and a common room) available for thesis students. Students in both categories may receive some financial support for their research from contestable funds, provided the research meets department guidelines and funding priorities. This policy dates from 2006 and was due to be reviewed in 2008. A review does not seem to have been undertaken.

The Panel was told by senior management that the resources provided do meet resource minima requirements and that a requirement that student projects be linked to project areas agreed to by the College ensures appropriate resources will be available. Examples were cited of scholarships awarded and of staff research teams seeking additional external funds to support research students.

However the Panel heard of instances where the resource minima did not appear to be met, or were variably met. For instance, the Panel heard from both staff and students that study space availability is a problem. Space is one of the resources listed in the resource minima statement as an entitlement.

Staff also reported variations in the minimum amount of financial support available to research students. In one school, the Panel was told, there is no “flat rate”. Another school had clear caps for Master’s and for PhD students. In another School students have to apply for “targeted” funds. In each case it appeared that determination of the amount of financial support was a decision for the Schools. While this variation appears confusing for students, the Panel was told that students who complain about differences between Schools do so because they do not understand different disciplinary requirements. The students the Panel talked to sought greater clarity about their entitlements.

In addition to the above resources, University staff reported on the availability of library resources, technical support, data bases as well as workshops provided by the Centre for Teaching and Learning. Students appreciated the support provided by the writing consultants in the Centre but

said this service is not well known. None of the other learning services available to postgraduate students were mentioned by either staff or students.<sup>142</sup>

Student involvement in postgraduate committees (in Schools and Colleges) was reported by students as variable. There are student representatives on the University Doctoral Research Committee.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University review its policy on Resource Minima for Postgraduate Students and establish processes to ensure that it is implemented consistently across the University and is understood by students.

### **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.

As noted in section 7.1, the supervision requirements for doctoral students are clear. Six-monthly reporting requirements are outlined in the Web Book for Doctoral Study.<sup>143</sup> Reports are forwarded to the Doctoral Research Committee which may identify and follow up on any issues, including situations where reports have been delayed.

Oversight of supervision of sub-doctoral research is the responsibility of the Colleges, within the guidelines specified in the Supervision of Graduate Students Procedure. These Procedures are dated 2001 and were to have been reviewed in 2005. The academic units referred to in the Procedures have since changed. Panel members reviewed the process documentation of two Colleges. These varied in the level of detail and range of information made available. Neither addressed processes for ensuring supervision is effective or that student progress is monitored. College committees, where such exist, appeared to have limited authority to make decisions regarding sub-doctoral research.

The Panel learned that although there are points in the research process which allow an *ad hoc* assessment if there are problems (for example, through the ethics approval process), there is no University-wide oversight of progress or supervision quality for sub-doctoral research. Nor is there a forum for sharing good practice or problems which might affect students or staff in more than one College. The University is currently discussing the benefits and disadvantages of putting in place a more central oversight. Proposals have been presented in the Research Student Management Project. The Panel supports this initiative.

Student support staff noted the particular challenges experienced by international students, many of whom can be reticent about discussing difficulties with supervision. These might be discussed with staff of the International Office but it was not clear who would deal with these matters at College level.

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<sup>142</sup> See "Centre for Teaching and Learning Academic Support for Postgraduate Students" in College of Business Postgraduate Handbook, pp 6-7.

<sup>143</sup> [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/higher-research-degrees/choose-doctorate/doctor-philosophy/interim-progress.cfm](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/research/higher-research-degrees/choose-doctorate/doctor-philosophy/interim-progress.cfm) downloaded 02.12.13.



Heads of College Postgraduate committees considered they would also be points of contact if research students had particular problems. The Panel heard that some staff were perceived to be reluctant to supervise students whose English language ability was considered to be limited.<sup>144</sup> While the International Office might provide support to students challenged by writing in English, concerns remained with respect to editing and final presentation. It was suggested to the Panel that school workload policies should take account of the additional demands made on some supervisors of international students. The Panel heard that at a University-wide level discussion is taking place about the maximum number of students a staff member may supervise.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends** that the University review its policy and processes for the management of sub-doctoral research, including the appointment and support of supervisors, establishing which activities require University-level oversight and which may be carried out within Schools and Colleges, and developing a mechanism for cross-University sharing of experiences, including exchange of good practice.

