

Report of the 2016 Academic Audit of the University of Otago – Te Whare Wānanga o Otāgo

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

August 2016

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



Academic
QualityAgency
For New Zealand Universities

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Postal address

P O Box 5787
Lambton Quay
Wellington 6145
New Zealand

Location

Level 9
142 Lambton Quay
Wellington 6011
New Zealand

Website

www.aqa.ac.nz

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Foreword

The 2016 audit of the University of Otago is the fifth academic audit of the University carried out by the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA). The University was last audited in 2011 (report released March 2012), as part of the Cycle 4 audit of New Zealand universities, by a Panel of auditors from the (then) New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit¹.

The current (fifth) audit cycle focuses on teaching and learning and student support, including postgraduate.

The methodology adopted for the 2016 audit of the University of Otago is that used for all New Zealand universities in this cycle of audits. The methodology is based on a framework of 40 Guideline Statements which are expressions of the qualities or standards that a contemporary university of good international standing might be expected to demonstrate. The Guideline Statements were developed after extensive discussion with New Zealand university staff and Vice-Chancellors and consultation with other stakeholders, including students and academic auditors. The Guideline Statements are informed by comparable frameworks in other jurisdictions, in particular the QAA (UK).

AQA academic audits draw on a university's self-review and the supporting documentation it provides, publicly accessible pages of the university's website and interviews with staff, students, Council members and, where appropriate, external stakeholders. The University of Otago submitted its Self-review Portfolio, including a report and key supporting documentation in both print and electronic form, mid-February, 2016. The Self-review Report (SR) included hyperlinks to documents on the University's public website and also references to documents organised by the University in an electronic depository for the purpose of the audit. Further documents were provided on request as needed, including more recent reports provided during, and a short time before, the site visit.

These various sources enabled Panel members to triangulate claims made by the University and to ensure the Panel's own conclusions do not rely on a single source of evidence. The Panel has used the current strategic plan (Strategic Direction to 2020) and associated planning documents to provide the context for this audit.

The Chair of the audit Panel and the AQA Executive Director visited the University for a pre-audit planning meeting in April, when they met with the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and other staff.

The full Panel of five auditors, including an international auditor, came together in Dunedin on 8 May, 2016 for the site visit on 9-12 May. In total, during the site visit the Panel spoke with 99 staff and 22 students, as well as four members of the University Council.

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

This report presents the Panel's findings, based on the evidence it has considered. The AQA's conclusions are phrased as recommendations, affirmations and commendations, defined as follows:

Recommendations - refer to areas where the audit Panel believes the University would benefit from making some improvements or changes. Recommendations alert the University to what the Panel believes needs to be addressed, not to how this is done. The Panel may indicate some priority for recommendations by noting a need for action as urgent.

Affirmations – refer to areas which the University has already identified for itself in its Self-review Report or during the site visit as requiring attention, and about which the University has already taken action but does not yet have sufficient outcome to evaluate impact. Affirmations are in effect a validation by the audit Panel that something needs to be done and that the approach taken is likely to be effective.

Commendations – refer to examples of exceptionally good practice, or to examples of effective innovative practice, in areas which have or should result in enhancements to academic quality or to processes underpinning academic quality and which should produce positive impacts on teaching, learning and student experience.

The report is released under the authorisation of the AQA Board.

Emeritus Professor Sheelagh Matear

Executive Director

Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

August 2016

Executive Summary

Established in 1869, The University of Otago is the oldest university in New Zealand. Its main campus is in Dunedin with campuses in Christchurch and Wellington focussed on health sciences education and research, and an Invercargill campus that is part of the College of Education. A centre in Auckland provides student information and support for distance students.

In 2015, the University of Otago had a total enrolment of 20,601 students (18,421 EFTS) and 3,803 full-time equivalent staff. The University of Otago's academic offerings span from pre-degree to doctoral level and in 2015 comprised 187 programmes. They include professionally accredited programmes in health sciences and dentistry, commerce, surveying and education. A number of programmes are offered by distance. Approximately 20% of students are postgraduate.

The University was audited by the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA) in 2016. The current audit follows the methodology used for all New Zealand universities in the fifth cycle of academic audits. It focuses on teaching and learning and student support, including at postgraduate levels. The AQA audit methodology incorporates a framework of 40 Guideline Statements which articulate the qualities or standards which a contemporary university of good standing internationally might be expected to demonstrate.

