



# Student Voice Handover Guide

November 2020



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## Introduction

This handover guide brings together the voices of the New Zealand Union of Students' Association (NZUSA), Te Mana Ākonga (TMA), Taura Pasifika (TP) and the New Zealand International Students Associations (NZISA). It is intended for student representatives who are involved in the academic decision-making structures of their respective universities. More specifically, it is intended for those representatives who sit on their university's Academic Board or Senate, and other related university/department-wide committees. Although it seeks to provide an operational overview to support these students, it also functions to unite student voices on education in Aotearoa New Zealand. The aim of this guide is to demystify these structures and provide advice on how to be an effective student voice. After attending the Student Voice Summit this document can help to guide you during your year(s) of representation and can also be used to train others.

There are four parts to this document:

1. The first part provides an overview of the organisations that have contributed to this document.
2. The second part looks to our vision for education. It draws on international examples and good practice from within Aotearoa New Zealand, to outline what a united vision for education could look like and achieve.
3. The third part focuses on your role as a student representative. It draws on examples from the sector and provides a national breakdown of the key issues of 2020.
4. The final part helps to explain the jargon and the system that can make the academic environment inaccessible and unwelcoming.



*Student Representatives from NZUSA, Te Mana Ākonga, Taura Pasifika and NZISA at NZUSA Presidents Training in January 2020*

## **Part One | Who are your student representative organisations?**

### **New Zealand Union of Students' Association**

The New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA) is the national voice of students in tertiary education. Since 1929, NZUSA has been a collective of students' associations from universities and polytechnics across the country. Together, our job is to fight for a barrier-free education for all -

Our job, like yours, is to improve the lives of students so that they become well-supported, happy, successful and well-rounded graduates. We do this by being an influential and inclusive voice for students from all across the country.

Our value lies in our capacity to engage with government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Members of Parliament and Ministers to ensure that students' interests are represented throughout the policy-making process.

Based in Wellington, our National Office team works hard on issues that are important to students, such as the rising cost of living, poor quality housing and poor mental health/wellbeing. We do this by undertaking research on these issues, campaigning to build public support for student issues, and lobbying politicians to advance student-friendly policies. We also provide support for member associations on matters such as governance, employment, media training and student voice/representation.

### **Te Mana Ākonga**

Te Mana Ākonga (TMA) is the National Māori Tertiary Students' Association and provides a voice for ākonga Māori on issues that impact on them within the tertiary-education environment. TMA focuses on assisting rōpū in advocacy, enhancing support services for ākonga Māori on campus, and keeping rōpū informed of issues that impact on them at a central government level.

Born out of the student protest movements of the 1970s, TMA joins a long line of individuals and rōpū who wanted to change the status quo of ākonga Māori. The first example of this begins with the likes of Tā Apirana Ngata, Te Rangihīroa and Tā Māui Pōmare - who were pioneers of their time. Whetu Tirikatene-Sullivan was the first president of the Federation of Māori Students during which time Emeritus Professor Whatarangi Winiata was also involved. Ngā Tama Toa included people like brothers Sid and Moana Jackson, and shortly after Te Mana Akonga was established.

We are whānau-based, and currently have rōpū (registered members) at all eight of the universities, and some polytechnics, in Aotearoa New Zealand. The structure of TMA is made up of kaiarahi (representatives from each rōpū). These kaiarahi attend hui throughout the year at which they discuss issues, formulate actions and determine a work programme for the Tumuaki.

## **Tauira Pasifika**

Tauira Pasifika is the voice for Pasifika students in Aotearoa New Zealand's tertiary education sector. We were set up in 2019 by Pasifika students, for Pasifika students, as Pasifika students. As Pasifika is one of the priority learning groups identified by the government, our aim is to ensure that the Pasifika student voice is well represented and supported across the sector. To achieve this, Tauira Pasifika provides a leadership role to encourage and empower Pasifika student engagement in decision making across tertiary education.