#### **7.4 Thesis examination**

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

Examination processes for PhDs are outlined in the Doctoral Examination Handbook. For PhDs there are three examiners:

- One from outside New Zealand ("international examiner")
- One from within New Zealand but external to Massey ("New Zealand examiner")
- One internal to Massey ("internal examiner")

The identity of the nominated examiners should not be revealed to the candidate until the oral is organised.<sup>145</sup>

Examination of Master's theses is governed by the general Regulations for Assessment and Examinations but is managed within each academic unit, and moderated at College level. Master's theses are assessed by two examiners, one of whom is external to the University and both of whom are independent of the research being examined.

Apart from the reliance on College oversight (rather than University oversight) for quality assurance of Master's thesis examination processes and outcomes, the examination processes appear to be as might be expected in a New Zealand university. Initiatives proposed under the Research Student Management Project (non-Doctoral)<sup>146</sup> would improve overall management of the process and make expectations more uniform and more transparent to both staff and students.

<sup>144</sup> Note that Massey University defines English language requirements in its regulations: [www.massey.ac.nz/massey/international/study-on-campus/entry-requirements/entry-requirements\\_home.cfm#PG](http://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/international/study-on-campus/entry-requirements/entry-requirements_home.cfm#PG) downloaded 08.12.13.

<sup>145</sup> Web Book for Doctoral Study.

<sup>146</sup> Research Student Management Project (non-Doctoral), pp4-6.

### **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.

Doctoral students have the opportunity to provide feedback on their supervision via the confirmation and six-monthly research reports. Research students also participate in the University's Student Experience Surveys.<sup>147</sup> The University reports 80% satisfaction by research students for key services. Students also have an opportunity to provide feedback on specific services they have used (such as those offered by the Centres for Teaching and Learning). The University has recorded a need to develop processes for gaining feedback from students on resource adequacy.<sup>148</sup> The Panel was told that a benchmarked postgraduate survey is being planned. The Panel would support this initiative.

Postgraduate students commented that supervisors are crucial for providing support and advice but vary in their ability and willingness to do so (see also Chapter 7, section 7.2).

The Panel was told that the University is exploring extending student membership of the Doctoral Research Committee (it currently has two elected student members). Staff reported a range of avenues for informal student feedback, mostly via heads of school or through the various different committees operating in Colleges. The Panel was told that currently not all Colleges have doctoral research committees and not all Colleges include students on the committees they do have. The Panel believes there should be some expectation of formal student engagement with these committees for issues not related to individual students.

**Recommendation:** The Panel **recommends that** the University develops a regular formal survey of postgraduate students to address, *inter alia*, issues related to supervision, resourcing, support needs and services, opportunities for providing feedback and input to matters that concern them or their research and opportunities for professional engagement. Such a survey should specifically seek feedback from priority groups, including distance students. It might be benchmarked against other such surveys used elsewhere in Australasia.

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<sup>147</sup> SR, p53.

<sup>148</sup> SR, p50.

## Conclusion

In the course of the site visit to the University the Panel talked to about 100 staff and 45 students from four campuses (Manawatu; Albany; Wellington; and distance students). It also talked to a staff member based in Singapore and to Council members. Staff and students were well-versed in their portfolio areas and prepared to engage constructively with the Panel. The “one university” concept appeared to be widely accepted and understood. Students spoken to were articulate and frank; they appreciated the opportunities offered by Massey.

In working through the Cycle 5 Guideline Statements the Panel agreed with the University that in almost all cases the expectations were met. In most cases where Guideline Statements were not met, or where improvements are needed, the University had identified this in its self-review. The Panel found no issues of serious concern in terms of the University’s potential to achieve its aspirations but found some areas where change or improvement would help the University to do so. The Panel is also concerned that changes to Senior Management which were underway at the time of the audit must ensure momentum is not lost in making progress on the significant policy and process agenda which has been put in place over the last 3-5 years. The recommendations the Panel has made are intended to assist the University as it moves forward the implementation of its Plan to 2020/2025.