Prior to 2016, the University of Otago was most recently audited by AQA (as the then New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit) in 2011. The University provided an update against the findings of that audit and the Panel recognised the initiatives undertaken since the Cycle 4 audit. It observed that notwithstanding the progress made, several of the recommendations made during Cycle 4 remain current or are at early stages in implementation. Where the Panel considers that further attention is required in the area of a recommendation, this has been noted in the report.

The University emphasises its research intensity, the role that residential colleges play in the student experience and the importance of both academic and personal development of its graduates. The Panel considered that these points did characterise the University and that they were reflected throughout the materials it reviewed and in interviews with students, staff and members of Council.

The Panel was impressed by the clear and coherent strategic framework and the way in which the University's approach to devolved decision-making was understood and valued across the University. It also recognised that there were a number of systems and processes in place to ensure that differences between departments and disciplines do not mean a lack of equity in opportunity or experience for students or staff. The Panel was also impressed by the way in which devolved decision-making was supported by data and evidence. It notes that, when warranted, the University does take a more centralised approach to particular issues. The Panel has commended the University's approach to, and support of, its strategic direction and decision-making.

The University's planning processes include ensuring that its teaching and learning spaces are current and fit for purpose. It is undertaking significant building programmes and the Panel noted the co-ordination that was occurring between the development of physical and digital infrastructures and endorsed the University's Student Desktop initiative. However, the Panel considers that the University

should consider whether its Committee for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching is exercising a fully strategic oversight of learning and teaching developments.

The role of the residential colleges is an important component of the student experience and the University is building on this with the establishment of a position to better co-ordinate student transition and the first-year experience. This is an example of an initiative that the University is managing centrally, rather than in a devolved manner. The Panel endorses this approach and was impressed with the emphasis that the University places on student transition and the range of programmes and support for specific groups of students.

At the time of the audit, the University was engaged with a series of changes. These included the implementation of a new student management system. Although the technical installation of this was almost complete, changes to student and staff processes were either still ongoing or being embedded. Several of the affirmations or recommendations that the Panel has made refer to the potential to further leverage the benefits of this new system, including how course advice is delivered and early identification of students who are at risk of under-performance.

The Panel was impressed by the University's approach to assessing the extent to which its graduates had developed and applied attributes in their graduate profile and its efforts to seek and use feedback from graduates and employers on the attainment of the attributes. It also considered that membership of the Matariki Network of Universities offered further potential for both staff and students. One aspect of the curriculum that the Panel considers should be developed further is how Māori knowledge and pedagogy are incorporated. It anticipates that the Māori Strategic Framework will provide a mechanism for consolidating examples of good practice across the University and progressing this issue.

The University makes good use of student feedback in identifying opportunities for improvement as part of an overall commitment and systematic approach to gaining student input into the activities and processes of the University. The Panel has recommended that the University ensure that students are made aware of the impact of their feedback.

The Panel considered the University has strong processes for induction and review of staff and that these processes supported a culture of teaching excellence. The Panel was also impressed by the University's support for teaching innovation and its recognition of teaching excellence. It endorses the University's intention to enhance its system of evaluation of teaching.

The University identified enhancements to its supervision of research students. The Panel has endorsed these and has recommended that the University continue to assess and consider the impacts of variability in the support for postgraduate research students across divisions.

The University identified eight planned enhancements in its Self-review Report, a number of which the Panel has specifically endorsed. Other major developments in progress were noted. The Panel has made 12 commendations, 7 affirmations and 6 recommendations. This evaluation reflects the Panel's view that the University of Otago is performing well across the activities and areas that are the subject of the Cycle 5 Academic Audit.

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List of Key Terms and Acronyms

ALDP	Academic Leadership Development Programme
AR15	University of Otago Annual Report for 2015
AQA	Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities
CEQ	Course Experience Questionnaire (utilised in the Student and Graduate Opinion Surveys)
CALT	Committee for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching
CUAP	Universities New Zealand Committee on University Academic Programmes
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
EFTS	Equivalent Full-Time Student(s)
EPI	Educational Performance Indicator
eVision	The student management system (SMS) adopted by the University of Otago
FTE	Full-time Equivalent (staff)
GRS	Graduate Research School
GYR	Graduating Year Review
HEDC	Higher Education Development Centre
HR	Human Resources
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ITS	Information Technology Services
KD	Key (supporting) document (forms part of the University's Self-review Portfolio)
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MSF	Māori Strategic Framework
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
OUSA	Otago University Students' Association
Panel	Unless otherwise specified, "the Panel" refers to the Academic Audit Panel engaged by AQA to conduct the 2016 audit of the University of Otago
PVC	Pro-Vice-Chancellor
SD	Supporting document (forms part of the University's Self-review Portfolio)
SD2020	The University's strategic plan, Strategic Direction to 2020
SLC	Student Learning Centre
SMS	Student management system
SR	Self-review Report
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
VCAG	Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group