*Tauira Pasifika student representatives at the ITP Student Voice Summit 2020*

Guided by the pan-Pacific value of service, Tauira Pasifika supports the Pasifika student movement by working collectively across our three regional hubs: Northern, Central and Southern. We are governed by a National Executive and currently have membership across many New Zealand universities and Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics.

Tauira Pasifika is currently represented on the Ako Aotearoa Pacific Peoples Caucus, and was formerly represented on Universities New Zealand Enhancement Theme Steering Group for the Cycle 6 Academic Audit.

## **New Zealand International Students' Association**

The New Zealand International Students' Association (NZISA) is an active international student body that was established in late 2016. NZISA represents the collective voice of international students in New Zealand. We are recognised as the largest international student voice in New Zealand and have members in the tertiary and secondary education sector. Our goal is to address issues faced by international students and to ensure that we see sustainable growth in the export education sector.

We act as the connecting bridge between students, policy makers, education providers and regional development groups. We believe that it is important that the voices of our international students are considered when the New Zealand government develops policies that concern international students and temporary migrants. Thus, we strive to be the representing voice, influencing existing or new policies, and other factors that directly or indirectly affect international students.

NZISA acts as the student voice on the International Education Strategy and the International Student Wellbeing Strategy. These strategies guide the government's direction on international education. As the student voice we ensure that our student needs are balanced with commercial objectives of the export education sector. In the past we have worked on increasing international student post-study work visas to a length of three years, and worked alongside MBIE in reducing the labour exploitation of international students.

Our structure consists of a National Executive that is supported by our Representative Council. The National Executive handles day-to-day operations of the association and liaises with other stakeholders or the government. Each registered member association sits on our Representative Council and is able to voice their concerns directly to our National Executive.

## Part Two | Our Vision for Tertiary Education in New Zealand



*Students protesting their right to education in the late 20th century.*

Student leaders believe that everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand should have access to high quality, publicly-funded and publicly-owned tertiary education. We believe that tertiary education is a public good which means that the system belongs to all of us, and that we all benefit from it. Our role in fighting for this is embedded within our Constitutional objects, which are to:

- Ensure tertiary students are well represented and supported across the tertiary sector by NZUSA and local students' organisations, who are influential, visible, principled, well-resourced and informed;
- Encourage world-class learning and teaching practices;
- Promote outstanding student experiences and learning environments;
- Develop adequate levels of student support;
- Ensure there are no unfair barriers to education;
- Promote equitable access and support for achievement; and
- Ensure students are valued members of an academic community that contributes to the creation and dissemination of knowledge.

We believe that the issues of student welfare and quality education at universities are inextricably linked. Limited financial support and poor mental health are barriers to education success. Students' associations have done a great job at campaigning on the welfare issues, related to transport, housing, and health, that students face. In the current climate, it is really important that academic issues that students face are also integral parts of NZUSAs work. This can range from student fees to class sizes, how the university performs its 'critic and conscience' role and quality assurance.

## Student Voice in Universities

Students are the primary stakeholders of the university and its decisions, so it only makes sense that we play our part in those decisions. This can be seen in a number of ways, including:

- Student representation on University Councils;
- Student representation on Academic Boards / Senate;
- Class-level student representation;
- University's Investment Plans requiring them to demonstrate how they are supporting student voice; and
- Academic quality audits that require a university to show that they support student engagement in planning, policy development and the monitoring of key academic activities.

The role of student voice is also evidenced in research in New Zealand and around the world on student partnerships in tertiary education settings. For example, in 2012 NZUSA and Ako Aotearoa New Zealand (the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence) worked in partnership on a project called the "Student Voice in Tertiary Education Settings: Quality Systems in Practice".

One of the aims of the research was to identify pre-conditions for the effective operation of systems that allow/ facilitate a representative student voice to have an impact in quality enhancement. Those pre-conditions have now been summarised into a table of five practice features and indicators of good practice in action.

In addition the Student Voice research report has produced six sets of reflective questions (29 in total) that align to six major themes of the research:

1. Establishing the partnership in which the student voice is to be heard;
2. Legitimising the student voice;
3. Establishing clear roles for those delivering the student voice;
4. Providing training for those delivering the student voice;
5. Providing adequate resources for supporting the student voice; and
6. Hearing and heeding the student voice.

