University of Otago

Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo

Academic audit report

Cycle 4   March 2012

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This audit report is the seventh report of Cycle 4 academic audits to be administered by the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit - Te Wāhanga Tātari during the period 2008-2012.

Cycle 4 academic audits are whole of institution reports, and follow Cycle 1 audits on whole of institution in 1995-1998; Cycle 2 audits on research, research students, and research-teaching nexus in 2000-2001; and Cycle 3 audits on teaching quality, programme delivery, and the achievement of learning outcomes in 2003-2006.

The hardcopy printed version of this report is the version authorised by the NZUAAU Board.

An electronic version of the report is posted on the NZUAAU website as a portable document format (PDF) file.

Preface

Background

The New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit was established in 1993 to consider and review New Zealand universities' mechanisms for monitoring and enhancing the academic quality and standards which are necessary for achieving their stated aims and objectives, and to comment on the extent to which procedures in place are applied effectively and reflect good practice in maintaining quality.[1] Since its establishment, the NZUAAU has administered three complete cycles of academic audit:

- Cycle 1 academic audits were full institutional audits of the then seven universities; they were conducted during the period 1995-1998.

- Cycle 2 academic audits focused on research policy and management, the research-teaching nexus and the support of postgraduate students, as well as a theme specific to each university; they were conducted during the period 2000-2001. In 2001, a full institutional academic audit was conducted at the eighth New Zealand university - the newly-created Auckland University of Technology (AUT University).

- Cycle 3 academic audits focused on teaching quality, programme delivery, and the achievement of learning outcomes; they were conducted during the period 2003-2008.

The audits in the present cycle, Cycle 4, are full institutional audits, and are being administered over the period 2008-2012.[2]

The Process of Audit

The process of audit requires a self-assessment which informs a self-review report (structured with respect to the Cycle 4 indicative framework as set down in the NZUAAU 2007 *Academic audit manual*) in which the university evaluates its progress towards achieving its goals and objectives related to the focus of the audit, identifies areas for improvement, and details intended plans, strategies and activities with respect to enhancement initiatives.[3] The report is the foundation of the Audit Portfolio, which includes key supplementary documents identified by the University.

After examining the Portfolio, and seeking further information if necessary, the Audit Panel conducts interviews during a site visit to the university to seek verification of materials read, and to inform an audit report which is structured in accordance with the indicative framework. The report commends good practice and makes recommendations intended to assist the university in its own programme of continuous improvement of quality and added value in the activities which are the focus of Cycle 4 audit.[4]

Soon after the publication of the audit report, the Panel Chair and NZUAAU Director discuss with the university the preferred procedures to be used in the follow-up to audit and the monitoring of

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[1] See *Appendix 3* for NZUAAU terms of reference, vision and objective with respect to academic audit.

[2] See *Appendix 4* for the framework for Cycle 4 academic audits.

[3] John M. Jennings *Academic Audit manual for use in Cycle 4 academic audits by the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit, Te Wāhanga Tātari.* NZUAAU, Wellington, 2007.

[4] See John M. Jennings *Handbook for auditors.* NZUAAU, Wellington, 2010.

follow-up activities. A formal report against the audit recommendations is required one year after the public release of the audit report.

Academic Audit of the University of Otago

The University of Otago submitted its self-review Portfolio in mid-July 2011. The Panel appointed to carry out the academic audit of the University met in Auckland on 17 August for a preliminary meeting during which it evaluated the material it had received and determined further materials required. The Chair of the Panel and the NZUAAU Director undertook a Planning Visit to the University on 15 September 2011 to discuss the supply of the further materials requested as well as arrangements for the site visit. The Chair, one Panel member and a member of the NZUAAU secretariat visited University of Otago, Wellington on 7 October, preceding the four-day site visit by the whole Panel to the University in Dunedin on 10-14 October 2011.

The Wellington visit was hosted by the Dean and Head of Campus, Professor Sunny Collings. The purpose of this visit was to help the Panel understand the effectiveness of University structures, processes and procedures on campuses away from the administrative centre in Dunedin. Due to the recurring earthquake problems affecting the Christchurch campus and its staff and students, the University and NZUAAU decided that no visit should be made to that campus at the time of the audit. However the Dean on that campus was interviewed by telephone.

The Dunedin visit was hosted by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Harlene Hayne and on the final day by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International), Professor Vernon Squire. The Panel notes that the Vice-Chancellor had been in post only nine weeks at the time of the site visit. Audit interviews were held at St Margaret's and at Abbey residential colleges.

During the site visits to Wellington and Dunedin the Panel interviewed approximately 165 people – members of Council, staff, students and stakeholders.

The findings of the Panel as expressed in this report are based on the written information supplied by the University and from material publicly available on the University's website, and on the information gained through interviews conducted during the site visit.

Dr Jan Cameron
Director
March 2012

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Summary

General

The University of Otago

The University of Otago, established in 1869, is New Zealand's oldest university. It has a main campus in Dunedin and three satellite campuses: Health Sciences in Wellington and Christchurch, and Education in Invercargill. It also has an office in Auckland and has a distance education portfolio, consisting primarily of specialist postgraduate qualifications. A high proportion of Dunedin-based students originate from outside the University's traditional home area of Otago and Southland.

The present Vice-Chancellor took up her position in July 2011.

Governance and Management

Vision and Mission

The University's Vision is to be "a research-led University with an international reputation for excellence".

Governance and Management Structure

The University Council appears to be fully engaged with the University's objectives, without straying into management responsibilities.

The University has a conventional academic and management structure with a mix of schools, departments and faculties. The University emphasizes devolution and collegiality as distinctive features. The University recognizes the challenges of monitoring effective policy implementation which are inherent in devolved organisational activity.

Strategic Planning

Many of the University's planning documents expire in or about 2012. The University is thus engaged in a process of review and renewal. The Panel suggests this provides an opportunity to achieve a closer alignment of key planning documents.

Collegiality

The Panel was impressed by the University's commitment to collegiality. However the reluctance to impose compliance on staff was considered by the Panel to pose a potential risk in some areas where consistency of policy application is desirable or necessary.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

The Quality Assurance System

The University undertakes a wide range of quality assurance activity. Staff themselves acknowledge that quality assurance processes are review and survey intensive and a degree of "review fatigue" was reported. The Panel was concerned that a lack of an integrated system meant the University might not gain full benefit from these reviews and surveys beyond the unit or programme being reviewed. It is the Panel's opinion that lack of an explicit quality assurance framework means that quality assurance and enhancement activities can be fragmented such that initiatives in one area do not systematically inform activities in another area. Feedback loops from review or survey outcomes to policy and practice are not always obvious and opportunities for sharing good practice identified in reviews appeared to be somewhat limited to the units immediately affected by

the review. Meta-analyses of review reports are a potentially useful initiative.

The Panel supports the Policy Framework which the University has developed; this might be a useful starting point for an overall quality assurance framework.

Programme Approval and Review	The University's programme approval and review processes follow those common to other New Zealand universities. Given that the University states that it "needs to favour teaching developments that involve a strong research-teaching synergy", the Panel considered that closer attention needed to be paid to this as a criterion for programme approval and review.
Learning and Teaching Quality and Student Experience	University staff use a range of methods for evaluating teaching quality and student experience, including surveys, peer review and information from programme reviews. However teaching surveys are not mandatory except where required for performance appraisal. The Panel urges the University to reconsider the optional status of teaching quality surveys.
	The University is a participant in the AUSSE. A significant amount of data appears to be available. A challenge for the University is how to make best use of such data. The Panel would also like to see more proactive feedback to students and ways of ensuring staff learn from survey outcomes.
Benchmarking activities	The University's leadership of the Matariki network, which provides opportunity for international benchmarking, was strongly supported by the Panel.

Teaching and Learning and Student Support

Teaching and Learning Plan	At the time of the audit the University's teaching and learning was guided by its *Teaching and Learning Plan 2005-2010*, *Teaching and Learning Action Plan 2011-2012* and two supporting documents, *viz. Guidelines for Teaching at Otago* (for staff) and *Guidelines for Learning at Otago* (for students). The current challenge was to encourage staff engagement with the goals of the Action Plan. The Panel considered that it would be useful for departments, divisions and service units to develop individual plans to operationalize these goals, as appropriate to their areas of responsibility.
Graduate Profile	The Panel was impressed by the *University of Otago Graduate Profile* which articulates attributes related to the discipline, affective elements such as a global perspective, and attributes commonly sought by employers, such as teamwork. The *Guidelines for Teaching* offer suggestions as to how staff might ensure these attributes are acquired. The Panel observed that there needs to be more curriculum coordination in some areas to meet these objectives.
Academic Programmes	The University offered over 190 qualifications in 2010. The University facilitates flexibility of student choice.
Teaching-research Nexus	Staff reiterated numerous ways in which research informs their teaching. The Higher Education Development Centre, HEDC, offers workshops related to development of the teaching-research nexus in programmes.

Student Achievement and Success	The University sets targets for student completion and pass rates and monitors these on an annual basis.
Learning Environment and Student Support	The range of support provided for students is consistent with that provided by other New Zealand universities. The University has had minor issues related to introduction of a new version of its learning management system but various processes are in place to overcome difficulties.
	The Panel heard of efforts to ensure students live and study in a safe environment.
	The University places strong emphasis on the role of residential colleges in helping achieve academic and social objectives. It provides New Zealand's first postgraduate college. The college experience is also available to local students.
	The Panel was supportive of efforts being made to ensuring students at campuses outside Dunedin are appropriately supported.
Equity and Diversity	The University offers an "enhanced admission" pathway to Māori and Pacific students who qualify for entrance. It engages in early intervention and offers support activity to try and enhance achievement of these groups. The needs of other equity groups, e.g., low decile school leavers, are recognised.
Distance Education	The University aims to be known for its support of distance students. It currently offers over 120 qualifications by distance and has approximately 2,000 distance students. The Panel learned that support was highly developed for students studying from the University's Wellington campus (primarily postgraduate health science students). However some students studying away from one of the physical campuses, in particular doctoral students, voiced concerns about adequate support. The Panel supports the recommendations made in the University's own review of distance learning and notes the Distance Learning Strategy which has now been developed.
Internationalisation	The University intentionally restricts its international students to 12% of total enrolments, with no more than 25% from any one country. It has been proactive in trying to encourage internationalisation of the curriculum but considers there is room for more staff engagement in this area.

Research Environment and Postgraduate Students

Research Environment	The University has a strongly-embedded research culture. It also engages in many activities which reflect its "critic and conscience" role as well as its research orientation.
Postgraduate Students	The University is committed to growing its postgraduate roll, which in 2010 comprised 16.4% of all EFTS. Half of these were research students. The Panel heard that procedures for administering PhD research were sound but that there was more variability for Master's research students
Postgraduate Supervision	The University monitors the satisfaction of research students with their supervision via formal reporting and via a Graduate Opinion Survey. The majority of survey respondents (>80%) expressed satisfaction in the most

recent survey. Formal training for supervisors is encouraged but not compulsory. The Panel considers any non-compliance exposes the University to a potential risk.

Postgraduate Student Support

Students reported to the Panel that the University provides excellent support, noting the services provided by Graduate Research Services in particular. Student opinion surveys enable the University to identify any areas where support is inadequate.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Treaty Partners

The University's primary Treaty partner is Ngāi Tahu, with whom it has a Memorandum of Understanding. It is involved with other South Island educational institutions in Te Tapuae o Rehua. There are also formal relationships with other iwi and Māori health providers.

Māori Strategic Framework

The *Māori Strategic Framework* which grew out of the University's 2005 Treaty of Waitangi Stocktake, guides the University's commitment to contribute to Māori development and the achievement of Māori aspirations.

Human Resources, HEDC, the Quality Advancement Unit, and the Office of Māori Development help embed the commitments of the Framework at departmental level. The objectives receive strong support from Council, which has a Treaty of Waitangi Committee chaired by the Chancellor.

Māori Student Access, Support and Achievement

Students who identify as Māori comprised 7.6% of enrolments in 2010. The University has a number of strategies to assist with access, transition to tertiary study, retention and achievement.

The Panel was particularly impressed by the Science Wānanga and other initiatives to foster science education for Māori at secondary school. It was also impressed by the immersion activities offered to health science students, including the whānau dental clinic.

Curriculum

Many taught papers include a Māori perspective or relate to Māori aspirations or need. The Panel suggests the University explores ways in which te reo might be used more proactively.

Māori Staff

Only 3% of academic staff identify as Māori. The Panel appreciates the challenges the University faces in trying to recruit more Māori staff. The Panel supports developments aimed at improving support to current Māori staff, and at recognizing the service-related activity for which they are responsible.

Māori Research

The Māori Research Consultation Committee offers guidance in supporting research by Māori, with Māori and for Māori. Staff consider this support invaluable.

University staff

Recruitment, Induction and Confirmation

The University has a five-year confirmation pathway for all new academic appointments. The Panel considered this to provide robust expectations and evaluations and to be a major factor in a low attrition rate for academic staff.

Performance Review and Promotion	Staff performance reviews are partly formative, against agreed expectations.
Professional Development and Staff Support	The University differentiates leadership development, academic scholarly and professional development, and general staff development. The programmes providing support of these are appreciated by staff and efforts are made to ensure programmes are available to staff on all campuses. The HEDC, in particular, is commended. The Panel also concluded that the programme for Heads of Department is particularly effective.
Staff Workloads and Workforce Planning	The University has general, high-level, workload principles but operationalization of these is devolved to departments. There is thus some unevenness as to the ways in which workload is managed. The Panel believes the University needs to address this to ensure more transparency and equity. The Panel believes the University would also benefit from more systematic workforce planning.

Community engagement

Community Connections with the City	The University has extensive and very strong links with the city, both formally with the City Council and informally in a wide range of activities.
Input to Programmes	The University has links with employers, professions and industry which are usual for a New Zealand university. These contribute to programme development as appropriate.
Links with Schools	In addition to support for Māori students, the University provides particular services in the sciences area, including support for schools with limited resources for science teaching.
Pacific Peoples	A range of activities is offered to encourage the Pacific community to be involved with the University. These include activities offered in the Pacific region. Health Sciences provide exemplars in this regard.

External academic collaborations and partnerships

National Collaborations	The University engages in various collaborations with other tertiary providers and government departments. The projects developed under the government's "Leading Thinkers" initiative received special mention.
International Collaborations	The Matariki Network arrangement involving six other international universities is predicated on these institutions having similar characteristics, including a similar ethos. Staff are beginning to take advantage of the opportunities the network provides. The University of Otago provides incentives for staff and student exchanges to favour Matariki partners.
	The Panel supports the University's activity in reviewing its large number of memoranda of understanding and developing criteria for future such memoranda.

Commendations, Affirmations and Recommendations

Key: C = Commendation   A = Affirmation   R = Recommendation

NOTE: *The words 'the University' in each recommendation are intended to refer to the agency within the University of Otago that the University itself deems to be most appropriate to address and progress the recommendation.*

Governance and Management

C1.   P16   The Panel *commends* the University for its institution-wide collegial ethos and for the manner in which collegiality is supported and encouraged at all levels, leading to an environment in which staff feel that they can voice their opinions and have them heard with respect.

R1.   P16   The Panel *recommends* that the University determines which policies and processes are sufficiently critical to meeting its objectives that it must ensure their common understanding and application.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

R2.   P18   The Panel *recommends* that the University reconsiders the processes for departmental, programme and service reviews to ensure review reports and outcomes are reported at the appropriate level to those bodies which are responsible and accountable for the academic quality of the University. The Panel also recommends that, given Senate and Council roles in ensuring and achieving excellence, the University establishes channels for ensuring that Senate and Council receive key information derived from reviews and surveys.

R3.   P18   The Panel *recommends* that the University develops an overarching quality assurance framework to encompass all processes, both implicit and explicit, and policies by which it assures itself of academic quality.

R4.   P21   The Panel *recommends* that the University finds ways of assuring itself that all courses are routinely evaluated at individual paper level, at least every three years, and that there is institutional oversight of evaluation outcomes and subsequent action where issues have been identified.

R5.   P21   The Panel *recommends* that the University becomes more proactive in closing the loop following course and teaching evaluations and surveys, and develops ways of ensuring actions resulting from these are communicated to students and staff.

Teaching and Learning and Student Support

C2.   P24   The Panel *commends* the University on the coordinated and coherent suite of documents supporting its mission to establish a distinctive Otago Graduate Profile. The Panel notes the strategies being developed to teach and assess towards the Profile, and supports efforts to find ways of evaluating achievement of the attributes identified in the Profile.

A1.   P27   The Panel *affirms* the scope of recommendations in the review of Distance Learning, noting the action already taken in establishing a Working Party and an overarching Distance Learning Strategy, and encourages the University to give priority to finding ways of ensuring that adequate academic and support services are available for students whether they are on one of the satellite campuses or at another location (R 18 of the Distance Learning Review).

R6.   P27   The Panel *recommends* that if the University is to continue to promote opportunities to do postgraduate research by distance then closer attention be paid to ensuring such students receive appropriate support and have adequate supervisory interaction.

C3.   P30   The Panel *commends* the University on the support it provides to students, and in particular the PASS programme and the academic support provided by the residential colleges. The Panel supports the University's initiative to extend the opportunities provided by the residential colleges to local students.

A2.   P30   The Panel *affirms* the University's efforts to improve the safety and well-being of students in the residential environs.

Research Environment and Postgraduate students

C4.   P36   The Panel *commends* the induction and support services available to postgraduate students, especially the range of workshops and individual advice provided by the Graduate Research Services. The Panel was pleased to note that appreciation of these services extended beyond Dunedin.

