

Summary of the 2023 Academic Audit of Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa

Academic Audit

Academic audits are part of the external quality assurance arrangements for universities in Aotearoa New Zealand. They are the only external quality assurance process that takes a whole-of-institution view of a university's teaching, learning, student support and student outcomes. Audits are undertaken 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 Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand universities—Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga mō ngā Whare Wānanga (AQA) is responsible for the audit process and for releasing audit reports.

This is the sixth cycle of academic audits run by AQA. It has two main phases. In phase one (2017 - 2020) universities took part in an enhancement theme 'Access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and for Pacific students'.¹ Phase two is an academic audit of each university. The framework for the 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

Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa was established as an agricultural college in 1927 and became a university in 1964.³ The University operates across three campuses in Palmerston North, Wellington, and Auckland, as well as a 'virtual campus' for distance and online students. In 2023 the University has 30,132 students and employs 3178 FTE staff.

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 reach commendations, affirmations, and recommendations, the Panel considers a Self-review portfolio produced by the University, as well as information gained during a site visit to the University. At the site visit, the Panel held 25 interview sessions and met with 61 members of staff and 28 students.

¹ <https://www.enhanceunz.com/> (Accessed 25 May 2023).

² <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/cycle6> (Accessed 25 May 2023).

³ Massey University Te Kunenga Ki Pūrehuroa Self-review Report, p. 15.

Commendations

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

- 1. Aspirations to be a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led university** – the Panel saw evidence of Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities coming through in the audit portfolio and recognised the University’s investment and holistic University-wide approach to these responsibilities. This led to the Panel commending the University for how it is supporting and giving effect to its aspiration to be a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led university.
- 2. Coherent planning framework** - the University has a coherent approach to planning and reporting. Part of this saw over 200 initiatives consolidated into six workstreams. The University’s coherent planning framework includes teaching and learning, and student experience activities.
- 3. Investment in a Data Enabled Student Support platform** – the University has invested in data systems and capabilities to support its reporting with a series of standard dashboards now available. These dashboards include course and programme level reports, student progress and retention, grade distributions, and teaching and learning indicators. Other reports could also be developed easily to look at specific aspects of student success.
- 4. Academic committees** – the University’s academic committees were recognised as effective mechanisms for promoting consistency of decision-making and communicating outcomes of academic decisions. Committee members are expected to report back to their colleges, schools, or associations.
- 5. Focus on closing parity gaps for Māori** – the University’s work towards the Cycle 6 enhancement theme has assisted ongoing initiatives focussed on closing parity gaps for Māori students in a way that encourages ongoing commitment to this work so that it becomes embedded and sustained.
- 6. Establishing the Office of Pacific Students Success (OPSS)** – the University’s establishment of the OPSS has enabled both the Dean Pacific and the OPSS to build relationships across colleges and service units and has reinforced the shared responsibility for Pacific Students’ success. The OPSS has also been set up with a direct reporting line to the Provost and for the establishment of Associate Dean Pacific roles in the colleges, which aims to enable wrap-around support for Pacific learners through an integrated approach to support.
- 7. Pūrehuroatanga** – Pūrehuroatanga is the University’s strategic initiative to improve student success and aims for the University to have an academic offering that is supported and optimised for academic quality and student wellbeing, to guide and support students into the University, and to support wellbeing and achievement. Both the establishment and the whole of-university co-ordinated focus on student success of Pūrehuroatanga are recognised.

- 8. Attention to equitable access** – recent changes to the University’s website, policy, and regulation, as well as the 2021 Student Experience Survey and discussions with students during the audit site visit, highlighted the attention the University has on ensuring access to the University is equitable and that its processes are enabling.
- 9. Model of good relationships for academic advice** - The Cycle 5 academic audit for the University occurred shortly after a move to centralised services for course advising and several challenges were identified. The Cycle 6 academic audit found that the model developed good relationships between the Advising and Communications Team and colleges.
- 10. Training and professional development programme for academic advisors** – the University has a robust training system and professional development available to academic advisors, including a pathway to professional accreditation with the NACADA (the Global Community for Academic Advising) and professional development that reflects the University’s aspirations to be Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led.
- 11. Building capacity and capability to support students** – the University emphasised the importance of connections between support services, colleges, and schools, with connections and relationships that allow individual support services to remain within their own scope of practice while developing clear pathways for referral. This allows the University to take a case management approach to student support and reflected the University’s commitment to building capacity and capability to support students across the University.
- 12. Student-centric monitoring of courses** - Courses and programmes are monitored through student feedback and academic governance processes, and the use of Data Enabled Student Success within the Pūrehuroatanga initiative provides additional monitoring of courses and programmes. Here the monitoring of student progress is used to identify where courses might need attention, with the Activate course review and the Course Incubator initiative acting as response mechanisms to the student-centric monitoring.
- 13. Pathway to international professional recognition of teaching** – the University was recognised for making a pathway and supporting its staff toward international professional recognition for teaching. This included redeveloping its Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning to make it more accessible.
- 14. Accreditation model for doctoral supervisors** - the University requires all doctoral supervisors to be accredited by the Doctoral Research Committee before they can be appointed as supervisors. The University’s Graduate Research School provides a learning and development programme based on the University’s Supervisor Development Framework. This includes more than 30 workshops and events, which are delivered every year, one-to-one mentoring, and having mentor supervisors meet to share practice. Doctoral supervisors are also required to be re-accredited every two years.