Student voice is not homogenous. The diversity of the student body across age, ethnicity, religion, culture, course of study etc., means that a wide range of students, at all decision making levels, need to be engaged in decisions. Although we recognise students as 'experts' in their student experience, they are only experts in their *own* experience.



*Te Mana Ākonga Hui Kaiarahi, July 2020.*



## Moving Forward: National Centre for Student Voice

### *Our Vision for a National Centre for Student Voice (NCSV)*

The essential function of a NCSV would be to provide training and support to student representatives across Aotearoa New Zealand. Ideally, this would look like:

- Intensive annual training, focusing on areas such as governance, finance, organisational management and most importantly, student voice training.
- Training would be catered to individual associations and training would be provided on campus, rather than one centralised training session

Continuing support throughout the year as a point of contact for student representatives who need assistance with a range of matters. This could be:

- Administrative assistance (i.e. dealing with invoices);
- Governance matters (i.e. help with using legal services);
- Point of contact for student Presidents dealing with confidential matters;
- Advice on matters relating to the TEO's council;
- Advice on matters relating to Associations' CEO or General Manager (i.e. pay negotiations)
- Collect funding from each students' CSSF levy to directly fund their association.



*Student Voices Panel at the 2020 NZUSA National Conference. From Left to Right: Isabella Lenihan-Ikin, Ali Leota, Mamaeroa Merito, Sabrina Alhady, Nohorua Parata.*

## Part Three | Your Role as a Student Representative

*You're the Expert – what outgoing administrations wished they knew this time last year.*

*How to be an effective member of academic committees?*

## Part Four | Understanding the Jargon and the System

### Key Terms, Acronyms and Abbreviations

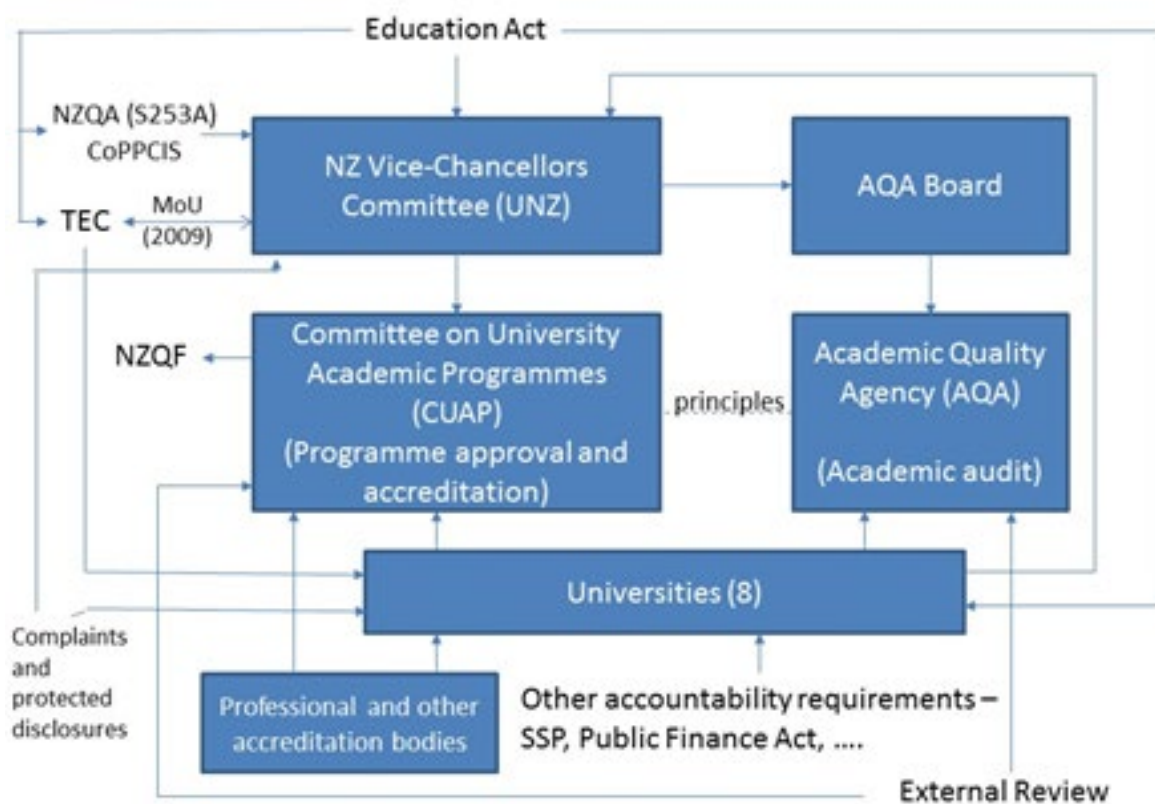
AB	Academic Board
AQA	Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities, Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa
AUSSE	Australasian Universities Survey of Student Engagement
AVC	Assistant Vice-Chancellor
BoGS	Board of Graduate Studies (AU, OU)
BUGS	Board of Undergraduate Studies (OU)
CAD	Centre for Academic Development
CALT	Committee on/for Learning and Teaching
CARs	Commendations, affirmations and recommendations
CE	Continuing Education
CEQ	Course experience questionnaire
CRM	Customer Relationship Management (system)
CUAP	Committee on University Academic Programmes (UNZ sub-committee).
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
EFTS	Equivalent Full-Time Students
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
EPI	Educational Performance Indicator
EQA	External quality assurance
EQAA	External quality assurance agency, for example, AQA
ETSG	Enhancement Theme Steering Group
FTE	Full-time equivalent (staff)
GES	Guaranteed Education Score
GDS	Graduate destinations survey
GRS	Graduate Research School
GS	Guideline statement(s)
GYR	Graduating year review (part of CUAP processes)
IQA	Internal quality assurance
ITS	Information Technology Services