R7.   P36   The Panel *recommends* that the University finds ways of ensuring more consistency across departments in the application of key policies regarding supervision and support for postgraduate research students.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

R8.   P39   The Panel *recommends* that the University develop and implement mechanisms whereby it can evaluate its achievement against the objectives of its Māori Strategic Framework in a robust and systematic manner.

C5.   P40   The Panel *commends* the engagement with iwi and the range of initiatives offered by the University to support current and potential Māori students. The Panel particularly commends the University on its Science Wānanga.

R9.   P41   The Panel *recommends* that the University not only proceed with a review of its policy regarding submission of theses in te reo Māori, but also explores other ways in which the use of te reo Māori can be proactively encouraged where appropriate.

Staff: Academic, Management and Professional Support

C6.   P44   The Panel *commends* the success of the confirmation pathway processes, evidenced in the low attrition, including the robust nature of the expectations and evaluations during the probationary period.

R10.   P44   The Panel *recommends* that the University develop a system of strategic workforce planning which pays attention not only to demographic impacts but also to the recruitment of Māori staff and Pacific staff, as well as to succession planning and staff support.

C7.   P45   The Panel *commends* the range of activities provided by HEDC and the effectiveness of the University's HOD/senior leadership programme, including the opportunity provided to assist with succession planning.

R11.   P46   The Panel *recommends* that the University develop a generic set of principles and guidelines which underpin workload allocations and lead to more apparent equity, transparency and consistency across the University.

R12.   P47   The Panel *recommends* that the University consider establishing an overarching Equity and Diversity Group (replacing the existing Gender Equity group) to explore the spectrum of strategic and organisational issues related to equity and diversity.

A3.   P49   The Panel *affirms* the University's initiatives to ensure staff in Wellington and Christchurch have access to relevant support, professional development and training, and the Panel encourages the University to continue to explore a wider range of delivery mechanisms, including self-paced activities.

Community Engagement

C8.   P51   The Panel *commends* the University on its very clear commitment to the city of Dunedin and on its achievement of gaining a similar commitment by the city to the University.

A4.   P51   The Panel *affirms* the University's wide-ranging interactions which benefit its various communities of engagement as well as its own staff and students.

A5.   P53   The Panel *affirms* the range of activities supporting the successful involvement of Pacific people with the University of Otago, and encourages the University to explore how initiatives might be extended across the University, using where appropriate the strategies formulated by the Division of Health Sciences as exemplars of good practice.

1

Introduction

1.1   The University of Otago - *Te Whare Wānanga o Otago*

The University of Otago, established in 1869, is New Zealand's oldest university. The Cycle 4 self-review report identifies its distinctive characteristics as:

- A vibrant research-led culture which, in turn, underpins excellence in teaching and professional training
- A broad curriculum that encompasses traditional scholarship and new knowledge
- A unique concentration of special professional schools
- An outstanding campus learning environment in Dunedin, health sciences campuses in Christchurch and Wellington, and specialist facilities in Invercargill and Auckland
- A high proportion of students that come from outside the University's traditional home area of Otago and Southland.[5]

The University of Otago is one of New Zealand's two largest research organisations and according to the 2006 PBRF assessment was the top ranked university on the research quality score[6]. In 2010 it had a total revenue of about $590 million.[7] The University has just under 20,000 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) and close to 4,000 equivalent full-time staff (FTE), of whom roughly 1,600 are academic or research staff. Of all students, 17.2% Asian, 7.6% Māori and 3.1% Pacific; 57.0% are female. Of all domestic students, 8.6% are Māori.[8] International students account for 10.6% of the University's EFTS. About 16% of students are enrolled for postgraduate study, including 1,324 doctoral students. The self-review report notes that 80% of the University's first-year students come from beyond Dunedin City, and 40% of first-year students come from the North Island, indicating that the University's catchment area extends far beyond Otago and Southland.[9]

There are over 190 qualifications available, with some professional undergraduate and postgraduate programmes such as those in Surveying, Dentistry and Radiation Therapy not offered elsewhere in New Zealand. Significant proportions of academic staff engage in professional contributions outside the University, including about 28% serving on Government advisory boards or committees, 67% providing services to public sector departments, statutory authorities, agencies, committees, boards, inquiries and non-governmental organisations, and 72% holding posts in organisations and associations relevant to their area of professional expertise. The University also contributes actively to community education and development through over 300 open lectures, community short courses and public seminars held during the year.[10]

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[5]   Self-review report p5.
[6]   *Ibid* see *www.otago.ac.nz/research/pbrf/* downloaded 27.10.11
[7]   2010 Annual Report p60
[8]   Figures derived from Annual Report – see Appendix 1.
[9]   See Appendix 1.
[10]   *Ibid.*

The University of Otago is not confined to Dunedin: it also has campuses and centres in Auckland (18 EFTS), Invercargill (175), Wellington (600 approx.), Christchurch (660 approx.). The Auckland Centre hosts Distance Learning programmes, the Postgraduate Diploma in Dietetics programme, and the Auckland office of the Centre for Research on Children and Families. It also houses the section of the Schools' Liaison Service that covers the central and upper North Island and is used as a base for building linkages between the University and Auckland's business community. The Southland (Murihiku) campus, Ahuahu Te Mātauranga, provides a range of teacher education programmes in early childhood, primary, primary bilingual and secondary education. It is the University's most recent campus addition, following the 2007 merger with the Dunedin College of Education. The University of Otago Wellington (UOW) campus provides education for fourth, fifth and sixth-year medical students and radiation therapy students. UOW also offers numerous postgraduate programmes in health-related subjects, hosts clinical courses in physiotherapy and human nutrition, and has about 60 PhD students. The University has links with the Capital and Coast District Health Board, the Hutt Valley District Health Board and the Hawke's Bay and MidCentral DHBs, hospitals outside the Wellington region, and a number of private providers and leading specialists. The University of Otago, Christchurch (UOC) also provides education for fourth, fifth and sixth-year medical students, hosts a wide range of postgraduate health sciences programmes, and has about 70 PhD students. UOC collaborates with the Canterbury District Health Board and the Nelson/Marlborough DHB, the region's hospitals, general practitioners, and other health and community agencies.

The Dunedin campus, in addition to being the administrative base for the University, is the location of the academic Divisions of Humanities, Sciences, Commerce (School of Business) and Health Sciences.

1.2   Response to Cycle 3 Academic Audit

The Cycle 3 audit of the University of Otago took place in 2006 at a time when the University was reviewing its own strategies and priorities. The Cycle 3 audit Panel thus paid particular attention to the 14 improvement initiatives which the University had identified to assist it in achieving its "Strategic Direction to 2012". The 2011 Cycle 4 Panel received a mid-term report and subsequent update[11] which addressed these 14 improvement initiatives, as well as the recommendations from the Cycle 3 audit. The mid-term update was referenced in various parts of the Cycle 4 portfolio to provide supplementary information on current and planned activities. It also played a key part in the approach taken by the University to its Cycle 4 preparations.[12]

Specific actions and responses to each of the Cycle 3 recommendations, some of which were in relation to the University's own 14 improvement initiatives, were described in detail in the mid-term update. The University also set out its concerns about some recommendations, especially those requiring mandatory compliance with policies and processes.

The update on the University's own 14 improvement initiatives provided the Panel with detailed information on current actions and developments, as well as contributing to the focus of the 2011 audit. During its site visit, the Panel developed an understanding of why some Cycle 3 recommendations had not been fully implemented. Some of these recommendations referred to issues which the Cycle 4 Panel considered to have persisted. These are discussed in more detail in

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[11]   Academic Audit Cycle 3 Mid-term Report and Update, April 2011.
[12]   Self-review report p11.

the relevant section of this report. Overall, the Panel is satisfied with the progress the University has made in response to its own improvement initiatives since the last audit.

1.3   Cycle 4 Academic Audit

In preparation for the Cycle 4 audit the University of Otago adopted the indicative framework proposed by NZUAAU[13]. This framework asks universities to identify their commitments, strengths and progress, challenges, monitoring and enhancements for key areas listed under:

- Teaching and learning
- Research environment
- Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Academic and support staff
- Institutional quality assurance
- Management and administrative support
- Community engagement
- External collaboration

Universities are free to develop the structure of their self-review report to reflect their specific priorities, provided that the broad themes within each of the above key areas are addressed. With respect to research, the University of Otago wrote strictly to the guidelines of the indicative framework, in the main limiting its discussion to the areas which have an obvious impact on teaching and learning and student achievement. In its self-review report[14] the University conflated the two staffing sections of the indicative framework (i.e., Academic and Support Staff; Management and Administrative Support) into one chapter. NZUAAU believes this arrangement with respect to staffing was sensible.

The self-review report addresses the areas outlined in the Indicative Framework. In many instances the Panel was satisfied that the commitments, monitoring, evidence and enhancements were appropriate and required little more than endorsement by the Panel. However the Panel felt that on some topics the University's report was primarily descriptive and its evaluation of effectiveness needed clarification.

This audit report focuses on areas which the Panel considered were critical to interrogate for a range of reasons. In some cases the Panel had concerns or required further clarity on matters identified from its reading of the portfolio material prior to the site visit. In other cases the Panel wished to explore areas especially crucial to the University of Otago's own plans for its future development or areas which the Panel considered to be potential exemplars of good practice.

The University itself identified twenty-one challenges and proposed enhancements.[15] Some of these were activities which the Panel considered to be normal business for a university – for example, renewing and updating the Strategic Plan (E1) or fine-tuning the new Limitation of Enrolment process (E6). The Panel saw that all the proposed enhancements had value, but in some cases suggests additional emphases or actions. These are detailed in the audit report.

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[13]   Appendix 4

[14]   The University titled its report "2011 Academic Audit Portfolio". However it is referred to as the self-review report throughout this audit report in order to differentiate the self-review document from the other documents in the portfolio.

[15]   Appendix 1

2

Governance and Management

2.1   Vision and Mission

The Vision Statement of the University of Otago is: *A research-led University with an international reputation for excellence.*

This is supplemented with the following Mission Statement: *The University of Otago will advance, preserve, and promote knowledge, critical thinking and intellectual independence to enhance the understanding, development and well-being of individuals and society. It will achieve this by building on foundations of broad research and teaching capabilities, unique campus learning environments, its nationwide presence and mana, and international links.*

Effect is given to the University's aspirations articulated above by University staff, students and members of its Council and by its planning and organisational processes.

2.2   Governance and Management Structure

The governance of the University has not changed significantly since the Cycle 3 audit. The University Council is the governing body of the University and is constituted and empowered according to legislation. It is chaired by the Chancellor and comprises elected, appointed and co-opted members representing key stakeholders, including alumni, students and staff. Specific committees report directly to the Council on matters including audit, capital development, ethics, financial management and performance, risk management and statutory compliance, and the Treaty of Waitangi.

The University's Council appeared to be fully engaged with the University. The Panel noted, in particular, the Chancellor's leadership and support in negotiations with iwi. The Council's Treaty of Waitangi Committee is chaired by the Chancellor (see section 6.1). Several Council members told the Panel how they kept informed of grass-roots activity via their membership of College Boards and University committees.

In its self-review report the University maintains that its focus on quality "is directed by Senate and Council-approved principles, which require a commitment to the continuous monitoring and improvement of teaching, research and community service activities".[16] It also says that the Council "seeks the advice of Senate on academic matters, and receives and ratifies reports from both Senate and its standing committees."[17] Given the University's vision of having "an international reputation for excellence", the Panel was interested in how Council discharged its own responsibilities. Council members indicated they relied on the report of the Vice-Chancellor and said the Strategic Plan is "an

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[16]   Self-review report p12.
[17]   Self-review report p7.

important tool" whereby performance is measured annually. Council members themselves had a clear understanding and appreciation of the distinction between governance and management. Key advisory committees of the University are Senate (Academic Board – which advises Council) and its standing committees, the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group and the Deputy Vice-Chancellors'/Pro-Vice-Chancellors' Advisory Group. The Senate also from time to time appoints working parties on key strategic issues, for example the Working Party on Coursework Masters' Degrees (2009) and the Working Party on Honours Degrees (2010/2011).

The senior management team at the University of Otago constitutes the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group and comprises, in addition to the Vice-Chancellor:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & International)
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Humanities)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Sciences)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Commerce)
- Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Health Sciences)
- Chief Operating Officer
- Registrar and Secretary to Council
- Director of Māori Development
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Marketing and Communications.

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) reports to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International). Other Pro-Vice-Chancellors, who head the University's academic Divisions, report directly to the Vice-Chancellor. The divisional structure is supported by Heads of academic departments and Deans of professional schools. Some, but not all schools, are multi-departmental. Within a division, the roles of HoD and Dean are identical, namely to manage the academic and administrative functions within a department or school and to provide strategic leadership.

In summary, the governance and management structure is traditional for an established university such as the University of Otago, with specific Boards of Studies, such as the Board of Graduate Studies (BoGS), Board of Undergraduate Studies (BUGS) and the various divisional Boards (Commerce, Health Sciences, Humanities, Sciences) reporting to Senate. The University's Research Committee, the Committee for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching, and the Quality Advancement Committee also report to Senate to ensure academic oversight of these strategically important committees.

While its structure is conventional, the University emphasises its distinctiveness through the devolved nature of its management and organisational activity. The Panel heard of many instances where centrally-determined policies are actioned at divisional or department/school level "as appropriate". The University considers the ability to ensure decisions are made where policies are implemented is an advantage, but also acknowledges that it is a challenge to ensure that a balance of central and local control and responsibility leads to effective policy translation and enactment. The Panel noted that the University recognises the inherent challenges of monitoring effective policy implementation in such a devolved approach. During its discussions it became clear to the Panel that much reliance is placed on Heads and Deans for the University's achievement of its mission. It is therefore appropriate that the University has invested considerable effort in supporting and training its Heads (see Chapter 7).

2.3   Strategic Planning

The University's "Charter" adopted in 2003, though no longer required by Government, continues to provide a high-level statement of the University's core values, vision, mission and special character. These are articulated in the "Strategic Direction to 2012" and its action plan, in the Statement of Objectives 2011-2013 and in the TEC Investment Plan.

Formally adopted by the Council in 2006, "Strategic Direction to 2012" guides the University's continued development as a research-intensive and predominantly campus-based university, with enhanced national and international linkages and a focus on high-quality research and teaching outcomes. It identifies six strategic imperatives. Each imperative addresses a critical issue or an area regarded as vital to the University's future:

- Achieving Research Excellence
- Achieving Excellence in Research-Informed Teaching
- Ensuring Outstanding Campus Environments and Student Experience
- Contributing to the National Good and to International Progress
- Strengthening External Engagement
- Building and Sustaining Capability

Given the emphasis the University places on its work towards Māori achievement, the Panel was surprised that the University's Treaty obligations were embedded in the objective of "Contributing to the National Good and to International Progress", rather than warranting a separate objective. While developed further in the University's Māori Strategic Framework, the Panel felt there was a disconnect between two of the University's most important strategic documents. It is suggested that this be reconsidered when the next Strategic Plan is developed. (See Section 6.2)

At a pan-institutional level, various actions requiring central leadership to give effect to the strategic objectives have been identified by a series of working groups. Oversight of progress on these actions rests with the Planning and Funding Office. The Panel was provided with the 2011 "Strategic Directions Actions Report" and with a summary document outlining the University's strategic planning approach (September 2011). The latter document describes the University of Otago's approach to strategic planning as being "collegial" and "directional rather than prescriptive".[18] Such an approach, which involved significant consultation and feedback both inside the University and in its external community, is considered to reflect the University of Otago's "distinctive flavour".

The University's processes were described to the Panel as allowing the high-level objectives to be met by divisions and departments as deemed appropriate to those administrative units. Such an approach gives discretion but, in the audit Panel's view, also risks inconsistency and potentially conflicting actions if the activities of organisational units do not align with each other. In a number of instances the Panel heard that activity on particular strategic matters was "patchy", for example, induction of staff into Māori tikanga; development of staff workload models; staff funding for conferences; effectiveness of student class rep systems; support for postgraduate students.

Second tier plans, such as the Teaching and Learning Action Plan, the Research Action Plan, the Campus Master Plan and the Māori Strategic Framework, have evolved out of or are developed to align with the "Strategic Direction to 2012" objectives. The Panel was also provided with a selection of divisional and departmental plans. In their various forms these demonstrated how the "Strategic Direction to 2012" has provided a framework for the development of other significant planning and

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[18]Otago's Strategic Direction and Strategic Planning Approach September 2011, p1.

operational documents, and showed how organisational units endeavour to give effect to the institutional objectives while making their own mark on the University's direction.

The Panel explored the University's progress against its plans. Of the 167 specific actions in the Strategic Directions Action Plan, nearly half had been completed and a further third identified as on track to being completed. A very small number had been discontinued, and the remainder were still underway. Of particular interest to the Panel was a report that 95% of the plan for achieving excellence in research-informed teaching was on track or had been completed. For instance, the Panel received a set of Notes on "Research-informed teaching at the undergraduate level" prepared for general distribution throughout the University and for inclusion in the interim Teaching and Learning Action Plan for 2011-12. These notes include guidelines for teaching at the University, with emphasis on graduate learning outcomes and profiles specific to Otago as well as strategies for engaging students through research-informed teaching. (See Section 4.3).