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

## Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations

### Commendations

- GS1.5 C1 The Panel **commends** the Library for continuing to provide the excellent level of service which earned it a commendation in the previous 2008 academic audit.<sup>149</sup>
- GS1.6 C2 The Panel **commends** the University on its comprehensive and effective emergency management provisions and its clear definition of business continuity expectations and encourages the University to continue its efforts to ensure these are communicated well to both staff and students as appropriate.
- GS5.2 C3 The Panel **commends** the University on its extensive range of learning support services across campuses, which are valued by students, and in particular commends the pre-reading service initiative, the services provided by the Library and the Centres for Teaching and Learning and the attention being paid to support for Māori and Pasifika students. The Panel also notes the University’s initiatives which enable students to support each other and its efforts to improve services, focusing on support provided in different modes (e.g. face-to-face, online and virtual).

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<sup>149</sup> Massey University Academic Audit Report, Cycle 4, December 2008, p14.

- GS6.6 C4 The Panel **commends** the University on its teaching awards framework which includes systematic stair-cased processes for recognizing and rewarding excellent teachers.

### Affirmations

- GS1.3 A1 The Panel **affirms** the University's review of ways to enhance student involvement in and input to academic policy development, monitoring and decision-making.
- GS1.4 A2 The Panel **affirms** the University's processes for planning development of teaching and learning spaces, in particular its efforts to ensure that spaces are aligned with pedagogical developments which reflect the University's distinctive character as well as with capital planning and financial allocation.
- GS2.1 A3 The Panel **affirms** the University's work in developing consistent formats for the presentation of regulations on the web, noting the intention to extend this to qualification regulations through use of a common template.
- GS3.1 A4 The Panel **affirms** the implementation of the Qualifications Policy and the Qualifications Framework and the development and implementation of the Articulation Register.
- G3.6 A5 The Panel **affirms** the University's Assessment Strategy, Principles and Guidelines and encourages the University to explore strategies to enhance staff awareness and understanding of the principles and expectations and ensure that implementation is appropriately monitored.
- GS4.1 A6 The Panel **affirms** the development and implementation of the Student Success Strategy and encourages the University to ensure there is ongoing evaluation of both intervention effectiveness and overall outcomes of achievement.

### Recommendations

- GS1.1 R1 The Panel **recommends** that the University documents and communicates to staff with greater clarity its delegations for academic decision-making, in particular at the College level.
- GS2.3 R2 The Panel **recommends** that as part of its overall monitoring of the effectiveness of the shared service model of student advice and information, the University engages College staff in exploring how perceived difficulties with the model might be overcome and, in particular, how to resolve the perceived disadvantages of distancing academic advice from those providing the academic service.

- GS3.2 R3 The Panel **recommends** that the University completes the work on graduate attributes of qualifications and specialisations and that it considers stating formally an institutional graduate profile which reflects its strategic aspirations and which should be reflected in the attributes and outcomes of qualifications and specialisations.
- GS3.5 R4 The Panel **recommends** that the University reviews the ways in which staff ensure undergraduate and taught postgraduate programme curricula and assessment are benchmarked to national and international expectations, and endeavours to develop University-wide guidelines on programme benchmarking which take account of the different requirements for professional and other disciplines.
- GS3.6 R5 The Panel **recommends** that the University as a matter of urgency undertakes an assessment of grading practices across the University with an objective of removing inconsistency in grading practices both within and between Colleges and ensuring equivalence of marks and grades between different programmes.
- GS3.6 R6 The Panel **recommends** that the University investigates practices related to consideration of aegrotat applications, including defining responsibility for recommendations and decisions, communicating expectations to staff and students and undertaking an analysis of aegrotat outcomes.
- GS3.7 R7 The Panel **recommends** that the University continues to promulgate and explain the Equivalence Policy to ensure it is well understood and is implemented effectively across all Colleges. The Panel suggests that the University revisits the issue of equivalence of assessment tasks and explores ways of quality assuring these. The University is urged to find ways of monitoring adherence with the Policy and address any implementation breaches.
- GS3.8 R8 The Panel **recommends** that the University reviews its guidelines for the use of Turnitin plagiarism detection software and other electronic forms of detection to ensure staff and students receive and use consistent information and experience consistent use of the detection procedures. Guidelines should include an outline of the scope of use, procedures to be followed and the information to be conveyed to students about application of Turnitin to the assessment in particular papers.
- GS4.4 R9 The Panel **recommends** that the University carry out thorough systematic monitoring of the application of the Academic Standing Model to students who are identified as making poor progress or being at risk of under-achieving, and evaluate the adequacy and appropriateness of the assistance available to such students.
- GS4.5 R10 The Panel **recommends** that the University explores how it might use the Academic Standing Model to enhance its recognition of high-achieving and potentially high-achieving students, engages with students to identify further opportunities to support such students, and communicates these developments to students.