KPI	Key performance indicator
LMS	Learning or Library Management System
MOOC	Massive Open Online Course
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority (non-universities)
NZQF	New Zealand Qualifications Framework
NZVCC	New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (statutory body responsible for QA in universities, operates as UNZ)
MoE	Ministry of Education
Panel	Panels engaged by AQA to conduct academic audits of universities
PVC	Pro Vice-Chancellor
QA	Quality Assurance
QE	Quality Enhancement
SAC	Student Achievement Component (funding)
SLC	Student Learning Centre
SLG/T	Senior Leadership Group/Team
SMS	Student Management System
SP	Strategic Plan
SSP	Statement of Service Performance (requirement for annual reports)
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission (funding)
TEI/TEO	Tertiary Education Institution/Organisation
TKA	Te Kāhui Amokura (UNZ Māori Committee)
UNZ	Universities New Zealand (operating name for NZVCC)
VCAG	Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group (OU)

## Quality Assurance in New Zealand Universities

The Vice-Chancellors are collectively responsible, as the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) for quality in universities in Aotearoa New Zealand. The universities themselves play a major role in ensuring quality and the Academic Boards and Senates are key contributors to this.

Academic Boards and Senates undertake internal quality assurance (IQA). The Academic Quality Agency (AQA) and the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) undertake external quality assurance (EQA) and are known as external quality assurance agencies (EQAA). Universities also have other external accountability requirements including through their Statements of Service Performance and with professional and other accreditation bodies for professionally accredited degrees, for example teaching, medicine, law.



## Academic Board/Senate

The Academic Board (also known as Senate at some institutions) is a committee of the University Council's at each university. Among its functions is to "advise the Council on matters relating to courses of study, awards, and other academic matters". It approves new courses, significant changes to qualifications, discontinuation of courses and programmes and is the highest University body to approve new subjects or qualifications, which are then forwarded to CUAP for consultation with the other universities.

The structure of the Academic Boards at each university are different, but their function is essentially the same. The structure below the Academic Boards (i.e. the committees and sub-committees of Academic Board/Senate). Learning these structures, at your own and other institutions is highly recommended.