The Panel was aware that several of the high-level strategic planning documents are due to expire and that new documents are being deliberated on. It heard that the Vice-Chancellor does not expect that the University will be reinventing or substantially altering its strategic direction over the next planning period. The Panel believes that when reviewing its strategic direction the University now has an opportunity to bring key institutional plans into alignment (including alignment of the time period of their operationalization).The Panel notes the reshaping of the Statement of Service Performance in the University's "Annual Report" to already be in the form of a report against the objectives of "Strategic Direction to 2012" and its companion documents.

2.4   Collegiality

During its visit the Panel heard repeatedly that the University of Otago is based on a collegial system of action and decision-making. Collegiality is reflected in the devolved management and organisational structure referred to above. Collegiality is also signified in a determination to ensure that the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors and the Pro-Vice-Chancellors remain research-active, as academic peers of their colleagues.

Staff were asked what they believe is meant by "collegiality" at Otago. Responses included, "shared responsibility for decisions"; "decision by consensus"; "revolt against [the concept of] line managers"; "respect for each other"; "a feeling that management are pushing in the same direction as us [staff]". Staff at all levels confirmed that their views were taken into account at a local level and that they could access key staff at any level. The Panel also noted repeated comment that Otago "didn't do mandatory".[19] Staff who drew attention to the commitment to collegiality all thought this was a positive characteristic of the university which contributed to ensuring harmonious working relationships.

It was not always clear to the Panel how responsibility for decision-making was delegated within the devolved organisational structure or where ultimate responsibility lay for a number of key operations and functions. That is, it appeared to the Panel that there were no explicit delegations of authority (other than for financial matters or in academic regulations) that identified, by position, the authority for individuals to make key decisions. Some staff met by the Panel were also unclear as to what happened to their input once it left the local level within the devolved structure.

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[19]   The fact that Otago University "doesn't do mandatory" was offered as a reason why the University chose not to implement several of the Cycle 3 recommendations. See Section 1.2.

At the University of Otago devolution and collegiality are linked to a reluctance to impose mandatory requirements on staff. Throughout this audit report there are instances of core academic quality activities which are devolved to departments to action as they see appropriate (for instance, use of an MoU for thesis students). University of Otago staff are "expected" or "encouraged" to engage in activities (for example postgraduate supervision training) which are commonly required elsewhere. During its interviews the Panel heard of several instances where lack of consistency posed problems or uncertainty for staff and students (for instance the inclination of departments to top-up or not top-up postgraduate scholarship support).The Panel was impressed by the commitment to collegiality by the staff it met. This commitment was clearly being encouraged by the university leadership. The Panel applauds the University's determination to continue the collegial ethos and fully recognizes the benefits which flow from this.

> **C1.** **The Panel *commends* the University for its institution-wide collegial ethos and for the manner in which collegiality is supported and encouraged at all levels, leading to an environment in which staff feel that they can voice their opinions and have them heard with respect.**

In the Panel's view, the university's reluctance to ensure compliance with some activities poses a risk to the University in some areas. The Panel suggests that the University determines which policies and processes are sufficiently critical to meeting its academic objectives that it must ensure common understanding and, where appropriate, common application. The Panel does not see this kind of compliance as being at odds with collegiality.

> **R1.** **The Panel *recommends* that the University determines which policies and processes are sufficiently critical to meeting its objectives that it must ensure their common understanding and application.**

3

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

3.1 The Quality Assurance System

Academic quality assurance at the University of Otago is covered by the term "quality advancement". The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International) has overall responsibility for "design and implementation", assisted in particular by the Quality Advancement Unit for policy advice and the Quality Advancement Committee for policy development and monitoring.[20] These activities are underpinned by quality principles approved by Council.

The DVC (A&I) maintains a quality oversight by chairing the six main quality committees.[21] The DVC (A&I) also attends Council where he may speak through the Vice-Chancellor. During its site visit the Panel heard of a substantial array of "sign-off" activities which fall within the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's portfolio. It was told that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (rather than the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor) normally communicates institutional survey and department or programme review findings to departments. It was clear that the University is heavily reliant on the DVC (A&I) role for activities from high-level strategic planning down to relatively minor operational approval sign-off. In the Panel's view this reliance poses a risk to the University, especially because some key people charged with quality assurance responsibility do not appear to have any significant role in the processes. These observations also prompt the question as to whether there might be more effective delegation. For instance, the Panel considered that some of the departmental briefings undertaken by the DVC (A&I) might be more appropriately undertaken by the Divisional PVC. Apart from the responsibilities specified in statutes or academic regulations, the University does not have a formal delegations schedule for academic matters. The Panel feels that articulation of such a schedule would help identify those activities which could be delegated and would enable the University to evaluate where the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's effort can most productively be deployed. This is particularly appropriate given that the incumbent of the DVC (A&I) role is expected to be research-active and PBRF-eligible.[22] A schedule would be a risk management tool to ensure those involved in quality assurance have input to decisions but at the same time decisions are made only by those with authority to make them. Such a schedule might also be linked to position descriptions and performance review processes.

Related to the above issue is the role of Senate in academic processes. While the Panel heard that reports on academic matters, including reviews, are available to members of Senate on request, it did not consider that this provided sufficient opportunity or incentive to share good practice and address common challenges that such reports presented. Similarly, Council is charged with ensuring excellence but might be constrained in doing so because apart from reports against the annual

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[20] Self-Review Report p12.
[21] The Quality Advancement Committee; Committee for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching; Board of Undergrad Studies; Board of Postgrad Studies; Distance Learning Advisory Board; Internationalisation Committee,
[22] Self-review report p8.

Statement of Service Performance it does not appear to see actual quality assurance reports. Council receives minutes of Senate meetings but from the minutes it perused the audit Panel was not convinced these relayed substantive information about general academic quality matters. In both cases, i.e., Council and Senate, reports are made available but opportunities for University discussion and learning from the information contained in them is not routine. Reporting processes appear to reflect the University's overall ethos of making information available, but not *requiring* use of the information.

> **R2. The Panel r*ecommends* that the University reconsiders the processes for departmental, programme and service reviews to ensure review reports and outcomes are reported at the appropriate level to those bodies which are responsible and accountable for the academic quality of the University. The Panel also recommends that, given Senate and Council roles in ensuring and achieving excellence, the University establishes channels for ensuring that Senate and Council receive key information derived from reviews and surveys.**

The University engages in the normal range of activities which form the basis of academic quality assurance. However the Panel did not find evidence that these are integrated in ways which constitute an explicit quality assurance framework or system. When queried about mechanisms for quality assurance, University staff placed heavy emphasis on having policies (for implementation) and reviews and surveys (for monitoring). No mention was made of quality assurance of such processes as, for example, aegrotat criteria, examinations policies or assessment, which are all academic quality management processes. The Panel believes the University would benefit from development of an overarching academic quality assurance framework which makes explicit its own implicit understanding of how academic processes and policies connect with each other and how they flow from or are aligned with its high-level planning documents and strategic objectives. The framework would also make clear how the quality management processes are themselves quality assured.[23]

> **R3. The Panel *recommends* that the University develops an overarching quality assurance framework to encompass all processes, both implicit and explicit, and policies by which it assures itself of academic quality**.

Recent (2010-11) initiatives which reflect external constraints and internal objectives include the Limitation of Enrolment Policy and changes to the Academic Progress Policy. The former places entry limitations on all undergraduate degree programmes and provides for different admission pathways, namely preferential, competitive, and enhanced admission for Māori and Pacific students and students with disabilities. The latter changes bring forward the point at which students may be placed on conditional enrolment. Both policies are consistent with the University of Otago's aim to increase the proportion of high-achieving undergraduates while the Limitation of Enrolment Policy explicitly addresses under-representation of Māori and Pacific students. The Panel was pleased to note the 2011 Review of Managed Enrolments which focussed on streamlining process; after less than a year of operation it would have been premature for the Panel to evaluate effectiveness of the policy.

In response to Cycle 3 recommendation 1, the University has developed a Policy Framework "which establishes a university-wide approach to the development, approval, implementation and review"

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[23]   For example, how does the University know its admission processes achieve the desired student profile?

of policies. Attention has also been paid to communication and dissemination of policies.[24] The Panel was encouraged by this development and very supportive of it.

3.2 Programme Approval and Review

The University's processes for programme approval follow those common to other New Zealand universities. Proposals are required to address the criteria specified by the Universities New Zealand Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP), and also incorporate strategic relevance criteria related to both the University's strategic priorities and alignment with the Tertiary Education Commission's priorities. From the information available to the Panel the programme approval processes appear to be robust.

An area where the Panel did consider attention is warranted concerns the inclusion of a criterion related to research-informed teaching. Given that the University states that it "needs to favour teaching developments that involve a strong research-teaching synergy"[25], the Panel believes there is an argument for including this criterion in the University's internal programme approval requirements. Discussion with staff indicated an assumption that no programme or course would be developed which did not reflect research interests or expertise and that proposals would be rejected if there was not evidence of a research base. Nevertheless, the Panel's view is that this assumption should be made explicit if the University is to be able to assure itself that its objectives on this matter are met.

The University of Otago has an exhaustive review process and schedule, extending beyond departmental and programme reviews to include service and support areas. The Panel explored the review process, frequency and outcomes with a range of participants in the process. It is clear that the process provides many opportunities for staff involvement and contribution. The Panel also paid attention to a sample of review reports. The Panel concluded that heavy reliance is placed on regular reviews as a quality assurance mechanism, but that the extent to which review recommendations resulted in outcomes that improved quality appeared varied. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (A&I) receives and comments on follow-up status reports. Some examples of significant changes which resulted from review recommendations were cited, though some staff expressed less confidence that recommendations resulted in action. Staff endorsed the value of the self-review part of the process and the value of the opportunity to look forward. One staff member referred to the "rhythm" of reviews and noted their formative nature. The Panel also recognizes that the University needs to manage staff expectations on review outcomes so that these are reasonable, especially in areas requiring significant resourcing.

In an endeavour to extract common themes in reviews, the University has developed "meta-analyses" of its review reports. The Panel explored two of these (the space analysis and the analysis of Treaty-related activity). These overview documents are positive initiatives in collating activities and issues. The Panel was told that they inform decision-making of relevant services (in this case the Space Committee and the Office of Māori Development). However it was unclear to the Panel how much the summaries inform wider discussion in the University or lead to further enhancement of quality. The Panel encourages the University to ensure the meta-analyses are used effectively.

Review reports go to the Vice-Chancellor as well as to the DVC (A&I) and to the relevant PVC. Once formally released, copies of the report are made available to staff in the department, programme or

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[24]   Academic Audit Cycle 3 Mid-term Report and Update, April 2011, pp 30-31.
[25]   Self-review report p29.

area that was reviewed and to other University staff on request. The release of review reports is announced in the *Staff Bulletin.* Graduating Year Review reports are reviewed by the relevant subcommittee of Senate. Beyond that, the Quality Advancement Unit which manages reviews was said to assume that if members of Senate want to see a report "they will ask". As noted above, the apparent absence of wide discussion of such reports at Senate misses an opportunity for enhancement and engagement of a wider group of academic staff with the review process, which involves significant staff time and energy, so that reviews have impact beyond the individual departments or programmes being reviewed.

The University itself refers to "review-fatigue"[26]. Interviewees referred to several dimensions to this – including the load on department Heads, the challenge of finding panellists and convenors, and the demands of managing internal reviews alongside external accreditation reviews. The Panel suggests that the University endeavour to rationalise the extent to which Graduating Year Reviews required by CUAP, scheduled programme and departmental reviews, and external accreditation reviews impact on staff and units which are subject to two or more of these in the time period of a review cycle. It is noted that the University's own "Improvement Initiative 10" prior to the Cycle 3 audit referred to this issue, but that limited progress had been made by 2011.[27] It is possible that extending the timeframe of the scheduled reviews would assist.

3.3 Benchmarking

The 2006 Cycle 3 academic audit recommended (Recommendation 15) that the University develop programme benchmarking to complement its institutional benchmarking. In its 2007 response, the University decided that it was not appropriate to incorporate benchmarking into programme reviews.[28] Since then, the University has led the development of an international benchmarking strategy, the Matariki network (see Section 9.3), which provides opportunity for programme benchmarking to be revisited. The Panel strongly encourages the University to pursue this.

3.4 Assurance of Learning and Teaching Quality and Student Experience

The University outlines several means for assuring itself of teaching and course quality, including peer review, feedback from tutors, demonstrators and class representatives, information from department reviews and standard course and teaching evaluation surveys. The course and teaching evaluation surveys are conducted by "some but not all" departments; they are not mandatory except when required for promotion or confirmation appraisal.[29] The Higher Education Development Centre, HEDC, has introduced a set of core questions to the course evaluation questionnaire and has gained Senate agreement for results to be provided to Heads of Departments. HEDC itself has noted the Cycle 3 audit improvement initiative to enhance means of evaluating courses and considers "there is an institutional mandate to regularly evaluate courses"[30]. The University has identified revision of teaching and course evaluation instruments as an enhancement (Enhancement 5) and

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26 *Op.cit* p16.
27 Academic Audit Cycle 3 Mid-term Report and Update, April 2011, pp 24-25
28 *Op.cit* p 57.
29 *Evaluation at Otago – A Discussion Paper from HEDC* June 2010, p2.
30 *Ibid.*

has advised that Senate has recently "agreed that [the course evaluation questionnaire] will normally be used by all departments or programmes on a three-year cycle".[31]

The Audit Panel believes that notwithstanding its limitations, the course evaluation survey is the most significant pan-university quality assurance instrument for teaching quality at the paper level and urges the University to move beyond "normally" to making these surveys a requirement.

> **R4. The Panel *recommends* that the University finds ways of assuring itself that all courses are routinely evaluated at individual paper level, at least every three years, and that there is institutional oversight of evaluation outcomes and subsequent action where issues have been identified.**

The Quality Advancement Unit also conducts a Student Opinion Survey and a Graduate Opinion Survey and is a biennial participant in the Australasian Survey of Student Engagement, AUSSE. The core instrument in the opinion surveys is the Australian Course Experience Questionnaire, the CEQ. Postgraduate students also respond to questions related to supervision and support.

Use of the AUSSE offers benchmarking potential and the University reports that, overall, it performs well compared with its Australasian peers.[32] In future the University will have available to it the New Zealand AUSSE report, "Student Engagement in New Zealand Universities". It will also have available to it information from the national Graduate Longitudinal Study New Zealand (GLSNZ) which will provide a broader range of data than that collected in the Graduate Opinion Survey and possibly facilitate benchmarking nationally. In addition to the above routine surveys, the Quality Advancement Unit administers targeted surveys: for residential colleges (annually), for programmes prior to programme reviews and on institutional processes (e.g., a survey of postgraduate supervisors for Graduate Research Services).

The challenge with the array of data which the University has available to it is how best use might be made of the results. Staff reported a systematic approach to ensuring the data are reported to departments and divisions, and to students who participated in the surveys. Students who met with the Panel, however, suggested that feedback to them is not necessarily routine or systematic. Department Heads use the data in preparing cases for promotion and tenure confirmation "or just for general information". Review panels receive the data. It was suggested that new staff make greater use of the survey data than do more experienced staff.

The Panel heard there was variation in the extent to which staff advise students of actions resulting from surveys. It was suggested by some staff that they might prefer to see "a message" emerging from the data over more than one year before they make changes to their courses. In summary, the Panel concluded that surveying and reporting processes are sound but that subsequent action, and monitoring of subsequent action, is variable. The Panel suggests that if the University is to get appropriate return from its investment in surveys it should develop strategies for ensuring the results do contribute to quality enhancement.

> **R5. The Panel *recommends* that the University becomes more proactive in closing the loop following course and teaching evaluations and surveys, and develops ways of ensuring actions resulting from these are communicated to students and staff.**

The Panel explored quality assurance on the Wellington campus, as one of the University's outlying campuses. It heard that the practice of distributing students over a wide region for clinical

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[31] Self-review report p20.
[32] *Op.cit* p19.

experience can potentially raise quality issues. The University is aware of this. It was reported that outcomes remain consistent across all three Otago campuses and have parity with similar programmes of study elsewhere in New Zealand. The need to meet external accreditation requirements which are "tightly scripted" also helps ensure consistency.

3.5   Special Projects

At the time of the Cycle 4 audit the University was engaged in three projects intended to enhance its future academic quality: the Limitation of Enrolment Policy; revisions to the Academic Progress Policy; and introduction of a new Student Management System. The Panel received written and verbal information on each of these and was satisfied that the University's processes of concept development, project scoping, implementation and review reflected good practice and should support the projects' objectives.

The Panel notes that the Quality Advancement Unit offers "Improvement Grants" for individual staff and for departments and divisions, but it did not explore further how these are used.

3.6   Quality Enhancement

The Quality Advancement Unit takes responsibility for managing the quality enhancement agenda in the University, under the oversight of the DVC (A&I). The Unit provides several fora and colloquia (others are offered as part of teaching development – see Section 7.3). The Panel was pleased to hear and read of these activities, but it remained concerned that the quality advancement/quality assurance culture at the University of Otago is very review and survey intensive, and that while the processes for review and reporting are highly developed, the follow-up on the impact of the reviews and surveys does not seem to be so systematic. In part this appears to derive from the ethos of the University, which favours providing information to designated academic and administrative staff and then allowing staff to determine how the information is used.

The University makes a big investment in its reviews and surveys. It deserves to assure itself that this particular investment pays off in improved academic quality. It also needs to facilitate Senate and Council meeting their responsibilities in ensuring academic excellence.