15. Support available to doctoral students - the Graduate Research School, Te Wheke a Toi, the Office of Pacific Student Success, and the Library provide support to doctoral students. This support includes regular workshops as part of professional development, writing initiatives, and specialist learning support.

Affirmations

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

- 1. Plans for oversight and monitoring of responses to audit recommendations** – the University’s Academic Committee will have oversight of audit recommendations and will assign responsibilities for responding to recommendations. It was noted that the University has also committed resources to monitoring its response to audit recommendations.
- 2. Plans to develop a partnership with students** – the University’s plan to develop a partnership with students is recognised. The Panel also notes that the diversity of student voices will be included in decisions that affect students, and the University’s aim to ensure that students are aware of changes made in response to their feedback.
- 3. Complaints project** – although the University has processes and resources in place for academic complaints, appeals, and grievances, some inconsistency was noted as to whether complaints or grievances should be addressed through informal or formal mechanisms. Further clarification around how Tikanga processes work in this space was also sought. The Panel suggests that the University’s upcoming complaints project provides the University with an opportunity to clarify informal, formal, and Tikanga processes.
- 4. Te Whare Tapa Whā as the basis of the student wellbeing framework** - Pūrehuroatanga provides the overall framework for student safety and wellbeing at the University, and the student wellbeing framework is based on the Te Whare Tapa Whā wellbeing model.
- 5. Plans to review qualification review policies and procedures** – a major review of the University’s qualification review process is underway and that a working group and terms of reference for this have been established. The Panel noted challenges with student engagement in this area, as well as a suggestion for Te Tiriti o Waitangi to be strengthened in the terms of reference for the review.
- 6. Assessment policy** – work on different aspects of assessment is underway at the University; this includes the intention to develop an assessment policy that would set out an agreed University position on assessment and provide direction. The Panel noted that the assessment policy should assist in providing a means for understanding whether assessments are appropriate and effective.
- 7. Redevelopment of an academic integrity policy and procedures** - the University’s Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures are under review and are currently being considered by the Learning and Teaching Committee. The revised policy and procedures are intended to

provide a framework to manage allegations of breaches of academic integrity by students, determining the types of alleged breaches. The Panel also recognised the University's plans to communicate information and provide support for good practice relating to academic integrity.

- 8. Plans for increasing assessment in Te Reo Māori** – although the number of students seeking to submit assessments in Te Reo Māori is still low, the demand is expected to grow as the number of first language speakers increases. The newly appointed Director, Māori Success will assess the experience of first language speakers and use this as a basis for further development. This work will also intersect with developing a greater understanding of relationships between Te Reo Māori and how content reflects Te Ao Māori, Mātauranga Māori, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The University has also recently appointed a Pūkenga Reo role in the Office of the DVC Māori, and this role provides oversight and coordination of assessment in Te Reo Māori.
- 9. Kaiārahi Tiriti initiative** – the Kaiārahi Tiriti initiative aims to build capability internally to help support the University's aspirations to be Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led.
- 10. Development of a Pacific Staff Recruitment plan** – the University has a strategic priority to extend “capacity and capability building, as well as career pathways for its Pacific Peoples staff” and advised that a Pacific Staff recruitment plan will follow the refresh of the Pasifika strategy.

Recommendations

The University has been asked to consider the following recommendations:

- 1. Corporate support functions alignment** – the relationship between strategy and planning for teaching and learning environments, including the digital environment, was less clearly expressed throughout the audit. Additionally, there was no evidence that the University's aspirations to be Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led were having a systemic impact on the design and operation of learning and teaching spaces across the University. It is recommended that the corporate support functions of ITS and Facilities and investment in these areas are aligned to learning and teaching and the University's aspirations to be Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led.
- 2. Policies reviewed regularly** – though the University's policy framework includes risk management, emergency management, and business continuity policies and plans. Some risk management policies and plans were overdue for review. It is suggested that the University implements a mechanism that ensures policies are reviewed regularly.
- 3. Increase the visibility and awareness of academic risk reporting** – the University operates a series of risk registers. It was unclear how the registers connect to one another and what the mechanisms are for escalating risks. Additionally, risks to the quality and continuity of teaching and experience did not seem to be captured in the risk registers.