*“Student representation on academic boards and committees is absolutely paramount to ensure equitable and inclusive education. Students feeling engaged, communicated with and heard is crucial to the student experience. Furthermore, as a vulnerable group impacted by Covid-19, it remains important to include students' unique experiences, perspectives and problem solving skills in the decision making processes. This is because these decisions have lasting implications on our day-to-day lives. Thus, student representation in academic decision making remains more important than ever.*

*Taylah Shuker, Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association President (Acting)*

## **Academic Quality Agency (AQA)**

The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA) was established in 1993 by the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee. AQA's purpose, as set out in its Constitution, is 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, and
- supporting confidence in the academic quality of New Zealand universities.

AQA undertakes its quality assurance activities through an academic audit process. Up to 2016, audits took place every 4-5 years. In 2016, following a review of the findings of the fifth cycle of academic audits, the period between audits was extended to every 7-8 years.

The sixth cycle of academic audits runs from 2017-2025. The first 3 years are an enhancement phase and the audit phase will run from 2021-2024 (note: the start of the audit phase was deferred by a year in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic). The cycle will be reviewed in 2025.

After working together for several years, in 2017 NZUSA and AQA signed a memorandum of understanding. This formalised their partnership to enhance student voice and the engagement of students in the academic audit process. The partnership objectives are set out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AQA and NZUSA.

AQA and NZUSA share an objective of having an authentic, enduring, diverse and effective student voice that contributes to academic quality and quality assurance in New Zealand universities. The MoU also supports a specific objective to include students, or recent graduates, as auditors in the sixth cycle of academic audit for New Zealand Universities.

AQA also undertakes a series of quality enhancement activities including support for the Cycle 6 Enhancement Theme, events such as the Student Voice Summit and a newsletter.

## Cycle 6 Academic Audit Enhancement Theme

*'Access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and for Pasifika students: an enhancement theme approach.'*



*Members of the Enhancement Theme Steering Group at the STARS conference in July, 2018.*

Enhancement-led quality assurance is part of the external academic quality framework for the New Zealand universities. The universities have drawn on the Scottish experience and introduced an enhancement theme into the Cycle 6 Academic Audit in which universities collectively address an issue which is a topic that is strategically important for each university and of national significance.

The enhancement theme is 'access, outcomes and opportunity: for Māori, recognising Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the bicultural foundation of Aotearoa New Zealand; and for Pasifika, recognising the place of Aotearoa in the Pacific.'

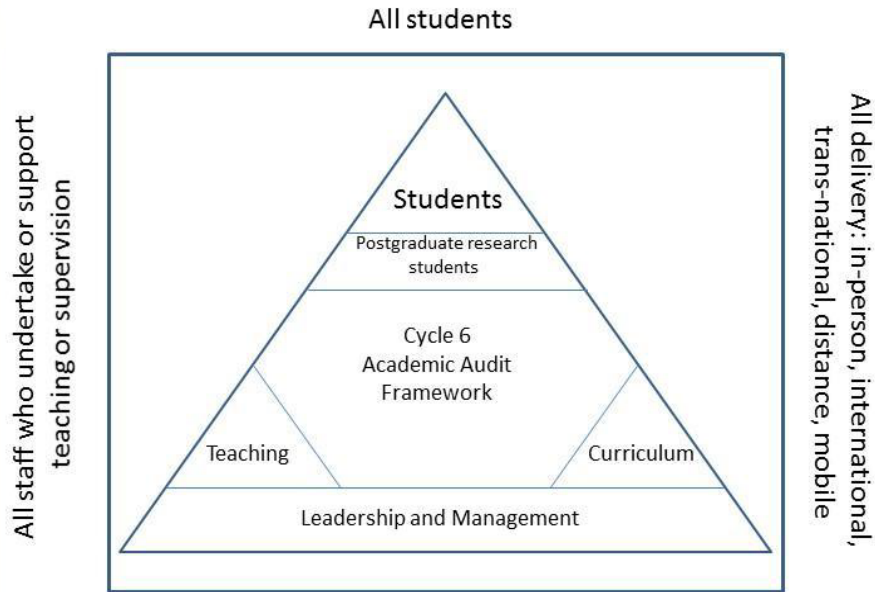
The enhancement theme is overseen by an Enhancement Theme Steer Group (ETSG) which has membership from all eight New Zealand universities, Te Kāhui Amokura, Komiti Pasifika, New Zealand Union of Students' Associations' and Te Mana Ākonga.

