

Summary of the 2022 Academic Audit of Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington

Academic Audit

Academic audits for universities in Aotearoa New Zealand are completed by the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities – Te Pokapū Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa (AQA). These audits take a broad, whole-of-institution view of a university’s teaching, learning support and student outcomes. Audits are completed by a panel made up of senior academics or academic managers in Aotearoa New Zealand. Panels include a Māori panel member, an international panel member, and a student or recent graduate.

The sixth cycle of academic audits run by AQA has two main phases. Phase one (2017 – 2020) had universities take part in the enhancement theme ‘Access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and for Pacific students’¹ and, phase two, which is an academic audit of each university. The framework for this academic audit is made up of 30 guideline statements, which are divided into five sections. The framework also has three supporting parts, which the audit also looks at. These are Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations, interdependence of university research and teaching, and universities’ role as critic and conscience of society. More details about the Cycle 6 academic audits can be found in the [Guide to Cycle 6 Academic Audit](#)², including an overview of the method, information about the process, and explanations of the different steps of the audit.

About the University

Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington was established in 1897, making 2022 its 125th year. The University is placed in the top two per cent of universities worldwide by international rankings and in the top one per cent for 20 subjects³. It has three campuses in Wellington, as well as additional sites across Wellington, Auckland and a student learning centre in Beijing. The University has 23,090 students⁴ and employs 3,362 staff.⁵

About this report

This report summarises the commendations, affirmations, and recommendations made by the Panel. The Panel has commended areas of effective or good practice, affirmed developments or initiatives that should result in good practice and made recommendations where it considers attention needs to be paid to enhancing practice.

To develop the commendations, affirmations, and recommendations, the Panel considered a Self-review portfolio produced by the University, as well as information gained during a site visit to the

¹ <https://www.enhanceunz.com/> (Accessed 30 November 2022).

² <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/cycle6> (Accessed 30 November 2022).

³ Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington Self-review Report, p. iii.

⁴ Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington Self-review Report, p. vii.

⁵ 2021 Universities Workforce Questionnaire

University. At the site visit, the Panel held 22 interview sessions and met with 78 members of staff and 35 students.

Commendations

The University is commended for the following areas of excellent practice and good, well-defined outcomes:

- 1. Establishment of Āwhina** – the Panel commends the establishment of Āwhina as a university-wide support team for Māori students. The University’s ongoing monitoring of Āwhina’s effectiveness is also recognised and the University is encouraged to ensure that the planned staffing levels of Āwhina are maintained.
- 2. Te Tiriti o Waitangi Handbook and Te Tiriti o Waitangi audit** – the development of the University’s Te Tiriti o Waitangi Handbook and the undertaking of a Tiriti audit are regarded as admirable and a good operationalisation of the University’s Te Tiriti o Waitangi Statute.
- 3. Pasifika Student Success Team** – the University has established a Pasifika Student Success Team that helps Pasifika students navigate the university and university study. Many positive comments were heard about the team and their work, including providing access to Pasifika spaces, schools outreach, academic mentoring and pastoral support.
- 4. Academic Approvals and the Programme and Course Design handbooks** – the University outlines its processes for programme approval in an Academic Approvals handbook. This handbook and the Programme and Course Design handbook are identified as examples of good practice.
- 5. Centre for Academic Development (CAD)** - CAD lead teaching development at the University and offer a range of programmes and initiatives that support staff with teaching development. In their response to COVID-19, CAD developed an extensive series of webinars for staff, created an online ‘drop-in’ model for advice and expanded its Digital Learning Hub. The work of CAD in supporting teaching development across the University and in response to COVID-19 is commended.
- 6. CAD’s leadership of the change programme** – the University has implemented new teaching and learning digital infrastructure. CAD ensured that developments were pedagogically led and that professional development and support for users embedded in the implementation. It is important for the University to retain this leadership as implementation progresses.
- 7. VicTeach** – the University’s VicTeach initiative focuses on support for a professional learning community and provides support for innovative and good-practice teaching and learning.

Affirmations

The Panel affirms work underway at the University in the following areas:

- 1. Investment in data capability** – the University has invested in data capability to help inform teaching and learning, monitoring performance, and support for students. The University’s work on developing data for planning and reporting is affirmed. The Panel notes data is mainly reported through management channels and suggests that the University provide further support for staff and students in using data.
- 2. Ngā Kīwai o te Kete** – Ngā Kīwai o te Kete is the University’s Student Engagement Framework and annual Student Agreement. The Student Engagement Framework acts as an overarching, principle-based framework for the University’s commitment to students as partners. An annual Student Agreement is based on this framework. The University is encouraged to continue this work and build productive partnerships with students.
- 3. Supporting staff in the implementation of the new Learning Management System (LMS)** – the University’s new LMS contributes to the development of learning, as well as learner and predictive analytics. The University is paying attention to support for staff during the implementation of the new LMS.
- 4. Enhanced teaching and learning environment** – the University has work underway across a portfolio of interdependent physical, but especially digital projects, to create an enhanced teaching and learning environment. Building staff capability is an important contributor to the new teaching and learning environment.
- 5. Implementation of recommendations from the Te Tiriti o Waitangi audit** – the University’s Te Tiriti o Waitangi audit outlined recommendations for the University. Its implementation plan for these recommendations is affirmed.
- 6. Progress the development of the Fale Malae** – the University outlined an enhancement initiative to progress the development of the Fale Malae, which will increase engagement with Pasifika communities, students, and schools in university life. The Fale Malae also aims to enhance Pasifika students entering the University and achieving academic success.
- 7. Review access pathways for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) focus group students** – the University outlined its intention to review access pathways for EDI focus group students. The Panel suggests that the University’s review include requirements for future reporting.
- 8. Titoko and the holistic advising model** – Titoko is the University’s Centre for Student Success which will work closely with Āwhina, the Pasifika Student Success Team and other units that provide support services for students. Both Titoko and the development of a