- GS6.1 R11 The Panel **recommends** that the University ensures that its induction activities are available and accessible to all staff, in particular ensuring that staff whose home School is based on another campus are adequately provided for.
- GS6.3 R12 The Panel **recommends** that the University ensures that its processes for monitoring individual teaching performance are followed in all cases where teaching is a contractual responsibility.
- GS6.4 R13 The Panel **recommends** that the University endeavours to support staff more proactively in the uptake of new teaching technologies, as appropriate to their discipline.
- GS6.4 R14 The Panel **recommends** that the University provides consistent and appropriate induction to all staff new to teaching at Massey on the teaching and learning policies, procedures, curriculum design and assessment requirements, modes of delivery and teaching and learning technologies which the University regards as critical in meeting the objectives outlined in The Road to 2020.
- GS7.2 R15 The Panel **recommends** that the University review its policy on Resource Minima for Postgraduate Students and establish processes to ensure that it is implemented consistently across the University and is understood by students.
- GS7.3 R16 The Panel **recommends** that the University review its policy and processes for the management of sub-doctoral research, including the appointment and support of supervisors, establishing which activities require University-level oversight and which may be carried out within Schools and Colleges, and developing a mechanism for cross-University sharing of experiences, including exchange of good practice.
- GS7.5 R17 The Panel **recommends** that the University develops a regular formal survey of postgraduate students to address, *inter alia*, issues related to supervision, resourcing, support needs and services, opportunities for providing feedback and input to matters that concern them or their research and opportunities for professional engagement. Such a survey should specifically seek feedback from priority groups, including distance students. It might be benchmarked against other such surveys used elsewhere in Australasia.

## Acknowledgments

The Panel thanks in particular Hon Steve Maharey, Vice-Chancellor of Massey University for his warm welcome to the University. Appreciation is also extended to the Massey University staff who hosted the Panel at the Albany, Wellington and Manawatu campuses. The Panel valued the opportunity to talk with Council members by telephone.

The preparation and submission of the University's Self-review Portfolio was managed by Dr Shelley Paewai and Ms Fiona Coote, and AQA appreciates the effort of all those who contributed to the University's self-assessment process, preparation of the Self-review Report and the organisation associated with the site visits to the Albany, Wellington and Manawatu campuses.

The Panel is most grateful for the open interaction and frank comments and observations of all those staff and students who gave their time to appear before it during the site visit or who talked to the panel by video, teleconference or telephone.

## Audit Panel

Emeritus Professor Raewyn Dalziel <i>Chair of the Panel</i>	University of Auckland
Professor Sheelagh Matear	Lincoln University
Professor Eric Pawson	University of Canterbury
Emeritus Professor Dugald Scott	Victoria University of Wellington
Emeritus Professor Debbie Clayton	Education Consultant (Australia)

### In attendance

Dr Jan Cameron	Director, Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities
Ms Heather Kirkwood	Quality Enhancement and Communications Manager, Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

## The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

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

- Engaging as a leader and advocate in the development of academic quality;
- Applying quality assurance and quality enhancement processes that assist universities in improving student engagement, academic experience and learning outcomes.

The AQA helps support universities in achieving standards of excellence in research and teaching by conducting institutional audits of the processes in universities which underpin academic quality and by identifying and disseminating information on good practice in developing and maintaining quality in higher education. Activities include a quarterly newsletter and regular meetings on quality enhancement topics.

The AQA interacts with other educational bodies within New Zealand and with similar academic quality assurance agencies internationally. The Agency is a full member of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), and of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). AQA has been assessed as adhering to the INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice in Quality Assurance.

Further information is available from the AQA website: [www.aqa.ac.nz](http://www.aqa.ac.nz).

### Cycle 5 Academic Audit Process

Key principles underpinning academic audits carried out by AQA are:

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

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

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



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

### Cycle 5 Academic Audit Framework

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

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

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

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

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

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February 2014

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

Phone +64 (0)4 801 7924

email [comms@aqac.ac.nz](mailto:comms@aqac.ac.nz)



**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@aqaa.ac.nz | **w** www.aqa.ac.nz