See <https://www.enhanceunz.com/> for more information on the enhancement theme.

## Cycle 6 Audit Framework and Student Auditors

Once the Enhancement phase of the audit cycle finishes in 2020, the audit phase of Cycle 6 will start. Universities will be audited against a framework of 30 guideline statements in 5 sections:

- A. Leadership and management of teaching and learning and academic quality
- B. Student profile, life-cycle, support and wellbeing
- C. Curriculum, assessment and delivery
- D. Teaching quality
- E. Postgraduate research students.



Self-review portfolios should reflect:

- University obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- The interdependence of university research and teaching
- Universities' role as critic and conscience of society

*Cycle 6 Audit Framework*

Audit panels will include a student, or recent graduate. AQA is seeking students, or recent graduates, to be members of audit panels. See <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/about-us/auditors> for more information.

**Ako Aotearoa**

Ako Aotearoa is New Zealand's National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence. Established in 2007, Ako Aotearoa is a government-funded organisation committed to supporting New Zealand's tertiary sector teachers, trainers and educators be the best they can be.

Ako Aotearoa works alongside all parts of the tertiary sector with an emphasis on building education capability. The majority of its work is geared towards better understanding high quality teaching and using that information to improve tertiary teaching practice across Aotearoa New Zealand.

Fundamental to Ako Aotearoa's work is to support collaborative work that encourages learners to have their say about their tertiary education experience. Ako Aotearoa works closely with its advisory groups, that features a strong presence of student voice, to help identify issues relating to tertiary teaching and learning, set priorities and to contribute to building education capability.

See <https://ako.ac.nz/> for more information.



## New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF)

Level	Certificate	Diploma	Degree
10			PhD
9			Master's Degree
8	Postgraduate Certificate	Postgraduate Diploma	Honours Degree
7	Graduate Certificate	Graduate Diploma/ Diploma	Bachelor's Degree
6	Certificate	Diploma	
5			
4			
3			
2			
1			

For more information on the NZQF, see:

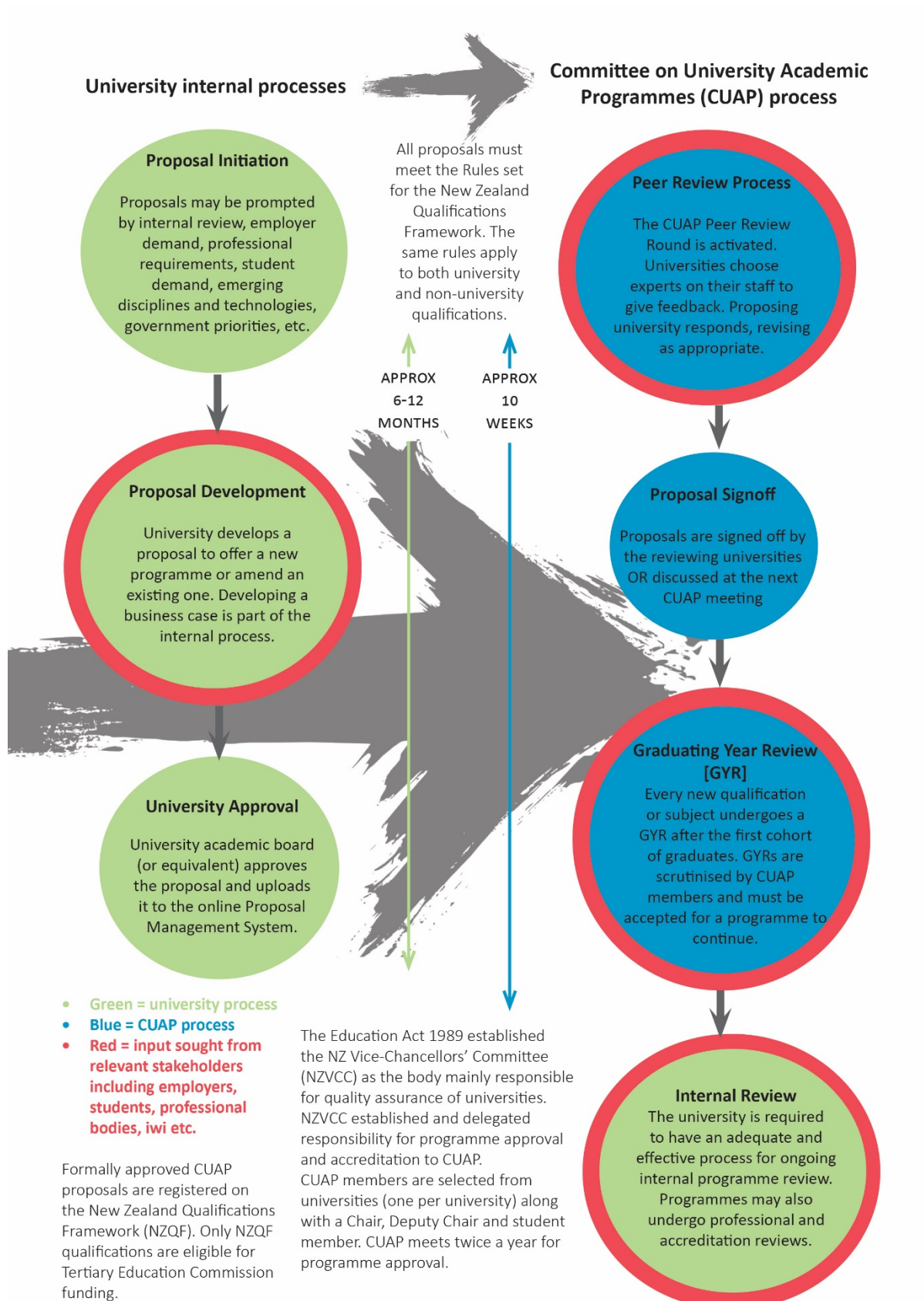
<https://www.nzqa.govt.nz/studying-in-new-zealand/understand-nz-quals/>

### Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP)

New Zealand's eight universities collaborate to ensure the quality of the country's university academic programmes. Instead of self-reviewing proposals and courses, university peer-review them. CUAP is the body that reviews the more significant types of academic proposals, including new or significantly amended qualifications, subjects, majors and specialisations. CUAP coordinates an inter-university review process that culminates in a set of recommendations made to Universities New Zealand, which are almost always accepted. When the proposals are for new qualifications, Universities New Zealand approves them on behalf of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and notifies the Tertiary Education Commission so that funding may be enabled. There are two CUAP rounds per year, in May and in September. At Academic Boards or Committees 'CUAP', a lot of focus will be on ensuring that programmes are submitted to CUAP in time for either round 1 or 2 for approval. Courses will only be sent to CUAP once they have moved through the quality assurance structure at each university. CUAP consists of one representative from each university and a NZUSA representative. Normally the representative from the university will be the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) or equivalent.