4

Teaching and Learning and Student Support

4.1 Strategic Objectives and Strategic Planning

One of the University's Strategic Imperatives in its "Strategic Direction to 2012" is *"Achieving Excellence in Research-Informed Teaching".* It also emphasizes *"Ensuring Outstanding Campus Environments and Student experience"*. [33]

In addition to favouring strong research-teaching links, the University has identified commitments to recruiting high-achieving students, to continuing distance learning provision, to maintaining a "balanced approach" to internationalisation which includes internationalisation of the curriculum, and to providing ongoing e-learning capability and high quality facilities. With respect to the campus environment and student experience, the University emphasized investment in facilities which are world-class at all its sites, first-rate support services for students, an adaptive physical and cultural environment and a student life-experience which is characterized by intellectual and personal independence and maturity. Special relationships between the University and its residential Colleges and between the University and its students' association, OUSA, are highlighted.[34]

These commitments provided a context for the audit Panel's investigation of teaching and learning and student support.

4.2 Teaching and Learning Plan

The University's *Teaching and Learning Plan 2005-2010* emphasises what is expected in teaching and learning and points to ways in which these expectations can be achieved. At the time of the audit the revised plan, re-named the *Teaching and Learning Action Plan*, had just been ratified by Senate. Aligned with the University's strategic imperatives, it has a set of guiding principles and four overarching goals, each supported by a range of strategies. The goals are:

- Create an exemplary learning and teaching environment
- Engage students with rich and diverse educational opportunities
- Enhance staff capabilities to facilitate the provision of high-quality educational experiences
- Enhance the quality of the teaching and learning environment.

The *Teaching and Learning Action Plan* is underpinned by two documents: *Guidelines for Teaching at Otago* (for staff) and *Guidelines for Learning at Otago* (for students), both produced by the Higher Education Development Centre, HEDC. The Panel was impressed by the *Guidelines for Teaching at Otago* which offer staff a variety of practices and activities which will enable them to satisfy the goals of the *Teaching and Learning Action Plan*. Senior staff acknowledged that the immediate challenge associated with implementation is to encourage the active engagement of staff with the

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[33] *Strategic Direction to 2012*, approved March 2006.
[34] *Loc.cit.*

Action Plan's goals and strategies. The accompanying *Guidelines for Learning at* Otago recognise the responsibilities of students in achieving good outcomes.

The Panel urges the University to encourage departments, divisions and service units to develop their own plans to operationalise the objectives of the *Teaching and Learning Action Plan* in the areas where they have responsibility.

4.3 Graduate Attributes

Embedded in the University's *Interim Teaching and Learning Action Plan 2011-2012* is a revised University of Otago *Graduate Profile.* The audit Panel was impressed by the manner in which the University articulated its desired graduate attributes, namely as:

- Attributes related to the discipline, including "knowledge of the fundamental contribution of research to the discipline";
- "Affective elements" (global perspective; interdisciplinary perspective; lifelong learning; scholarship);
- Attributes that include those most often sought by employers (e.g., communication; environmental literacy; teamwork).

The University, in its self-review report, commented that "although profiles exist for all programmes, the extent to which the attributes are embedded within the curriculum is variable".[35] Academic staff reported a variety of ways in which they addressed graduate attributes, from a direct influence on the design of learning objectives and regulated competencies (in accredited programmes) to more indirect embeddedness. The Panel heard that new paper proposals are examined in the light of the attributes.

In its *Guidelines for Teaching at Otago* HEDC offers suggestions as to how staff might teach towards achieving the Graduate Profile, noting it is not sufficient to just assume students will develop all attributes during their university experience, but they "must be explicitly incorporated into the curricula (both through teaching and assessment) and extra-curricula experiences".[36] In working towards realizing its graduate profile the University also intends to deliberately capitalise on the experiences provided by its strong residential dimension (see Section 4.9). However from its interviews and the material it read, the Panel's perception was that curriculum planning is somewhat uncoordinated in some areas of the University and that this must be addressed if the potential of the Graduate Profile is to be fully realised.

The Panel was interested in how the University assesses the achievement of its Graduate Profile, especially since the students who were interviewed by the Panel had little or no awareness of it. It was advised that there is significant alignment between the attributes in the Profile and the responses from the Graduate Opinion Survey which measures the extent to which attributes were developed during study and have been applied subsequently, for example "an awareness of ethical issues" or "ability to solve problems".[37]

> **C2. The Panel *commends* the University on the coordinated and coherent suite of documents supporting its mission to establish a distinctive Otago Graduate Profile. The Panel notes the strategies being developed to teach and assess towards the**

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[35] Self-review report p22.

[36] *Guidelines for Teaching at Otago* p25.

[37] 2010 *Graduate Opinion Survey* Summary report pp9; 67.

> **Profile, and supports efforts to find ways of evaluating achievement of the attributes identified in the Profile.**

4.4   Academic Programmes

In 2010, the University offered over 190 qualifications and, within these qualifications, a wide range of major subjects and subject-specific endorsements. The constrained funding environment has impacted on the University's ability to develop new programmes. The University's approach to academic programme development is characterised by:

- A flexibility that allows a high degree of individual student choice in the papers taken towards general undergraduate degrees;
- The quality of the University's teaching staff;
- A robust internal process for the approval of new programmes complemented by a comprehensive suite of resources to support development and design.

In keeping with its strategic focus on advanced study and targeted groups, the University has announced the phasing out of several sub-degree programmes and the re-focusing of the domestic student component of its Foundation Year programme (offered through Foundation Studies Ltd.) to meet the particular needs of Māori and Pacific students.[38]

In addition to face-to-face learning, the University engages in flexible delivery to meet the learning needs of students, using Blackboard, streaming media, lecture theatre interlinking, podcasting, audio- and video-conferencing and other forms of information communication technology. Information Technology Services and HEDC provide staff with relevant training and support.

The Panel discussed various aspects of academic integrity with staff and students and was satisfied this was well understood by them.

4.5   The Teaching-research Nexus

The University's *Interim Teaching and Learning Action Plan 2011-2012* states as its Vision that "the University of Otago will continue to be renowned for its leadership in research-informed teaching and learning". The Otago Graduate Profile states that all graduates will have "knowledge of the fundamental contribution of research to [their] discipline". As noted in Section 3.2, the Panel was surprised that such a critical dimension was not specified in programme approval requirements, but was taken for granted. The Panel also noted the University's own assessment that it is "a challenge … to provide undergraduate educational experiences that allow the development of research skills and techniques, the experience of doing research and inquiry, and the opportunity to have research discussions from the beginning of [their] study".[39] Yet no enhancement initiative was proposed on this topic. The Panel therefore explored with a number of interviewees how the University assured itself that teaching is research-informed, in accordance with the Vision of the *Teaching and Learning Action Plan.*

Undergraduate students tended to have a relatively simplistic appreciation of the contribution of research to their learning, but they did recognise it. As might be expected, staff reiterated numerous ways in which research informs their teaching. The Panel noted that the HEDC document *Guidelines for Teaching at Otago* includes the following indicators within its aspects of quality teaching:

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[38]   Self-review report p23.
[39]   *Op.cit* p35.

- Demonstrated links between teaching and disciplinary research, an explicit awareness of research-teaching links, articulation of the complementary of research and teaching in policies reflected in demonstrable action.

- Research and scholarship in teaching in the discipline ….[40]

HEDC also drew attention to workshops on designing courses with strong links between teaching and disciplinary research (2009), on developing research skills in undergraduates (2009), on inquiry and undergraduate research (2010) and an article in its periodical *Akoranga* on "Strengthening the links between teaching and research" (August 2011).

It was clear to the Panel that the University does pay a lot of attention to ensuring that teaching is research-informed. As with a number of other core activities, it relies on staff to achieve this without overt direction on how to do so.

4.6   Distance Education

The "Vision" in the University's *Distance Education Strategy 2010-2012* is that the "University will be known for its leadership and excellence in teaching, learning and support of distance students". In support of this vision, the University has a Distance Learning Advisory Board and Director of Distance Learning. A major review of Distance Learning was carried out in 2011. The University has acknowledged a need for further development in e-learning and distance learning.[41]

The University of Otago offers over 120 qualifications by distance and distance learning, especially in areas of special expertise at postgraduate level. It has approximately 2,000 distance students, a small proportion of whom reside overseas. Given its emphasis, the Panel explored the effectiveness of learning and support for distance students[42]. Those interviewed reported good service with Library support, access to workshops on-site (including in Wellington) and most, but not all, were satisfied with access to workshop materials and with electronic and phone contact with staff. Some students reported feeling isolated and not part of the "Otago community". A concern related to information technology (IT), (See Section 4.9). A range of other experiences was shared, though the Panel cannot judge whether the issues raised are systemic or pertain just to individuals.

The Panel heard some concerns from students undertaking postgraduate research at a distance. It did hear of good practice, for example use of Skype connections, opportunities to travel to Dunedin to meet with supervisors (paid for by the University) and requirements of residential periods on campus. The concerns expressed were primarily to do with difficulty in maintaining close interaction with supervisors.

The Panel paid particular attention to the experiences of medical students studying in locations away from the main bases. In Wellington, panel members heard that great use is made of education technologies: there are good videoconferencing facilities; students use teleconference, Skype and internet chat facilities and workrooms; clinical students can dial in from remote facilities for tutorials. All UOW distance postgraduate students have residential periods in Wellington.

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[40]   *Guidelines for Teaching at Otago*, Draft, pp8-9.
[41]   *Strategic Direction to 2012: Action Plan Update* 21 September 2011, p11.
[42]   The Panel conducted telephone interviews with a selection of distance students, both undergraduate and postgraduate and including one studying overseas.

The University's major surveys, the "Student Opinion Survey" and the "Graduate Opinion Survey", include data attributed to distance students, enabling the University to identify any outliers in experience. Overall, in 2010 distance students appeared to report slightly more favourably on teaching, assessment and supervision than did on-campus students (SOS pp37; 43; GOS p34) but reported less favourably on overall support (SOS p43). The University also has a course evaluation questionnaire which is tailored to distance students. These surveys provide a wealth of information which might enable the University to focus its attention in improving the educational experience for distance students, in keeping with its aspirations to be "known for leadership" in this sphere.

Clearly in the field of Health Sciences, in particular, the range of postgraduate programmes offered in distance mode serves a national need. While the Panel accepts the University's statement that distance learning "has an important place" in the University, the Panel was not convinced that the specific needs of distance students were always recognised. It strongly supports the intentions and strategies outlined in the 2010-2012 document and encourages the University to develop an action plan to flow beyond 2012.

> **A1.** **The Panel** *affirms* **the scope of recommendations in the review of Distance Learning, noting the action already taken in establishing a Working Party and an overarching Distance Learning Strategy, and encourages the University to give priority to finding ways of ensuring that adequate academic and support services are available for students whether they are on one of the satellite campuses or at another location (R 18 of the Distance Learning Review).**

> **R6.** **The Panel** *recommends* **that if the University is to continue to promote opportunities to do postgraduate research by distance then closer attention be paid to ensuring such students receive appropriate support and have adequate supervisory interaction.**

Given the unique requirements of the University of Otago's medical and health science students based in Wellington and Christchurch, the Panel paid attention to feedback from these campuses. Both reported on good library support (including resources shared with the local District Health Board libraries). Cultural "immersion weeks"[43] for 4th year students in Christchurch and Wellington were described as "useful" by senior staff and by Wellington students. Some Wellington students indicated they needed clearer avenues for giving feedback about teaching, gaining support and raising problems. Not all students were aware of the class representative system available to them. They were also not clear of where to go when they had problems with consultants. The Panel was told that this did not appear to be a problem in Christchurch with a perception that the relationship between the campus and the hospital was stronger in Christchurch than in Wellington. However, both clinical students and postgraduate health science students studying on the Wellington campus reported good support from University staff when they had approached them for support or with issues.

4.7   Internationalisation

The University of Otago has a modest proportion of international students – Council policy limits these to 12% of total roll, with no more than 25% of these coming from any one country.[44] Support of international students is referred to in Section 4.9.

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[43]   This is actually a week spread over an orientation fortnight. It includes a period spent on a marae – see Chapter 6.
[44]   Self-review report p26.

The Panel was interested in the extent to which the University internationalised its curriculum and student activity. The Internationalisation Committee offers "Internationalisation of the Curriculum Initiative Grants". The intention of these grants is that all students, not just international students, will benefit from the initiatives they support, and that the benefit will be to more than one cohort of students. However, in the past the grants have been under-utilised and the Internationalisation Committee has accepted what was described as a rather broad notion of "internationalisation" to encourage their uptake.

As noted below, social and cultural activities provide opportunities for domestic and international students to interact. These are important, but the University itself noted "the reality in the classroom is that many staff and students fail to take advantage of the different backgrounds and experiences represented" by international students.[45] The Panel therefore supports Enhancement 10 which seeks to develop further programmes which help integrate domestic and international students and to find ways of gaining from an international presence in the classroom.

4.8   Student Achievement and Success

The University promotes its high ranking on TEC performance indicators, in international rankings and in postgraduate scholarship success. It has met its KPIs of "at least 80% of commencing students passing at least two thirds of their academic credits in their first year of study" (KPI 2.3); it records an 88% three-year average pass rate (KPI 2.4).[46] The University notes the qualification completion rates of Māori students approximate those of non-Māori.[47] The lower level of achievement of Pacific students is recognized as a matter of concern by the University (see Section 4.10).

The University has mechanisms for analysing student performance trends. The extent of analysis and response to the results at programme level appear to be at the discretion of the programme or department (noting that for some programmes analyses are required for programme accreditation purposes and may also be utilised for performance review and promotion purposes).

4.9   Learning Environment and Student Support

The University provides a broad range of support for students consistent with that provided by most other universities. Among the key services provided, the Student Learning Centre has a prime focus on first year students "learning how to learn", the Library provides information literacy tuition and the University has student "learning hubs" for study, socialising and cultural activities.[48]Apart from problems experienced with IT (see below), the Panel heard of no significant issues for undergraduate students. These students spoke highly of the teaching they received and they appreciated the caring and open attitude of their teachers. These opinions concur with the University's 2010 report against its Statement of Objectives where it recorded that over 95% of respondents in the Student Opinion Survey gave a positive assessment of campus environment and key services (KPI 3.1) and over 90% gave a positive assessment of teaching quality (KPI 2.6).[49]

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[45]   *Loc.cit.*

[46]   *Statement of Objectives 2011-2013* 15 October 2010.

[47]   *Loc.cit.*

[48]   Self-review report p25.

[49]   *Loc.cit.*

As noted in section 4.2, The University's *Teaching and Learning Action Plan* includes as a companion document *Guidelines for Learning at Otago* which outlines expectations of students, discusses the transition to University and offers advice on how to succeed at University. The Panel was impressed by positive reports of the PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) programme and of the tutorials provided in the residential Colleges.

The major complaint from students related to educational technology and IT services. The Panel heard of problems with the new version of Blackboard, with staff and students finding it more difficult to use than the previous version, and with a number of outages reported. From its discussions with staff the Panel understands that the conversion issues were not unusual and that IT staff responded to problems expeditiously. Tutors have been trained (in conjunction with HEDC), multi-media help files have been developed and interventions advising of resources have been introduced to lectures. Courses for staff on using Blackboard have also been run in Wellington, Christchurch and Invercargill. A Steering Group and Working Party have been established to explore functionality and provide improved support to students. The Panel supports the ongoing vigilance over Blackboard deployment and encourages the Working Party to adopt a wide remit regarding usage and support. Issues related to email and Internet were raised mainly by postgraduate students. These reflected the ways in which the University manages IT support, and include Internet access, insufficient bandwidth and proxy log-ons. Staff suggested some problems were student-generated (excessive downloads by a very small proportion of students). However the Panel is concerned that the University ensures its systems are such that distance learning aspirations, in particular, are not compromised by inadequate IT support and that postgraduate students embarking on professional careers are appropriately supported (for example, having email addresses which indicate their identity rather than a code). Undergraduate students also require a reliable service for on and off-campus work.

The University places strong emphasis on its residential colleges and their key role in University life. Each College has an advisory council which includes members of University staff. Some include members of the University's Council. The majority of the University's first year students originate outside Dunedin city and spend their first year in one of the Colleges.[50] The Panel heard that, as well as managing social activities and communal living, advisory councils review academic achievement of their residents. The recent decision to provide elements of the college experience for local students is a good initiative. The Panel also considered the postgraduate residential college, which is the first of its kind in New Zealand, to be an interesting initiative.

The Panel paid attention to the services provided on the campuses outside Dunedin. The University had completed an audit of student support services and found "they are not as good" as in Dunedin. Against that though, both the University and Panel acknowledge that the services required on other campuses are not necessarily the same and could be specialised. Students pay different fees on each of the campuses to cover core services and those additional services which are provided. Both Wellington and Christchurch campuses have a local learning adviser. The Director of Academic Services and Director of Student Services visit the Wellington and Christchurch campuses annually specifically to assess service provision; administrators from those campuses are brought to Dunedin and the DVC (A&I) and PVC (Health Sciences) maintain close contact with the Deans on those campuses. The Deans also visit Dunedin regularly. Associate Deans support students from the Wellington campus located in Palmerston North and the Hawke's Bay. Similarly, an Associate Dean supports students from the Christchurch campus located in Nelson.