holistic advising model where students would have a dedicated student success advisor are affirmed.

9. **Wellbeing Outcomes Framework** – the University does not currently have an organisation-wide wellbeing strategic action plan. It intends to develop and implement a Wellbeing Outcomes Framework to address this and meet requirements under the new Pastoral Care Code.
10. **Review the graduate profile** – the University's intends to review its graduate profile as part of the planned Curriculum Framework project. It will engage widely across the University as part of this process.
11. **Progressing the assessment framework** – in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the University reviewed all assessment and developed a framework to provide for greater resilience and capability building. The University's intent to work on innovative assessment in a digitally enhanced learning environment is affirmed.

Recommendations

The University has been asked to consider the following recommendations:

1. **Evaluation plans** – the University's investment in data capability to help inform teaching and learning, monitoring performance and support for students is affirmed. The Panel recommends that required for evaluation and evaluation plans should be identified alongside the relevant success measures at the beginning of the initiative.
2. **Academic policy** - the University outlined their intention to develop an academic quality framework that embeds a systematic approach. However, given the slow pace of updating key policies, it is suggested that this framework should include academic policy to help ensure policies remain current.
3. **Post-implementation challenges of the Pasifika Student Success Team** – after the establishment of the Pasifika Student Success Team, the University conducted a post-implementation review of the Team. It is suggested that the remaining challenges identified within this review be addressed.
4. **Attracting Māori students and Pasifika students to postgraduate study** – the University outlined targets for the student body including that the student body make-up would reflect population percentages by 2025. Though overall percentages of Māori students and Pasifika students had been moving closer to reflect population percentages, wider gaps were noted for postgraduate students. It is recommended that the University give greater strategic focus

to attracting Māori students and Pasifika students to postgraduate study, particularly doctoral study.

5. **Support for transition and employability in the curriculum** – the University recognised the need for a co-ordinated approach to transitions. The Panel recommends the University focus on embedding support for transitions in curricula so that students do not need to seek additional support. This includes support for employability.
6. **Academic Grievance Policy** – the University was set to review the Academic Grievances Policy in 2019. This was deferred due to rising COVID-19 pressures and to ensure alignment with the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice (2021). The Panel recommends the University progresses work on reviewing this policy with urgency and developing clear guidelines to aide students and staff in raising and resolving complaints.
7. **Data regarding student cohort access to learning support** – given the implementation of new initiatives and systems within the University, it is likely the pattern of referrals to student learning services will change. It is recommended that the University collect data regarding student cohort access to various forms of learning support to monitor trends and evaluate the effectiveness of service provision.
8. **Learning support and academic skills development** - as improved data on the effectiveness and use of learning support interventions becomes available, it is suggested that the University consider embedding learning support and academic skills development in the curriculum.
9. **Composition of programme review panels** – the University outlined that programme review panels consist of a convenor from within the University and two external panels members, one of whom should be from an overseas university. Although additional members could be added, the Panel recommend that the University consider the composition of programme review panels to ensure they have sufficient breadth of perspectives.
10. **Operationalising the new academic integrity policy** – the University has resources and systems to promote academic integrity. It is suggested that the University complete the operationalisation of its new academic integrity policy with urgency.
11. **Ongoing training for postgraduate supervisors** – the University provides training for postgraduate supervisors, but does not monitor whether this training occurs. It is recommended that the University completes its review of ongoing training for postgraduate supervisors and ensures that training is undertaken.
12. **Progress-reporting requirements for postgraduate research students** – the University intends to monitor progress for doctoral students every 6 months and for research master’s



students through a one-month proposal and then three- and eight-month progress reports. However, compliance with progress-reporting is not complete. It is recommended that compliance with progress-reporting for postgraduate research students be enforced.

Further information

A detailed report of the 2022 Academic Audit of Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington can be found [here](#).

AQA’s academic audit and its findings relate to the institution as a whole and do not provide information about individual programmes of study or subjects.

Further information about the Cycle 6 Academic Audit process can be found in the [Guide to Cycle 6 Academic Audit](#).

Further information about the Cycle 6 Enhancement Theme, “Access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and Pacific students”, can be found here <https://www.enhanceunz.com/>.