4. **Processes and support for students to transition into postgraduate study** – inconsistencies in processes for admission to doctoral study between students with different pathways were seen. It is suggested that the University review its processes and support for students to transition into postgraduate study.
5. **Engage with students in the complaints project** – a clear sense of student contribution and input to the complaints project was not obvious. It is recommended the University engages with students, including in the early stages of this project.
6. **Access to Accessibility Services** – while all students can access support from Accessibility Services without formally registering and the University’s Disability Action Plan recognises that there may be many reasons why students do not engage with the University’s Accessibility Services, some students found access processes complex and off-putting. It was also noted that access processes were not well-attuned to the needs of Māori students or Pacific students. It is suggested that the University review appropriateness and effectiveness of access to Accessibility Services, especially for Māori students and Pacific students.
7. **Psycho-social support for students** – the University has a range of safety and wellbeing services. However, there may be a need for more proactive attention to psycho-social support for students, particularly those studying online or at a distance. It is suggested that the University review the availability, delivery, and effectiveness of psycho-social support for students.
8. **Graduate profile** - progress on the development of a University graduate profile has been slow. However, the development of a University graduate profile has been identified as a Pūrehuroatanga initiative. It is recommended that the University progress its work on developing and communicating its graduate profile with urgency.
9. **Benchmarking assessment standards** – the University’s Assessment Handbook refers to moderation of assessment design, moderation of marking and grading including external moderation, and moderation for review of assessment. There was less mention of benchmarking and lack of clarity in understanding the relationship between benchmarking and moderation. It is suggested that the University include direction on benchmarking assessment standards in its future work on assessment.
10. **Numbers of Māori staff** – the recruitment of Māori staff is a challenge for all universities in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is suggested that the University sets out a workforce development strategy to increase the numbers of Māori staff as part of its aspirations to be Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led to assist in addressing this.
11. **Induction policies and processes** – the University’s induction processes are managed through its HR system, and the University acknowledges that inductions for new staff have been inconsistent. There were positive examples of how Māori staff had experienced both recruitment and induction processes, although this was balanced by other comments on the

need for greater authenticity in Tikanga in induction processes. It is suggested that the University review its induction policies and practices, with particular attention to cultural appropriateness, coherence between central and college or school inductions, timing, and effectiveness.

- 12. Performance expectations for teaching** – although the University’s Capability Framework appeared to be a useful tool, the Panel heard that teaching capabilities and expectations were not well articulated. It is recommended that the University establish performance expectations for teaching for the different levels of academic staff. These may be in the form of a Teaching Expectations Framework.
- 13. Framework for monitoring academic quality** - the University outlined the development of a Teaching Expectations Framework, and it was noted that the evaluation of quality is not limited to how individual staff contribute within a course or programme. The Panel noted that an academic quality framework should include aspects such as student learning outcomes, student progress and success, curriculum design, assessment, currency and effectiveness of teaching practice, and achievement by priority learner groups. It is suggested that the University establish a framework for systematic monitoring and continuous improvement of academic quality.
- 14. Revisit recommendation 16 from the Cycle 5 Academic Audit Report** – the Cycle 5 academic audit report recommended that the University “review its policy and processes for the management of sub-doctoral research”⁴ and the University had not addressed this recommendation.
- 15. External supervisor formal relationships** – while there were no concerns about the quality of external supervisors raised, the lack of a formal agreement with external supervisors presents a risk for the student if the University needs to address any matters. As such, it is suggested that the University ensures formal relationships are in place with external supervisors.
- 16. Review pathways to accreditation of supervisors** – while the supervisor accreditation model was commended, high supervision loads are experienced by Māori staff and Pacific staff. It is suggested that the University review whether pathways to accreditation of supervisors are appropriate for Māori staff and Pacific staff, as part of increasing its numbers of Māori staff and Pacific staff available to provide postgraduate research supervision.
- 17. Support for sub-doctoral research students** – in addition to college support, doctoral students are also able to access support through the University’s Graduate Research School (GRS) However, there are lower levels, less visibility, and greater inconsistency of support available to research Master’s students than for doctoral students. It is suggested that the

⁴ <https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/Massey%20University%20Cycle%205%20audit%20report.pdf>, p. 56.
(Accessed 1 June 2023.)



University explore whether support available from the GRS could be made available to sub-doctoral research students.

Further information

A detailed report of the 2023 Academic Audit of Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa 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](#).