Since the last audit, the University has adopted a Code of Student Conduct which emphasises "mutual respect, tolerance and understanding" and addresses behaviour both on campus and in the

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[50] The Panel held its interview sessions in two of the Colleges and met a number of college residents.

community. This is supported by a 24/7 Campus Watch. The Panel heard from several interviewees about the University's plans for responsible alcohol management, including using the Matariki relationship to explore good practice. The Panel supports the University's wide-ranging efforts to ensure student behaviour is not intrusive or damaging to themselves, the community or the University's reputation. The Panel also noted stakeholder opinion that negative media reports of behaviour over-state the reality.

The University has also recently revised its "Ethical Behaviour Policy".[51] The Policy focuses on ensuring "safety, respect and dignity" and addresses harassment, bullying, discrimination and conflicts of interest, including ways in which these might be resolved. During its interviews with students and staff the Panel was made aware of efforts to provide a campus free of sexism, racism and homophobia, particularly through OUSA's Student Support Centre.

The Career Development Centre provides a range of services to support students seeking employment.[52] Students also spoke of being kept aware of internships, short-term and permanent employment opportunities via their teaching staff. Students on both the Wellington and Dunedin campuses suggested that there was plenty of support and advice should they be wanting to talk to someone about their career options.

> **C3. The Panel *commends* the University on the support it provides to students, and in particular the PASS programme and the academic support provided by the residential colleges. The Panel supports the University's initiative to extend the opportunities provided by the residential colleges to local students.**
>
> **A2. The Panel *affirms* the University's efforts to improve the safety and well-being of students in the residential environs.**

4.10 Equity and Diversity

In addition to general support the University provides targeted support for Māori students, Pacific students and students with a disability. Support for Māori students is discussed in Chapter 6.

Pacific students comprised 3.1% of enrolments in 2010, reflecting a steady increase over the preceding decade. The University's new Limitation of Enrolment scheme includes "enhanced admission" for Pacific and Māori students, which means that provided they qualify for entrance, Pacific and Māori students will be placed on the "preferential" admission pathway[53]. Although Pacific student performance has improved recently, the University recognizes that retention and achievement remain a challenge. The Pacific Islands Centre serves as a hub for Pacific students and provides targeted tutorial support for Pacific undergraduate students. In 2010, 681 students registered with the Centre.[54] Other support includes Pacific postgraduate seminars; activities with academic departments, schools and divisions; undergraduate scholarships; annual prizes and a transition pathway for first year students. The early intervention programmes identify first year students perceived to be at risk of not achieving their potential – students not gaining at least a C+ in their first semester are contacted. One department Head also commented that there is a similar

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[51] The revised Ethical Behaviour Policy was ratified by Council on 12 October 2011, in the week of the audit site visit.
[52] Self-review report p55.
[53] To protect against abuse of the self-declaration of identity, the University proposes that the respective support centres will contact all students identifying as Māori or Pacific in the first two weeks of semester. (*Review of Managed Enrolments 2011,* p12).
[54] 2010 Annual Report p49.

concern with some third and fourth year students. Another cited the advantages of training Pacific students to be PASS tutors.

The Panel considered the University to be responsive to the challenges related to Pacific student achievement but believed that more work is needed. The Panel agrees that there is likely to be value in taking initiatives into secondary schools and to parents. The Panel recognizes that compared to some other universities, the University of Otago has low numbers of Pacific students and that as a consequence support services are likely to be spread thinly across divisions. The Panel was interested to hear about an initiative on the Wellington Campus, whereby an administrative manager is receiving mentoring in this area from an equivalent staff member in another University with higher numbers of Pacific students.

The University acknowledges that it could target and support students from low decile schools who have high potential to achieve. It remains clear, however, that its focus is on recruiting "the best and the brightest".

The University's Disability Information and Support Office co-ordinates learning support services such as note-taking, tutors, alternative assessment arrangements and reformatting of materials for students with disabilities or impairments.

Students who were interviewed indicated a variety of activities across the University which fostered an appreciation of diversity and supported different equity groups, including the OUSA Cultural Awareness Week, women's week, market days with foods from different cultures and social events. The KiwiHost scheme, whereby senior local students live with international students in University Flats was appreciated, as was an international mentoring programme.

The Panel was satisfied the University is providing an appropriate range of support for specific equity and cultural groups. (See also Section 7.5)

4.11 Otago University Students' Association (OUSA)

Because of recent legislation regarding voluntary student membership (the VSM Bill) and because of the close relationship between OUSA and the University, the Panel met with OUSA Executive members to discuss student services. The students reported satisfaction with their working relationship with University management but were anxious about the future of a number of the services they currently provide. While the Panel was not privy to the negotiations in train at the time, it was convinced that the University was aware of the issues and would endeavour to ensure that services are maintained.

Students valued their contribution to the University via committee membership and the ability to take an independent stand on issues; they expressed anxiety about potential compromising of their independence in future service agreements.

The Panel notes that the Vice-Chancellor identified a range of opportunities for enhancing interaction between students and the community which would be facilitated by voluntary student membership.

5

Research Environment and Postgraduate Students

5.1 Research Environment

In its self-review report the University limited its discussion to the specific issues identified in the indicative framework for audit, namely the impact of the research environment on teaching and on students. The Panel therefore considered it inappropriate to address issues related to aspects of the research environment which have been canvassed in other Cycle 4 audits (for example, issues around collaborations and research centres). The extent to which the University achieves its objectives of being built on "foundations of broad research… capabilities"[55] was not audited other than to note the University's standing as a top-ranking New Zealand university on average quality PBRF measures and to report that many staff, during interviews, provided evidence that the University has a strongly embedded research culture.

The Panel explored how the University leveraged off its research to infuse this into the learning environment of its students. Clear links were reported between postgraduate student research topics and the research orientations of their departments and/or supervisors. However, just as the teaching-research nexus is assumed to happen for undergraduate students, the positive impacts of staff research on postgraduate study appear to be assumed rather than managed strategically. The Panel was told that the Research Committee "is strategic" in how it relates to students, but it was unclear to the Panel what this means.

Audit considerations of teaching-research links in undergraduate teaching have been recorded in the previous chapter (Section 4.5).

The critic and conscience role of universities contributes to and reflects the research environment, and is part of the audit focus. The Panel found a range of evidence that the University of Otago takes this role seriously. For example, the University is committed to acting in an environmentally sustainable way, has an Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee and is developing an Environmental Sustainability Plan. Research Centres highlight the critic and conscience focus, including the Bioethics Centre, the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, the Legal Issues Centre, the Centre for Theology and Public Issues, the AIDS Epidemiology Group, the Ngāi Tahu Māori Health Research Centre and the Otago Energy Research Centre. In support of developing countries and in keeping with its strategic objective of "contributing to the national good and international progress" the University has research clusters such as the Poverty, Inequality and Development Group and the Otago International Health Research Network. A number of teaching programmes also target contemporary issues and the University supports Volunteer Service Abroad through UniVol. [56]

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[55] *Strategic Direction to 2012,* Mission.
[56] Self-review report pp55, 56.

The University of Otago has a high profile in its local community and further afield, through activities derived from the expert knowledge and critical assessment of its staff and the civic responsibility of the institution (see Section 8.1). Stakeholders corroborated the University's view that its public seminar series is highly valued. The Panel was satisfied that the University undertakes a variety of activities and demonstrates a serious commitment to its responsibilities to its local, national and international communities.

5.2   Recruitment and Administration

The University of Otago considers that a defining feature of a research-intensive university is a high proportion of postgraduate students. The University is committed to growing its postgraduate roll, which in 2010 comprised 16.4% of all EFTS (KPI 2.1). Postgraduate research student EFTS were 8.3% in 2010 (KPI 1.3).[57] Completion rates for registered PhD students are in the region of 85-90% and it was suggested that non-completions were commonly for reasons outside the University's control. The Graduate Research Office can put in plans for "managed completion" if a student is at risk of falling behind the three year target. The University attributes some of its success in doctoral completions to the fact that international students comprise about a third of PhD enrolments. The University is aware that this number is vulnerable to any change in government policy regarding tuition subsidies and fees.[58]

One of the University's strategies for increasing the proportion of postgraduate students has been to increase the number of doctoral scholarships available. Some PhD students noted that scholarships were for three years whereas in some disciplines a PhD programme typically took four years to complete and submit, leading to funding problems for the student. They asked why, if four or more years was a "norm" for the discipline, the scholarship could not be extended. The limit of three years for scholarships for international students was also raised as an issue for those students.

The University commented on differences in the way that doctoral and masters' (including thesis masters') programmes are administered which can lead to inconsistencies. Staff also commented that procedures for master's theses were not as robust as those for PhDs, and that this reflected department or division differences. Responsibility for evaluating Master's student progress is located at divisional level rather than centrally. In the recent review of Graduate Research Services, that Panel recommended that the University consider the centralisation of masters-related procedures. The University reports that changes have been delayed until the new Student Management System is operational, as an effective IT system is necessary to administer the procedures centrally.[59] The Panel supports any moves towards greater consistency in procedures across the University.

5.3 Postgraduate Supervision

The University offers two forms of supervision to PhD students, either two (or more) supervisors or a supervisor backed up by a supervision committee. In each case one person is designated the primary supervisor and at least one supervisor must have taken a prior student to thesis completion. Students showed some uncertainty about the appointment of supervisors, some suggesting that they (i.e., the students) were the people who selected their supervisors. In fact the University provides staff with a document "Selecting high quality PhD students – Seven tips for prospective

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[57]   *Statement of Objectives 2011-2013* 15 October 2010.
[58]   Self-review report p29.
[59]   Self-review report p30.

supervisors" and staff clarified that every PhD application is considered by a departmental PhD Coordinator and either that person or the Head assigns supervisors. The University reports that many of the procedures applying to PhDs also apply to master's research.

The Higher Education Development Centre (HEDC) and Graduate Research Services offer a supervisory training workshop twice a year. This workshop has run for seven years and averages 40 staff per workshop. The HEDC also runs a "New Supervisors Programme" involving workshops and mentoring. Graduate Research Services runs a workshop on "Key Processes for Supervisors of PhD Candidates", held every semester at the Dunedin campus and every year at the Christchurch and Wellington campuses. The University reports that this workshop is usually fully subscribed.[60] A variety of other written resources is available for supervisors.

The University monitors research students' satisfaction with supervision via the Graduate Opinion Survey. For the 2010 survey (qualification requirements completed in 2008), around 80% of respondents provided positive assessments of supervision support on most items, with 84% indicating "overall satisfaction" with supervision.[61] Similar questions in the Student Opinion Survey elicited favourable assessments by 84% of respondents on supervision.[62]

OUSA recognizes excellent supervision via its "Supervisor of the Year" and "New Supervisor of the Year" awards. The Panel was pleased to hear that the current Supervisor of the Year is active in assisting with workshops and contributing to discussions and information sessions.

The Cycle 3 audit made a strong recommendation that the University *consider* making formal training of research supervisors mandatory (R11). The Cycle 4 Panel heard that the University had indeed considered this, and determined that "mandatory courses do not fit within the culture of the institution".[63] It was clear to the Cycle 4 Panel that the University takes postgraduate supervision very seriously and the Cycle 4 Panel acknowledges the University's view that "voluntary attendance is more conducive to an effective workshop experience"[64]. But this Panel is also concerned that preparation for such a critical activity should be left to individual choice, especially for new supervisors. Even if the majority of staff attend voluntarily, the fact that some might not do so could present an area of risk for the University.

5.4 Postgraduate Student Support

Institutional committees, offices, centres and staff available to support and monitor the graduate research student experience include the Board of Graduate Studies (BoGS); Graduate Research Committee and the Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee. The Library, HEDC, the Māori Centre, the Pacific Islands Centre and the International Office also provide postgraduate support. Intellectual property issues are usually identified at the thesis proposal stage and are managed by the Research and Enterprise Office. Supervisors have logs to record activity and the office advises students on information dissemination. Graduate Research Services, which is part of the Research Division, acts as the central link for these committees and services and for liaison with the academic divisions. The Research Division is led by a Director. Departments and divisions exert oversight via postgraduate committees, postgraduate coordinators, and associate deans at division level.

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[60] Self-review report p31.
[61] Graduate Opinion Survey 2010, p18.
[62] Student Opinion Survey 2010, p21.
[63] Academic audit Cycle 3 Mid-term report and Update, April 2011, p50.
[64] *Ibid*

The University provides a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) template which it "strongly encourages" supervisors and students to use to outline expectations in supervision.[65] The Panel heard from both staff and students that use of the MoU varies across departments, though "if the student wants it, it is done". However the Graduate Opinion Survey reported that fewer than half of respondents (49%) had discussed the University's guidelines on supervision with their supervisor.[66] Such students would then be unlikely to request an MoU. Students who had completed MoUs found them useful; they suggested that the MoU should be mandatory, including for master's thesis students. The Panel suggests that in the interests of equitable treatment of students the University should make an effort to ensure that MoUs are used consistently, at least for PhD students.

Regular formal reporting is required for PhD students, after the initial six months and then annually. Reports are considered by the Graduate Research Committee. A range of monitoring activity, including avenues provided by the Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee, enable matters requiring attention to be identified. These are dealt with by either the Graduate Research Committee or Graduate Research Services.

In addition to its scholarships, the University offers financial support to students by way of travel grants to attend conferences (it is an expectation that master's students attend a domestic conference and that PhD students attend a domestic and an international conference during their programme of study). There is also a postgraduate publishing bursary to support students to prepare papers after their thesis is submitted. Conference support in fact varies, with those departments holding more research funding seeming more able, or willing, to "top up" University grants. This variation, albeit understandable, confused students. Common understanding of a base level of support might be helpful.

Resources available to students include various workshops and seminars, with some tailored to specific disciplines, a policy on doctoral support and a minimum resources policy, and a booklet for PhD students aimed at assisting them towards completion.[67] Doctoral students spoke highly of the seminars run by the Director of Graduate Research Services and of the CD Rom provided with the presentation. They said that the seminars are optional but are "extremely valuable" and "you'd be silly not to go to them". Master's students made similar comments about the workshops available to them from the Graduate Research Services. Students also praised HEDC workshops, for example tutor workshops and workshops on preparing papers for presentation.

The Student Opinion Survey enables the University to explore acceptability of postgraduate support by qualification type. For research postgraduates overall satisfaction with University support sat at 79-80% in 2010. The lowest positive "satisfied" scores were for financial support (higher for PhD students than for Master's), departmental induction (54% of PhD students; 62% of Master's) and for whether their department provided a clear statement of postgraduate student responsibilities (61% of PhD students; 55% of Master's).[68] The University has a minimum resources policy outlining the minimum level of support a postgraduate student should receive, though students reported variability as to how this is applied.

Apart from complaints about internet access and email proxies (see Section 4.9) the issues raised by postgraduate students were specific to their individual experiences, rather than being a general

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[65] Self-review report p30.
[66] Graduate Opinion Survey p18.
[67] See www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/otago009191.html downloaded 20.10.11
[68] Student Opinion Survey 2010, pp 33, 34.

concern. The major issue was the lack of consistency across departments in how institutional policies were given effect.

Postgraduate students agreed that the University provided them with a safe and non-threatening environment in which to do their research. The high regard with which the Director and staff of the Graduate Research Services are held in supporting students confirmed that reported in the 2010 review of the office.[69] The Panel also heard positive feedback about the support provided by Postgraduate Liaison Office staff on the Wellington campus.

It is noted that some students had aspirations to remain at the University of Otago after completing their doctorates and were apprehensive about employment opportunities whether in Dunedin or elsewhere in New Zealand. The University does have a career guidance service (see Section 4.9) but there is possibly an additional opportunity for the University to offer targeted career advice to postgraduate students.

> **C4.** **The Panel *commends* the induction and support services available to postgraduate students, especially the range of workshops and individual advice provided by the Graduate Research Services. The Panel was pleased to note that appreciation of these services extended beyond Dunedin**.

> **R7.** **The Panel *recommends* that the University finds ways of ensuring more consistency across departments in the application of key policies regarding supervision and support for postgraduate research students.**

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[69] Commendations 1, 2 and 3 in University of Otago Review of Graduate Research Services 2010, p3.

6

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

6.1   The University's Relationship with its Treaty Partners

The University's primary Treaty partnership is with Ngāi Tahu, as *mana whenua* within the takiwā (tribal area) of Te Wai Pounamu. The basis of the relationship is embodied in a Memorandum of Understanding with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, originally signed in 2001 and re-signed in 2007. The University has also signed memoranda with Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Whātua and Ngāti Toa Rangatira and Treaty-based relationships exist with several Māori health providers in different parts of the country.

The University Council includes a Māori member who has Ngāi Tahu affiliations.[70] Council's Treaty of Waitangi Committee, which is chaired by the Chancellor and includes representation from the three local papatipu rūnanga, advises the University on matters of *kawa* and *tikanga*. The Panel heard from Council members of their strong commitment to ensuring the Māori Strategic Framework "is to be taken seriously".

The University is a shareholder in Te Tapuae o Rehua, a company which includes Te Rūnanaga o Ngāi Tahu and other tertiary institutions within the takiwā. The company is committed to collaboratively increasing the numbers of Ngāi Tahu (and other Māori) participating and achieving within tertiary institutions in Te Wai Pounamu.

6.2   Māori Strategic Framework

The University's commitment to the Treaty in its *Strategic Direction to 2012* is embedded in the imperative "Contributing to the national good and to international progress" which recognizes 'the growing size and voice of Māori people".[71] This document states that the University will extend its partnership with Māori beyond its current relationship with Ngāi Tahu, as its primary treaty partner. The performance indicators refer to Māori student participation and achievement and to the number of research projects being undertaken in association with Māori.[72]

The main strategic document supporting the University's commitment to Māori development is the Māori Strategic Framework 2007-2012, which was developed out of the 2005 Treaty of Waitangi Stocktake. Arising from that Stocktake the University also established an Office of Māori Development, whose Director and staff, along with a Māori leadership group *Te Kōhanga o te Kahu,* lead the University's response to the Māori Strategic Framework.