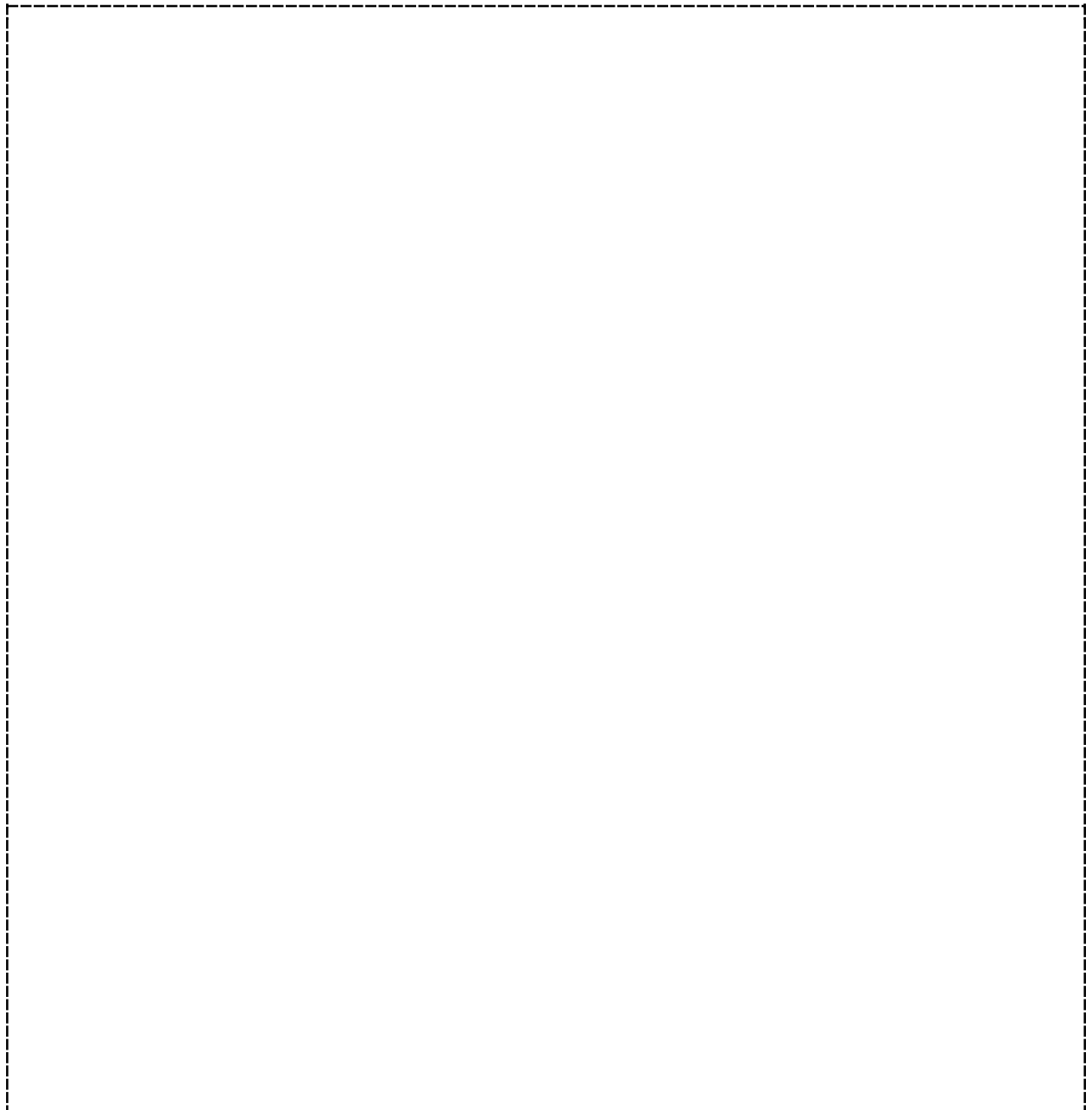
The 'rules' of CUAP are contained within the CUAP Handbook which can be found on the Universities NZ website.

## Structure of CUAP



**Academic Governance Structure**

*Draw in the structure of academic governance at your institution. Note the names and positions of those that will be useful to your role next year.*

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed border, intended for drawing the academic governance structure of an institution. The box is positioned centrally on the page below the instructions.

## Useful links and further notes

- Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs)
  - <https://www.sparqs.ac.uk/index.php>
- Memorandum of Understanding - AQA and NZUSA
  - <http://www.aqa.ac.nz/memorandum>
- Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand universities (AQA)
  - <http://www.aqa.ac.nz>
- Student Voice Australia
  - <http://studentvoiceaustralia.com/>
- National Student Engagement Programme - Ireland
  - <https://studentengagement.ie/about/>
- International Journal for Students as Partners
  - <https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/ijsap>

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