The Framework's intention is to support the University's "determination to proactively contribute to Māori development" and "the realisation of Māori aspirations". While it is described as "broad" and

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[70]   This position is a ministerial appointment (Self-review report p36). The Council does not have a designated Māori member (Annual Report 2010, p8).
[71]   Strategic Direction to 2012.
[72]   Statement of Objectives 2011-2013, October 2010, pxx.

"non-prescriptive"[73], the framework is also intended to encourage a more cohesive approach to Māori strategy across all campuses with both staff and students assuming a greater sense of responsibility and accountability "for the support and progression of 'things Māori'".[74] The Māori Strategic Framework identifies six strategic goals:

- Te Ārahina – Leadership
- Te Honohono – Partnership
- Te Rangahau Māori – Māori Research
- Te Tipuranga – Growth and Development
- Ngā Whakahaerenga Pai – Quality Programmes
- Ngā Taonga Tuku Iho – Language and Culture.[75]

Each division has developed its own plans in response to the above goals with annual reports to the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group.[76] The Panel heard from staff about various activities intended to meet the goals of the framework which are undertaken in their departments. The mid-cycle review in 2010 identified some specific institutional goals, including increasing the number of Māori staff, continued development of Māori leadership and initiatives aimed at improving Māori student achievement.

The Panel noted that several reviews have informed the University's understanding of activities supporting its commitments to Māori, namely annual reports submitted by academic and service divisions (2008-2010), a meta-analysis of department and programme reviews (2005-2009) and a report on research outcomes from the Māori Academic Staff Caucus (2009). These reports indicated to the University that the Māori Strategic Framework had, as intended, provided a "much needed, coordinated and strategic 'map' for Māori development at Otago".[77] The 2009 report identified a need for enhanced communication across the University and a need for greater resourcing, noting that higher expectation for Māori development was leading to a greater demand for support.[78]

Staff reported various ways in which departments give effect to the objectives of the Framework. The Panel was told that all departments have a kaiāwhina[79] (though, given the relatively small number of Māori on staff at the University, not all of these people are Māori). Some staff felt that the department review process was an important tool for checking what departments were actually doing. The Panel heard that service areas such as HR, the Quality Advancement Unit and HEDC are taking a leadership role in helping embed the commitments of the framework at departmental level. For example, HR includes sessions on the Treaty in its professional development programme and Heads are offered workshops on the Treaty and on the Māori Strategic Framework. The Māori Language Policy provides for free classes in te reo Māori and a booklet "Using Māori in the University" is available to staff.[80] It was suggested by some staff that it would be helpful if new Heads of department were required to attend the workshop on the Māori Strategic Framework, rather than this being optional.

The Panel felt that the mid-cycle report on the Māori Strategic Framework, although reporting on activities and achievements, did not assess outcomes against that Framework and it was therefore difficult (for the University as well as the Panel) to assess fully the Framework's effectiveness. The

[73] Report on the Review of the Implementation of the Māori strategic Framework, October 2010, p5.
[74] Māori Strategic Framework 2007-2012 pp1-2.
[75] op. cit. p3.
[76] Self-review report pp37-38.
[77] Report on the Review of the Implementation of the Māori Strategic Framework, October 2010, p7.
[78] op. cit. p8.
[79] Helper or assistant - www.maoridictionary.co.nz/ downloaded 27.10.11
[80] Meta analysis of Reviews, relating to responsiveness to the Treaty of Waitangi, 2005-2009 p19.

University's self-review report includes an enhancement to revise the Strategic Framework building on strategic gains since 2007. This gives little indication of the direction the University wishes to take from 2012 with regard to Māori development. The Panel recognizes the value of the Māori Strategic Framework but was surprised that the University's overarching strategic document, Strategic Direction to 2012, was not more forthright on the centrality of its commitment to Māori. The Panel encourages the University to identify a separate section related to Treaty commitments and Māori development in its new institutional strategic document.

> **R8. The Panel** *recommends* **that the University develop and implement mechanisms whereby it can evaluate its achievement against the objectives of its Māori Strategic Framework in a robust and systematic manner.**

The Panel considered the publication "Wananei – Celebrating Māori Success at Otago" to be an attractive way of communicating the University's commitment and achievements to its wider community.

6.3   Māori Student Access, Support and Achievement

Students who identified as Māori comprised 7.6% of total enrolments in 2010 (approx. 8.5% of domestic EFTS), reflecting a small but steady increase since 2006 (2006: 6.9% of total enrolments).[81] The University has a number of strategies designed to assist with access and transition. The most formal of these is the "enhanced admission" provision for Māori (along with Pacific) applicants who qualify for entrance.

The Panel was impressed by the initiatives aimed at fostering Māori student participation in science. These initiatives extend across New Zealand. The Tuia/Hawaiki, Tuia/Te Uru Māori Science Communication programme (or Science Wānanga) aims to increase the number of Māori students leaving school with the necessary background to pursue science or health science. A secondary outcome is the education of young Māori about health and science issues. The programme is run in partnership with rūnanga/iwi and is marae-based, with topics decided in consultation with local schools. It runs in Tolaga Bay and Te Araroa in partnership with Ngāti Porou and in partnership with Ngāi Tahu rūnanga in Murihiku and in Nelson/Marlborough. Wananga are planned for Northland, Gore and Dunedin.[82] In 2011 the programme was recognised internationally by UNESCO. In addition to the Science Wānanga, the University offers a "Hands-on Science" programme on the Dunedin campus for Year 11 and 12 students with places designated for Māori students, and an annual essay competition (in any discipline) for Year 12 and 13 students which has as a prize an expenses-paid week on the Dunedin campus. The Tū Kahika transition programme run through Foundation Studies Ltd also provides preparation for sciences and health sciences.

The University acknowledges that it is a challenge "to ensure that greater participation does not come at the expense of academic achievement". [83] It knows that support for students requires an ongoing investment. First year achievement rates for Māori students have increased over the last three years and, with 75.5% passing at least two-thirds of first year credits in 2010, are now close to the rates for all students (81.6%). Qualification completion numbers have also increased.[84] Some staff suggested there was attrition in first year because Māori students were not as forthcoming

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[81]   Annual Report 2010, p97. The Annual Report denominator includes international students. The Self-review report states 8.6% of domestic students are Māori; the 2010 report on the Statement of Objectives states 8.5%.
[82]   Overview of Science Wananga, March 2011.
[83]   Self-review report p38.
[84]   Statement of Objectives 2011-2013, October 2010, pp xviii; xx.

about gaining academic advice and support as they might be. Other staff suggested the University now needed to pay attention to increasing the rate of the transition to postgraduate study.

Efforts to enhance achievement encompass both academic and pastoral support and include early intervention strategies which identify low-achieving first year students and offer academic guidance, a research project in Health Sciences on factors influencing first-year retention, involvement of students with local iwi and marae and various orientation activities. The Māori Student Centre is central to the support provided. The Panel was particularly interested in the immersion activities run by Health Sciences. It was told that the marae residential experience "serves a lot more than [just] an introduction to Māori", providing for important social interaction between class peers. Staff spoke positively of these activities. However the Panel read and heard of difficulties experienced by Māori distance students in getting appropriate support. This was also mentioned in the 2011 review of distance learning, which referred to submissions related to "the reluctance of the Māori Centre to support distance students".[85]

> **C5.** **The Panel *commends* the engagement with iwi and the range of initiatives offered by the University to support current and potential Māori students. The Panel particularly commends the University on its Science Wānanga.**

6.4   Curriculum

The University's self-review report lists an array of papers across all faculties which address or include Māori issues and/or perspectives. In collaboration with the Library, the School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies, Te Tumu, has established a reference collection of core information resources which pertain to Te Ao Māori.[86] The Panel notes the expectations in the University's Graduate Profile that graduates will gain cultural understanding, which includes "knowledge and appreciation of biculturalism within the framework of the Treaty of Waitangi".[87] In its draft "Guidelines for Teaching at Otago" HEDC offers ideas as to how this might be achieved. The self-review report comments that this understanding "is expected to be fostered" but the Panel did not see or hear of ways of ensuring this happens, other than via the five-yearly department and programme reviews. The Panel thus supports the staff view mentioned above that regular reporting against the objective would assist the University in evaluating its progress and in targeting effort.

As already indicated, the Māori dimension is particularly important in Health Sciences. Three hauora Māori units exist within the Faculty of Medicine, each headed by an Associate Dean (Māori) and the School of Dentistry has a whānau dental clinic and sends all final year BDS students on 5-week placements with Māori health providers. The Panel was told that Māori health providers regard their relationships with the University very highly, whether these are formalized by Memoranda of Understanding or not.

Staff drew attention to practical difficulties around the opportunity to submit theses in te reo Māori. While it would be beneficial for the University to encourage this (given PBRF emphasis on research "by Māori researchers" and "into Māori matters"[88]) it was suggested that it might not necessarily be the best strategy for a student, who inevitably would have to translate the thesis into English for publication purposes.

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[85]   Review of Distance Learning 2011. p22.
[86]   Self-review report pp41-42.
[87]   Guidelines for Teaching at Otago, p3.
[88]   www.tec.govt.nz/Documents/Publications/PBRF-Quality-Evaluation-Guidelines-2012.pdf downloaded 23.11.11

R9. **The Panel *recommends* that the University not only proceed with a review of its policy regarding submission of theses in te reo Māori, but also explores other ways in which the use of te reo Māori can be proactively encouraged where appropriate.**

6.5 Māori Staff

Māori comprise just 3% of academic staff. The Panel was told that the University's objective of recruiting top researchers meant it did not proactively seek out Māori staff over other suitably qualified candidates. It was also considered difficult to "grow their own" Māori staff because of low staff turnover and because Māori PhD graduates are expected to "go away and conquer the world" when they graduate.

The Panel reviewed the 2009 Report to the Māori Academic Staff Caucus on Consultation Regarding the Career Development Needs of Māori Academic Staff. Issues arising from that review included: a perceived lack of support for staff; lack of recognition (by the University and by PBRF) of the complexity and time-consuming nature of research in the Māori community; lack of recognition (by the University and by PBRF) of the time-consuming nature of community service by Māori staff; the needs of the significant proportion of Māori staff who are in the process of postgraduate study[89]; the relative isolation of some Māori staff; and the overall lack of Māori staff.[90] During its interviews the Panel was told that current Māori staff need more support. The Panel read that the University is developing Māori competencies to be piloted in staff performance and development review processes and that "service to Māori" will be recognized in the promotions criteria for academic staff.[91] The Panel supports these developments, which would appear to address some of the issues identified in the 2009 review.

The University is referred to the following recommendations related to staff, proposed in Chapter 7:

The Panel *recommends* that the University develop a system of strategic workforce planning which pays attention not only to demographic impacts but also to recruitment of Māori staff and Pacific staff, as well as to succession planning and staff support. (R10, Section 7.2)

The Panel *recommends* that the University consider establishing an overarching Equity and Diversity Group (replacing the existing Gender Equity group) to explore the spectrum of strategic and organisational issues related to equity and diversity. (R12, Section 7.5)

6.6 Māori Research

Goal 6 of the University Research Action Plan is to "foster research and partnership with Māori". Activities proposed include: fostering kaupapa Māori research and research which contributes to Māori well-being; promoting research conducted, written or produced in te reo Māori; consultation with Māori communities through communication with the Ngāi Tahu Research Consultation

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[89] 25 out of 46 Māori staff interviewed for the review.
[90] Report to the Māori Academic Caucus on Consultation Regarding the Career Development Needs of Māori Academic Staff pp34-36.
[91] Report on the Review of the Implementation of the Māori Strategic Framework, October 2010, p24.

Committee, NTRCC[92]; encouragement of Māori participation in research including scholarships for postgraduate students; and staff professional development related to engagement with Māori perspectives.[93] Staff reported on successful research projects, including joint initiatives with iwi. They said that support from the Research Office is "exemplary" and the Māori Research Consultation Committee is "invaluable". The University's inaugural Māori research symposium "Hui Poutama" was considered to be a successful means of bringing staff together to share research by and related to Māori. The Panel noted that the review of the Research Consultation with Māori Policy observed that the Ngāi Tahu Research Consultation Committee was "overloaded" with proposals and that a Māori Research Development Committee "would provide valuable advice to the NTRCC on current and future developments in University research".[94]

[92] An independent committee which "is an expression of the Treaty of Waitangi relationship between the University and Ngāi Tahu represented locally by Ngā Rūnaka o Araiteru. (Research Consultation with Māori Policy – Special Topic Review, 2009, p2.)

[93] University of Otago Research Action Plan 2008 to 2012.

[94] Research Consultation with Māori Policy – Special Topic Review, 2009, p4.

7

Staff: Academic, Management and Professional Support

7. 1 Recruitment, Induction and Confirmation

During its visits to the University of Otago, members of the Panel repeatedly heard how "this University values its staff". The Panel is also aware that the standards of excellence to which the University aspires can be achieved only through excellent staff. The University states that "the global skills shortage means recruitment and induction are strategic issues for the University".[95]

In 2010 the University of Otago employed 1,599 FTE academic staff (of whom 432 were research-only staff) and 2,152 FTE general staff.[96] The University has an on-line recruitment service which incorporates induction advice from the time an individual first makes contact. The University has a range of services aimed at facilitating retention, including orientation sessions, online material, support for department Heads and assistance with accommodation. Targeted workshops and induction programmes for new academic staff are provided by HEDC.

The Panel was impressed with what it read and heard about the Department Induction Facilitators (DIF) initiative. This process outlines expected HR and departmental activities to support a new academic staff member. Activities are coordinated by the Department Induction Facilitator who is trained and supported by HR. New staff reported that they had been assisted by a variety of people but also commented that the system was not as good at inducting internal appointees as some knowledge was taken for granted. An issue for Facilitators, it seems, is that having been trained in a period of low growth they do not always have opportunity to exercise their skills with a variety of new academic staff.

All new academic staff at the University of Otago are placed on a five year confirmation pathway. The Panel heard that the process is "owned" by the Staffing Advisory Committee and is managed by HR. Each division has generic standards (e.g., the number of research outputs or grant income expected) which the Head of Department uses to negotiate what will be required of an individual staff member over the next five years. The agreed objectives are then signed off by the PVC and then by the DVC (A&I). Confirmation is subject to a review of progress at intervals of 18, 30, 42 and 54 months. Once objectives have been achieved, after a minimum of three progress reports, the staff member's contract is confirmed.[97] The Panel was told that there is only a 3% failure rate in the confirmation process. Staff made various suggestions to explain the high retention rate, including the quality of staff recruited, the pathway processes, excellent support from a department Head, department culture and collegiality, and very good support networks.

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[95] Self-review report p45.
[96] Self-review report p44.
[97] Self-review report p46.

    C6. The Panel *commends* the success of the confirmation pathway processes, evidenced in the low attrition, including the robust nature of the expectations and evaluations during the probationary period.

Training for Heads of Departments assists in the recruitment, induction and confirmation processes. The University thus appears to have taken a proactive and systematic approach to ensuring excellent staff are recruited and retained. This is supported by HR advisers who are located both centrally and in the divisions, including on the Wellington and Christchurch campuses. Staff spoke appreciatively of the work of these advisers.

7.2   Performance Review, Promotion and Succession Planning

The Panel was somewhat surprised to learn that notwithstanding the University's careful approach to recruitment and retention, it does not do any formal workforce planning at an institutional level, nor have any systematic succession planning. Discussing this matter, staff referred to the need to consider the ageing academic workforce in New Zealand, but the scope of discussion did not extend beyond that. Responsibility for workforce planning was deferred to Heads of Departments (some of whom did refer to identifying potential Heads, for instance nominating such people to attend the leadership courses designed for Heads).

    R10.The Panel *recommends* that the University develop a system of strategic workforce planning which pays attention not only to demographic impacts but also to the recruitment of Māori staff and Pacific staff, as well as to succession planning and staff support.

Once appointments are confirmed, academic staff at senior lecturer level and above have annual or biennial performance reviews which are partly formative, in that staff are appraised against the performance expectations of the level of employment to which they aspire. Other academic staff have "regular" reviews, which include establishing professional development needs. Heads of department who were interviewed were unclear how their own performance is reviewed as Heads but PVCs explained this did happen with review against objectives set for the department. PVCs also meet with Heads on (at least) a monthly basis. There are no institutional KPIs for department Heads. The Panel was pleased to hear Heads say that the University had "invested heavily" in supporting Heads, that they had good support and that being a Head of Department is "not a burden any more".

General staff have an annual performance and development review. There is also a General Staff Award for exceptional performance which recognizes outstanding contributions to the University.[98]

7.3   Professional Development and Staff Support

Some aspects of professional development have been covered in Chapters 4 and 5. The University differentiates leadership development, academic scholarly and professional development and general staff development. The main provider of leadership and general staff development is the

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[98]   Self-review report pp47, 48.

Human Resources Division; the main provider of scholarly and professional development related to teaching and learning is HEDC.

General staff development was explored only to the extent that this was an aspect of the assessment of quality equivalence across the campuses (see Section 7.6).

Staff spoke highly of the academic leadership programme and of the training and support which Heads of departments receive. They also spoke highly of the support provided by HEDC. Statistics were provided to the Panel on attendances at various kinds of workshops: in 2010 there were 89 professional development workshops with a total attendance of 1110. A 2011 review of the "Step aHead" Programme for academic Heads of department revealed that since 2009 43 new Heads and 8 directors of centres had attended four 2-day induction courses; just under 90% of departments have had a Head on the course as participants. Since 2009 the range of participants eligible to attend has been extended to include associate deans and other nominees of Heads (with a view to succession planning and distribution of department leadership responsibilities). These leadership programmes are also offered in both Christchurch and Wellington.[99]

The Panel was aware that HEDC had recently been reviewed. It received reports at each step in the review process, from self-review to follow-up, and met with several staff. It was clear that some of the recommendations of the review had been contentious and it was pleasing to see how both HEDC and the DVC (A&I) were working through these in a thoughtful and thorough manner. The Panel noted that while the review panel considered HEDC needed "to work more closely with other sectors in the University, especially Human resources, ITS, the Library, Distance Learning, and the Career Development Centre" it nevertheless commended HEDC (C11) on the "respect for and connectedness of individual HEDC staff, especially within the University".[100] The recommendation that responsibilities for leadership development (HR) and academic development (HEDC) be differentiated has been actioned. In response to its review recommendations, HEDC considered the joint provision, with HR, of the Women and Leadership and women's professional development programmes to be appropriate. (See Section 7.5).

It was clear to the Panel that HEDC provides leadership in the development of teaching and learning, and that this is used and appreciated by staff and, for relevant workshops, by postgraduate students.

> **C7. The Panel *commends* the range of activities provided by HEDC and the effectiveness of the University's HOD/senior leadership programme, including the opportunity provided to assist with succession planning.**

Study leave provision allows for extended focus on research or clinical skills. The University recognizes teaching excellence by way of annual awards to teachers and to postgraduate supervisors. Along with national award winners these staff constitute "a local community of outstanding teaching and learning practitioners ... that willingly shares its expertise with other staff through workshops and forums".[101]

At department level, academic staff may negotiate a scholarship development plan with the Head of Department, establishing goals and reviewing progress towards them on at least an annual basis.

The Panel heard of a range of initiatives to assist in keeping the University at the forefront of use of digital technologies in teaching and learning, including ITS development of "Unitube" and a uni imap, appointment of a senior lecturer to provide e-learning support to the medical schools, CALT grants

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[99]   Memorandum on Step aHead programme, 30 September 2011.
[100]   University of Otago Review of the Higher Education Development Centre 2010, pp2, 26.
[101]   Self-review report p47.

to develop software and explore ways of using e-technologies and employment of students to help students. This work is provided by both ITS and HEDC who also have a specialist educational technology/media team. Several of these initiatives are also of direct support to students.

7.4   Workloads

The University has adopted the principle of workload models with two main objectives, namely "to inculcate the University's strategic goals into the academic culture at departmental level" and to ensure an equitable distribution of workload. Responsibility for development and implementation of workload models sits with the academic divisions such that each division might develop workload models that are appropriate for its disciplines.[102]

Assessment of the effectiveness of the workload model with staff indicated that the former objective amounted to ensuring appropriate time is protected for research (no similar argument was made of protecting time for teaching) and at the simplest level this was given effect via a 40/40/20 workload allocation model. Achievement of the latter objective appeared to vary across departments. On the one hand the Panel heard that there is no policy "but everyone does it"; on the other hand it heard that workload models exist in all divisions, but not in all departments within divisions.

Processes which were reported ranged from simple allocations and formulae to complicated spreadsheets. While Heads noted that transparency was the most important consideration, the Panel could see risks attached to the variability of application, particularly where a department has non-standard weighting in postgraduate, professional or community activities. Pro-Vice-Chancellors suggested that a central workload model wouldn't work. However the audit Panel does suggest that the principles underlying an institution-wide workload model need to be more detailed than a simple 40/40/20 allocation. In addition to protecting individuals' time for research, high quality teaching and community and institutional service, and activities such as postgraduate supervision and pastoral support, the model needs to ensure the academic programme is deliverable by the available academic staff without compromising either academic quality or the University's obligation to be a good employer.

The Panel understands that the application of workload models is a contentious issue across the University, but it remains of the view that consistency would provide for better management of the increasingly competing expectations within departments and divisions as well as aid transparency and equity across departments and divisions.

>   R11.The Panel *recommends* that the University develop a generic set of principles and guidelines which underpin workload allocations and lead to more apparent equity, transparency and consistency across the University.

The Panel does not underestimate the amount of work involved in identifying a core set of workload principles. The University is urged to remain vigilant on the development and application of workload models currently in operation in its academic units, to continue to share good practice with regard to workload planning and modelling and to be alert for and responsive to instances of inequitable outcomes.

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[102]   Self-review report p49.

7.5   Equity

The Cycle 3 audit recommended that the University review its strategies to address gender imbalances "at all levels" across the institution. At that stage the University already had a Women in Leadership at Otago (WiLO) programme as well as a peer support and a mentoring programme for both general and academic women staff.[103] The University also supports senior female staff to attend the New Zealand Women in Leadership (NZWiL) programme. [104]

In response to the Cycle 3 comments a working party was established in 2008 to explore gender equity issues. As a consequence, a Gender Equity Advisory Committee has been established and a senior academic woman appointed as convener. The Gender Equity Working Party reported that the staff it consulted did not believe the University's systems and policies obviously or intentionally disadvantaged women. Rather, a range of gendered values and behaviours at times impeded women's advancement.[105]

During its interviews the Panel heard mixed opinions about gender equity, from those who said "it is not about gender" to others who said "gender is always an issue" and those who valued the initiatives to support women staff, especially the Women in Leadership programme. HEDC has commented that the success of the Academic Women's Mentoring Programme, which it oversees, is such that it believes the University should make a mentoring programme available to all staff.[106] The Panel did hear other views regarding the need for support for those with family commitments (whether men or women). The Panel also explored issues around people with disabilities, racism, cultural support and homophobia. Though none of these emerged as a systemic problem at the University of Otago, it is the Panel's view that a university must remain vigilant on these matters. HR staff are sensitive to this, reporting on how they endeavour to demonstrate inclusivity in their training programmes. It is noted that the Ethical Behaviour policy which relates to equity and diversity is well known on campus (see Section 4.9).

Given the mixed views about gender equity and, for at least some staff, a hesitance about privileging women's issues over those which might affect other groups, the Panel sees an opportunity for the University to widen its consideration of equity issues at an institutional level. Such a group might also address a perceived tension between the University's priorities for appointing only the very best academic staff with an under-representation of equity groups, in particular Māori, Pacific and women.

> **R12. The Panel *recommends* that the University consider establishing an overarching Equity and Diversity Group (replacing the existing Gender Equity group) to explore the spectrum of strategic and organisational issues related to equity and diversity.**

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[103]   Cycle 3 Mid-term Report and Update,2011, pp35-37.
[104]   Self-review report p49.
[105]   Report of the Working Party on Gender Equity 2009, pp5-6.
[106]   HEDC Six-month Report on its 2010 review, p9.

7.6   The Multi-campus Dimension

The University of Otago has campuses in Christchurch and Wellington, an office in Auckland[107] and has recently merged with the former Dunedin College of Education (which includes a campus in Invercargill). In addition, the medical schools have "distributed delivery" students and clinical supervisors in hospitals and general practices in various other locations. The outreaches pose challenges, the most immediate of which at the time of the audit was the recovery of the Christchurch campus – infrastructure, staff wellbeing and student wellbeing – subsequent to the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. In addition to speaking to staff and students in Dunedin about these campuses, Panel members visited the Wellington Health Sciences campus and spoke by teleconference to the Dean and Head of Campus in Christchurch.

The Panel explored the extent to which there is consistency of processes and services, for staff and students, at the Wellington and Christchurch campuses.

Given the emphasis the University of Otago places on collegiality, the Panel was interested in the extent to which staff on other campuses felt part of the University. One Wellington staff member likened the relationship with Dunedin to being "dual citizenship" with a "mothership"; another referred to Wellington as a "peripheral campus". There was agreement however that the relationship between Wellington and Dunedin has improved significantly, with improved communications, designated positions – e.g., learning advisers; Postgraduate Liaison officers; HR Adviser – on the regional campuses and with key staff travelling between campuses (in both directions). An unresolved issue remains who should pay for this travel. Several comments were made about the complexity of budgeting for devolved campuses. Several staff spoke of how Wellington staff miss out on opportunities provided in Dunedin but that efforts are made to counter this, such as representation on committees; rotation of locations for meetings; locally-provided workshops; and use of technology for interaction with remote colleagues.

An added benefit which emerged are the relationships built by staff with other tertiary providers in their cities: Wellington staff referred to the "vibrant tertiary hub" in which they are located, though some felt the visibility of the University of Otago in Wellington was not as good as it might be. It appeared that Christchurch staff might be less engaged with Dunedin activity, although efforts to achieve this were described. Staff who visited Dunedin had access to courses there. Library resources (for students or staff) can be accessed "from anywhere in the country" and there is good liaison with local District Health Boards for library matters. Staff in Wellington reported they had opportunity for involvement in University strategic planning and other policy matters if they wished to be involved.

Dunedin HR staff felt the provision for general staff development outside Dunedin was not as strong as desired. The University has appointed satellite HR managers, which should assist in improving this provision. Greater use of on-line resources is also envisaged. They said there were many dimensions to academic staff development, referring to a range of delivery modes including face-to-face. They said they and HEDC "never refuse a request" from staff on other campuses. This response was confirmed by HEDC.

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[107] In addition to housing the schools liaison service and the Enterprise Office (whose role is to build linkages between the University and the business community), the Auckland Centre supports distance learning programmes and the Postgraduate Diploma in Dietetics. www.otago.ac.nz/aucklandcentre/about/ downloaded 20.10.11.

Overall the Panel gained the impression that staff and students in Christchurch and Wellington are indeed "dual citizens" and that considerable effort is made to overcome any impediments created by distance. Staff do not seem to be prevented from collegial interaction by distance from their peers.

> **A3. The Panel *affirms* the University's initiatives to ensure staff in Wellington and Christchurch have access to relevant support, professional development and training, and the Panel encourages the University to continue to explore a wider range of delivery mechanisms, including self-paced activities.**

The Panel did not meet any staff from the former College of Education but it did hear about the difficulties surrounding the merger with the College of Education, most of which have been experienced by other universities that have undergone similar mergers. In the case of the University of Otago an additional problem was that the University already had a teacher education programme. Inevitably job cuts accompanied rationalization. A tension persists with the school sector over the relevance of research to teaching practice. However the Panel was told that the College has strong leadership and a clear research ethos is developing. A legacy of employment conditions persists but confirmation tracks are now similar and equitable.

The Panel did not visit Invercargill or talk to anyone from the Southland campus, which provides secondary, primary bilingual, primary and early childhood teacher education programmes to approximately 200 students.

8

Community Engagement

8.1 Community Connections: Relationship with the City

The University makes a commitment to community engagement which enhances student learning, contributes to excellence and relevance of academic programmes and which contributes to national and international progress. Two Strategic Imperatives relate to community engagement, *viz* *"Contributing to the national good and international progress"* and *"Strengthening external engagement".*[108]

The University of Otago is not only the major employer in Dunedin, but it also provides over 20,000 student consumers and is involved in a number of important business initiatives. A survey of academic staff activity in 2010 valued the University's contribution through community service of various kinds at $22.4million. This figure includes activity at national level, but the survey does report at least half of the respondents gave time and professional expertise to community projects and activities (47.1%), organisation of community outreach activities (56.7%) and presentations to non-university groups (68.6%).[109]

Given the centrality of the University in a small city, the "town-and-gown" relationship is therefore critical to both parties. The Panel heard from stakeholders, as well as university staff, that this is a very positive relationship. The relationship is underpinned by a position for the Mayor on the University Council and by the Tertiary Sector Steering Group which also sets up and facilitates initiatives on matters of mutual interest to the two tertiary partners (the University of Otago and Otago Polytechnic) and the city (e.g., quality of student accommodation; clean streets; student conduct). Most students live in close proximity to the University. The "Campus Cop", Campus Watch and Proctor roles are thus important in maintaining good relationships with city neighbours. Stakeholders commented that student behaviour is "much better than people think", and that the media over-play problems.

During its time in Dunedin the Panel became aware of the extent to which local people are made aware of University activity (particularly through the local newspaper, the Otago Daily Times, which is very supportive) and of the awareness local people have of University partnerships which support the city. Stakeholders who were interviewed could cite numerous examples of collaborative initiatives – for example, the Business Incubator (which also includes Otago Polytechnic), a city-funded Chair of Entrepreneurship, the new stadium. Many other activities where stakeholders valued the University contribution were cited, ranging from contributions to regional sports trust activities to sharing music tutors for the Southern Sinfonia. It was suggested that with so many international students living in the city the residents also become students in the extent to which they were exposed to learning about other cultures through interaction with these students. The Panel was told of research aimed at helping organisations which "are engaging on the front line", for instance work with the Salvation Army. It was interested to hear that since the Christchurch

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[108] Self-review report p50.
[109] Academic Staff Community Service 2010 pp11-12.

earthquake there has developed "a better spirit of volunteerism" among staff and students which might be capitalised on to develop volunteer projects. The Panel was told by stakeholders that the University has a great story to tell and should make more of the positive things it does in the community, particularly by "internal marketing" to local businesses.

> **C8. The Panel *commends* the University on its very clear commitment to the city of Dunedin and on its achievement of gaining a similar commitment by the city to the University.**

8.2   Other Community Connections

As indicated above, the University monitors the community service activities of its staff. In 2010 more than 92% of staff surveyed reported involvement in such activity, accounting for over 7% of their time.[110] In addition to its very strong town-gown relationship, the University extends its links to other communities of interest. A major initiative which reflects the University's engagement with the community is the University's role in supporting the New Zealand International Science Festival's "Everyday Science" event.

> **A4. The Panel *affirms* the University's wide-ranging interactions which benefit its various communities of engagement as well as its own staff and students.**

8.3   Internships, Advisory Boards and External Input to Programmes

In addition to the clinical placements used by health science students and practice placements for teacher education students, the University has a variety of internships, for example in business and social work. It was suggested to the Panel that there is far greater capacity to develop internship opportunities in the city as a way of introducing students to work-based learning. Students might also serve on Boards of community organisations. Students interviewed reported positively on the intern experiences they had had but some felt that such opportunities in the city are currently relatively rare. The Panel supports the University exploring the feasibility of incorporating work-based and community service activity into student programmes more widely than is currently the case.

University staff contribute to various advisory boards and committees appropriate to their expertise, while several University Boards of Studies and Advisory Boards include external experts or stakeholders.[111] The University engages with relevant professional and industry groups when developing new programmes and Graduating Year Reviews include evidence of employer acceptability of graduates. It is noted that the new Graduate Profile includes attributes "valued by employers".

Community engagement, clinical education and professional placements are integral to teaching and learning and professional practice in the health sciences, including medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, radiation therapy, physiotherapy, and nursing. Because of this, the Division of Health Sciences has particular relationships throughout the country which are critical to its activity, in particular with District Health Boards, hospitals, general practice clinics and other healthcare providers. External accreditation assures quality of the academic and professional programmes and the University

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[110] Academic Staff Community Service 2010, p7. The proportion is higher for Heads of Department (8.6%) than for other staff (7.1 – 7.8%).

[111] Academic Staff Community Service 2010, p8-9; self-review Report p52.

works closely with key professional associations, for example the Pharmacy Council of New Zealand. The Division's cultural immersion programmes are also a feature of learning in health sciences (see Section 6.2).

The University's research and commercial engagement with industry is facilitated primarily through its Research and Enterprise Office, Otago Innovation Ltd and the Centre for Innovation. The Career Development Centre provides a variety of services which foster engagement between the University, employers and students (see also Sections 4.9 and 5.4).

8.4   Relationships with Schools

The University's outreach programmes to schools are strongly focused on science and include "Hands on Science", Science Wānanga (see Section 6.2), the Advanced School Sciences Academy, interschool Chemistry quiz and the "Chemistry matters" column in the Otago Daily Times, as well as a "Gifted and Talented Programme" run by the Department of Marine Sciences. The departments of Chemistry and Physics run teaching outreach into Otago and Southland, in particular for rural schools with limited resources for science teaching.[112]

8.5   Relationships with Māori Communities

Relationships with Māori communities are the focus of Chapter 6.

8.6   Relationships with Pacific Peoples

The University's *Strategic Direction to 2012* states that the University will "strengthen its links with Pacific communities both within New Zealand and in the Pacific region". The University recognizes that recruitment of Pacific staff and students is a challenge. The 2011 Update to the Strategic Directions to 2012 indicates a number of initiatives are now in place. The Pacific Peoples Reference Group which includes senior members of the Pacific community from Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland advises the Vice-Chancellor on matters relating to Pacific students and to Pacific issues. The Division of Health Sciences has a Pacific strategic framework which other PVCs are aware of and emulate. Each division has a Pacific Islands liaison person. The Division of Humanities has a Māori and Pacific Advisory Board and has trialled a Pacific Peoples Teaching Assistantship scheme.[113]

The University is committed to supporting development and engagement in the Pacific region, as well as supporting local Pacific students to gain a university education. It uses University of Otago House at the National University of Samoa as a base for academic activity involving Otago staff. A University-wide Pacific Strategic Framework and Pacific Research Protocol are being developed (aligned with similar documents for Māori – see Chapter 6).[114]   A Pacific Postgraduate reference group was established in 2002 to support Pacific research students. The Panel noted that the Pacific Postgraduate symposium in 2011 (the eighth such symposium) included research projects from 25

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[112]   Self-review report p54.
[113]   Strategic Direction to 2012: Action Plan Update, 2011 pp21-22.
[114]   Self-review report p55.

students on Pacific topics.[115] The Panel supports the University's Enhancement 18 related to development and implementation of the Pacific Strategic Framework.

The University is aware that there is significant scope for progress on recruitment, retention and achievement of Pacific students, and senior staff recognize that this might require a focus on secondary schools and parents to lift aspirations. Staff also recognize that Pacific people are not a homogeneous group.

The Panel heard of some of the challenges facing Divisions trying to support Pacific staff and students when there are very few staff in any one division. They tend to work across divisions for activities such as mentoring. It was noted that the University now has a number of Pacific alumni who participate in camps for current students. The Panel was given a positive student assessment of the University's Pacific Islands Centre.

The Division of Health Sciences, which has connections with a medical school in Suva and a special partnership with the National University of Samoa and the Centre for International Health, has longer and stronger links with the Pacific than do other divisions. Health Sciences are particularly aware of the need to serve the Pacific communities and to lift performance of Pacific students. An Associate Dean (Pacific) was appointed in Health Sciences in 2009. The Division of Health Sciences has a Pacific Strategy Group which includes a community representative, and a student support action plan. One good practice initiative reported within Health Sciences has been to train Pacific students as instructors for the PASS programme. The Panel heard that the significant community involvement intrinsic to academic positions in Pacific Health pose workload and support challenges.

Other relationships with the Pacific region include collaboration between the University of Otago Faculty of Law and The University of the South Pacific Law School (Vanuatu) and a formal relationship between the University of Otago and the University of Papua New Guinea.

> **A5.** **The Panel *affirms* the range of activities supporting the successful involvement of Pacific people with the University of Otago, and encourages the University to explore how initiatives might be extended across the University, using where appropriate the strategies formulated by the Division of Health Sciences as exemplars of good practice.**

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[115] Pacific voices VIII, 2011.

9

External Academic Partnerships and Collaborations

9.1   National Collaborations

Consistent with its strategic imperative to strengthen external engagement, the University has a range of partnerships with other New Zealand universities, the Government and bodies such as Crown Research Institutes. The Panel supports the initiatives of the University of Otago, Wellington to engage with other tertiary providers in the Wellington region to enhance the professional networks and development of staff on this campus.

The government-supported "Leading Thinkers" project is deemed by the University to be a "great success" as an investment in people. Many of the 27 projects under this initiative at Otago have included establishment of a chair and the establishment of centres. Other research projects founded on relationships with external organisations provide opportunities for research student involvement. Examples of research collaborations include the Centre for Chemical and Physical Oceanography which is a collaboration with NIWA[116], the Centre for Reproduction and Genomics collaboration with AgResearch; the Centre for Bioengineering and Nanomedicine which involves both Dunedin and Christchurch campuses as well as the University of Canterbury.[117]

Collaborations which foster teaching developments include programmes co-taught with other universities, such as Marine Science co-taught with the University of Canterbury and Physics co-taught with the University of Auckland. A collaboration with Otago Polytechnic facilitates teacher education for people with industry experience and the Science Communication programme in natural history film-making is cited as an example of a collaboration with the private sector (Natural History New Zealand). [118]

While the Panel did not assess these relationships directly, it is clear that the University of Otago has strong linkages with key national partners. However the University notes that most collaborations are between individuals or small groups and has put in place mechanisms for monitoring and ensuring consistency of arrangements and fit with the University's strategic directions

9.2   International Partnerships

At the international level formal partnerships are overseen by the PVC (International) who reports to the DVC (Academic & International) but also has a strong direct relationship with the Vice-Chancellor

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[116]   National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research.
[117]   Self-review report pp59, 61
[118]   Self-review report p60.

for oversight of strategy. The PVC (International) is supported by an Internationalisation Committee, chaired by the DVC (A&I).

The Panel heard that the University had accumulated a large number of memoranda of understanding with international universities. The Panel was pleased to hear that a key task of the PVC (I) has been to review these and to develop a set of criteria which both MoUs and Student Exchange Agreements must meet.

China has been a recent strategic focus for University international developments. The University of Otago has joined with other New Zealand universities, supported by Ministries of Economic Development, Education and Foreign Affairs and Trade in establishing the New Zealand Centre at Peking University. Since joining this project the University of Otago has developed other initiatives with the University of Peking, taking opportunities to host Chinese students at Otago. The University of Otago also partners with the Confucius Institute hosted by the University of Auckland.[119]

The Panel supports the University's Enhancement 20, to undertake a stocktake of existing MoUs.[120]

9.3   Matariki

The University of Otago has been a leading player in the establishment of the Matariki Network which includes Dartmouth College (USA), Durham University (England),Queen's University (Canada), Tübingen University (Germany), Uppsala University (Sweden), and the University of Western Australia.[121] The universities share particular attributes, including having a similar ethos, being institutions where leading researchers are directly engaged in all aspects of teaching, being long-standing universities in their countries, fostering student personal development through community living and being located outside the capital or largest city. With "partnering for a better world" as a tagline, the focus is on enhancing the qualities of member institutions, and contributing to problems facing society through collaborative research and service. In this spirit, the network has focussed recent annual workshops on "Bioethics and Health" and "Renewable Energy", has run a workshop on Peace and Conflict Studies, and is about to share a project on how to reduce "dangerous behaviour" (such as alcohol-induced behaviour) of students.

In addition to student and staff exchange, and the possibility of connecting students virtually to share different perspectives, membership of the network provides the opportunity to undertake "deep benchmarking" at the wider institutional level. Examples to date include work by librarians, a project on student services and comparison of services in residential colleges. The Panel heard that one advantage of the international network is that it overcame the reluctance to share good practice which is sometimes found within the competitive context of a national institutional network.

While joint teaching initiatives have not yet been developed, the University of Otago does provide incentives for students and staff to favour Matariki partners for exchanges – there might be top-up funding for research projects and the University offers travel awards to partner institutions.

From its interviews the Panel concluded that staff are well aware of the Matariki arrangement. Pro-Vice-Chancellors spoke of initiatives within their divisions and referred to staff finding opportunities

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[119] Self-review report p58.
[120] Self-review report p57.
[121] www.matarikinetwork.com/index.html downloaded 23.11.11

facilitated by the network. The Panel supports Enhancement 21, to ensure the investment the University of Otago has made in Matariki adds value to the University.[122]

9.4   Student Exchanges

The University hosts study abroad and student exchange programmes and wishes to increase the number of students gaining an international experience in this way. More than 80 institutional student exchange agreements, with universities in over 30 countries, are in place. The University has three Exchange Advisers in the International office, each adviser having a regional portfolio and also an internal portfolio of divisions with which they liaise. The Panel was impressed that the number of outbound students had in fact increased in the last five years (from 178 to 251).[123] Senior staff are sensitive to the opportunities available for students who do not travel to gain from incoming exchange students, but as previously noted (Section 4.7), not all staff or students take advantage of these.

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[122]   Self-review report p58.
[123]   Self-review report p57.

Acknowledgments

The Panel thanks in particular Professor Harlene Hayne (Vice-Chancellor), Professor Vernon Squire (Deputy Vice-Chancellor), Ms Margaret Morgan (Director, Quality Advancement) and Ms K.C. Worden (Quality Advancement Administrator) for their support of the audit process and for the University's warm welcome to the Panel. The Panel appreciates the effort of all those who contributed to the University's self-assessment process, the compilation of the self-assessment Portfolio, including the self-review report, and the organisation associated with the site visit. The Panel was particularly grateful for the efforts made by the University to keep it updated with supporting documentation produced between the date of submission of the portfolio and the audit site visit.

The Panel thanks the University for the sensitivity with which discussions concerning the Christchurch campus were handled, and staff and students at the Wellington campus for agreeing to meet members of the Panel at short notice.

The Panel is most grateful for the openness and frankness of all those who gave their time to appear before the Panel, in Dunedin and Wellington, and for their constructive comments and observations.

The Panel's interviews took place in two of the residential colleges, St Margaret's College and Abbey College. The assistance of the staff in those colleges is appreciated and, in particular, the support of Ms Lynda Hartstonge who oversaw arrangements at St Margaret's College.

Audit Panel

Chair of the Panel
Professor Ajit Narayanan
Auckland University of Technology

New Zealand members of the Panel
Professor Eric Pawson
University of Canterbury

Professor Raewyn Dalziel
University of Auckland

Associate Professor Gordon Suddaby
Massey University

Overseas member of the Panel
Professor Victor Minichiello
University of New England, Australia

In attendance:
Dr Jan Cameron
Director, New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit

Ms Heather Kirkwood
Quality Enhancement and Communications Manager, New Zealand Universities Academic
Audit Unit

Appendix 1:
University of Otago
Statistical Overview 2010

The following information is derived from the University of Otago 2010 *Annual Report* pp.96-99.

Student Enrolments	Students	% of Students	EFTS	% of EFTS
Domestic	19,490	88%	18,130	92.2%
International (full fee paying)	2,649	12%	1,531	7.8%
Total	22,139		19,661	

Enrolments by Ethnicity[124]	% of all EFTS
European/Pakeha	75.6%
Māori	7.6%
Asian	17.2%
Pacific Islanders	3.1%
Middle Eastern/African/Latin American	3.1%
Other/Unknown	2.5%

Gender (n=22,139)

Male	43.0%
Female	57.0%

Full-time/Part-time (n=22,139)

Full-time	72.6%
Part-time	27.4%

Home area of students (n=22,139)		%
Dunedin	5,486	24.8%
Otago/Southland	2,216	10.0%
Remainder South Island	3,567	16.1%
North Island	7,891	35.4%
Overseas (inc. NZCZ overseas)	2,791	12.6%
Unknown	188	0.9%

Accommodation (n=22,139)		%
Own or parents' home	4,761	21.5%
Residential college	3,265	14.8%
Sharing (flatting)	12,120	54.7%
Private board	307	0.2%
Other/Unknown	1,686	7.6%

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[124] Students who reported more than one ethnic group are counted once in each group reported. The total therefore exceeds 100%.

Enrolments by Division, EFTS

Commerce	3,526
Health Sciences	5,620
Humanities	5,971
Sciences	4,490
Other University (inc. Continuing Ed.)	55
Other (inc. Foundation Studies)	257

Enrolments by Qualification Type, students

Doctoral	1,324
Masters	1,185
Bachelors Honours	777
Bachelors ordinary	14,076
Postgraduate Diplomas and Certificates	1,657
Graduate Diplomas and Certificates	440
Undergraduate diplomas and Certificates	106
Intermediates	1,027
Miscellaneous	1,283
Sub-degree	264

International Enrolments, students

Undergraduate	1,873
Postgraduate	776
Total	**2,649**

Staff, FTE[125]	Male	Female
Teaching & research	680	487
Research-only	169	264
General	741	1,411
Total	**1590**	**2,162**

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[125] From 2010 Annual Report p46.

Appendix 2:
University of Otago – Enhancements Identified

Enhancement 1: To review and renew the University's *Strategic Direction to 2012* document.

Enhancement 2: To undertake targeted meta-analyses of review reports, for the purpose of identifying trends and themes that have the potential to inform future planning and development in a wide range of areas.

Enhancement 3: To communicate the Policy Framework and establish an effective process for the ongoing management of University policies.

Enhancement 4: To provide a more detailed picture of the postgraduate experience at the University from 2012, by introducing a new postgraduate section into both the Graduate Opinion Survey and the Student Opinion Survey.

Enhancement 5: To revise the current teaching and course evaluation instruments and make progress towards better access to evaluation data for staff and departments.

Enhancement 6: To fine-tune the Limitation of Enrolment process on the basis of recommendations made in the 2011 Review.

Enhancement 7: To implement the new Student Management System (SMS), and to review its effectiveness after one year of operation.

Enhancement 8: To implement a revised Graduate Profile and seek ways to make it more visible and meaningful for staff and students.

Enhancement 9: To further develop peer learning support.

Enhancement 10: To further develop programmes, such as Otago Language Match, Kiwihosts and the International Mentor Programme, that help integrate international and domestic students; and to explore other initiatives that will encourage both staff and domestic students to recognise the value that international students bring to the classroom.

Enhancement 11: To give consideration to making scholarships for part-time postgraduate candidates more widely available.

Enhancement 12: To revise the Māori Strategic Framework, building on the strategic gains achieved since its adoption in 2007.

Enhancement 13: To work collaboratively with a variety of stakeholders to review successful initiatives and consider the expansion of Māori student transition programmes into other areas of study.

Enhancement 14: To find ways to "showcase" the breadth and depth of Māori curriculum developments in the University, across the various disciplines.

Enhancement 15: To advance the research skills of the University's academic staff by means of appropriately focused professional development.

Enhancement 16: To replace the current Scholarship Development process with one that is less bureaucratic and more targeted on staff who need academic guidance.

Enhancement 17: To reflect on how relevant external engagement by staff can be assessed for impact and quality in promotion criteria, without diluting the research and teaching focus.

Enhancement 18: To finalise and begin to implement a University-wide Pacific Strategic Framework and a Pacific Research Protocol.

Enhancement 19: To finalise and enact an Environmental Sustainability Plan.

Enhancement 20: To conduct a "stocktake" of staff's international collaborations to help identify gaps in the University's formal international partnerships, at country or institutional level.

Enhancement 21: To ensure that the investment in the Matariki Network of Universities (MNU) brings added value to the University of Otago and our MNU partners, through enhanced opportunities for staff and students.

Appendix 3:

New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit - Te Wāhanga Tātari

Mission:

To contribute to the advancement of New Zealand 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.

Terms of reference:

- to consider and review the universities' mechanisms for monitoring and enhancing the ongoing academic quality of academic programmes, their delivery and their learning outcomes, and the extent to which the universities are achieving their stated aims and objectives in these areas;

- to comment on the extent to which procedures in place in individual universities are applied effectively;

- to comment on the extent to which procedures in place in individual universities reflect good practice in maintaining quality;

- to identify and commend to universities national and international good practice in regard to academic quality assurance and quality enhancement,

- to assist the university sector to improve its educational quality;

- to advise the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee on quality assurance matters;

- to carry out such contract work as is compatible with its audit role.

The Audit Unit acts as a fully independent body in the conduct of its audit activities.

Objective with respect to academic audits conducted during the period 2008-2012:

- Timely completion of academic audits producing audit reports acknowledged as authoritative, fair and perceptive, and of assistance to universities.

Appendix 4:
Cycle 4 Focus - The 2007 Indicative Framework

	Topics	Activities
1	***General***	

2	***Teaching and learning***	2.1 The development, design, implementation and delivery of academic programmes and courses that:
		
		  * develop intellectual independence,
		
		  * are relevant to the needs of the disciplines,
		
		  * are relevant to the needs of learners and other stakeholders.
		
		2.2 The learning environment and learning support for students, including learning support for students from targeted groups.
		
		2.3 Student achievement and success.

3	***Research environment***	3.1 Research students and research supervision. 3.2 Teaching and learning within a research environment. 3.3 The interdependence of research and teaching. 3.4 The role of critic and conscience of society.

4	***Te Tiriti o Waitangi***	4.1 The application of the principles of Te Tiriti to:[126]
		
		  * access to learning,
		
		  * curriculum.

5	***Academic and support staff***	5.1 The determination of an appropriate academic staff profile across the institution. 5.2 Recruitment, appointment and induction strategies. 5.3 The implementation and monitoring of workload models. 5.4 Professional support, development and appraisal of academic staff.

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[126] A discussion of the implications for universities arising from the principles of Te Tiriti is found in John M Jennings, *New Zealand universities and Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, Wellington, New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit, 2004, 'AAU Series on Quality' no.9, available at www.nzuaau.ac.nz/reports-and-papers

	Topics	Activities
6	**Institutional quality assurance**	6.1 The internal planning-implementation-reporting-evaluation-enhancement cycle as applied to academic processes, academic programmes and courses.
7	**Management and administrative support**	7.1 The development of a management and administrative infrastructure that provides effective support to research-informed teaching and learning.
		7.2 The determination of an appropriate management and administrative staff profile.
		7.3 Professional support, development and appraisal of management and administrative staff.
8	**Community engagement**	8.1 The identification of stakeholders and communities of interest, the seeking of advice, and the application of information gained to curriculum and student learning.
9	**External academic collaborations and partnerships**	9.1 The development of external collaborative research and academic ventures and partnerships that impact on curriculum and student learning and achievement.

The following questions are to be applied to each of the above topics:

Commitments
What are the goals and objectives and the expected outputs and outcomes in this area and how were they determined?

Strengths and progress
What are the key strengths in this area and what positive progress has been made in achieving the goals and objectives?
What are the output/outcome data and other evidence used to determine strengths and to judge progress, and how relevant and effective are they?

Challenges
What are the key challenges for the university in this area?

Monitoring
What key quality mechanisms and processes are used to monitor ongoing quality and to provide input into continuous improvement in this area, and how effective are they?

Enhancement
Arising from the self-assessment, what are the areas in which enhancement is needed?
What enhancement activities will be undertaken during the next planning period – say, three years – who will be responsible, and what are the expected outputs and outcomes of those enhancement activities?
How will the university monitor the effectiveness of changes arising from the enhancement activities?