Preface

The University of Otago was founded in 1869 and was the first university to be established in New Zealand. The main campus is in Dunedin and the University has campuses in Christchurch and Wellington focussed on health sciences education and research, and in Invercargill as part of the University's College of Education². The University also has a centre in Auckland that provides student information and support for distance students³. While describing itself as "pre-dominantly campus-based", the University of Otago also has a portfolio of distance education qualifications⁴⁵.

University Profile

In 2015, the University of Otago had a total enrolment of 20,601 students (18,421 EFTS)⁶ and 3,803 full-time equivalent staff. Of the University's 20,601 students in 2015, approximately 20% (4,153) were enrolled in postgraduate programmes, 72% (15,324) were enrolled in undergraduate degree-level programmes⁷, 2% (355) in pre-degree programmes⁸, and 7% (1,450) in certificate of proficiency, interest-only, or other courses⁹. Two thousand students studied through distance programmes¹⁰. The majority (87%) of Otago's students are domestic¹¹. Total student numbers and EFTS dropped slightly in 2015, continuing a pattern since 2011 in which Health Sciences, postgraduate (since 2013), Foundation Studies and interest only student numbers have risen slightly, while other areas have declined. PhD student numbers dropped slightly in 2015. The Health Sciences Division has the highest number of EFTS, followed by Humanities, with Commerce the smallest Division in terms of EFTS¹².

In 2015, 8.5% students were reported as identifying as Māori and 3.9% of Pacific ethnicity¹³. The proportions of both Māori and Pacific students have increased steadily since 2011. The University has a Memorandum of Understanding with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu¹⁴.

The University has a target of enrolling a diversified international student population that constitutes no more than 15% of total University EFTS, with no more than 25% of the international cohort from any one country¹⁵. Total numbers of international students enrolled at the University declined slightly in 2015, attributed in part to the winding down of contracts with overseas governments for professional degrees. There was however a small growth in first-year international

² <http://www.otago.ac.nz/about/campuses.html> accessed 20160714.

³ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/aucklandcentre/about/> accessed 20160614.

⁴ AR15, p26. (Note: the Annual Report is available at <http://www.otago.ac.nz/about/official-documents/otago609967.pdf>)

⁵ A proposal is under development to teach a foundation programme in Malaysia.

⁶ Including Foundation Studies students; AR15, p122.

⁷ Graduate Diplomas, Bachelor's Honours, Bachelors, AR15, p122.

⁸ Undergraduate diplomas and certificates and foundation studies.

⁹ Calculated from AR15, p122.

¹⁰ AR15, p26.

¹¹ Calculated from AR15, p122 and p124.

¹² AR15, p122.

¹³ AR15, p123.

¹⁴ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/about/otago005277.html> accessed 20160621.

¹⁵ AR15, p51.

EFTS¹⁶. The United States is the home country for the greatest number of international students, followed by China and Malaysia¹⁷.

Of the 3,803 staff (FTE) reported in 2015, 1,619 (43%)¹⁸ were academic and research staff. The student to staff ratio in 2015 was 15.3, slightly lower than in 2014 and again continuing a downward overall trend since 2011¹⁹.

The University of Otago's academic offerings span from pre-degree to doctoral level and in 2015 comprised 187 programmes²⁰. They include professionally accredited programmes in health sciences and dentistry, commerce, surveying and education²¹.

The University of Otago is structured as four academic divisions – Commerce, Health Sciences, Humanities and Sciences – each led by a Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC). Academic, Research and Enterprise, and External Engagement portfolios are each led by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC). The Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor positions report directly to the Vice-Chancellor, as do the positions of Chief Operating Officer, Registrar and Secretary to Council, Director Human Resources, Director Māori Development, Chief Financial Officer, Director Planning and Funding and Head Internal Audit ²².

Foundation programmes are delivered by a wholly owned subsidiary company. While there are some operational differences between Foundation Studies and the rest of the University, the Panel heard that there was strong academic oversight from the University and that any proposals for new programmes or significant change to programmes would follow normal University processes.

The Senate is the “principal academic authority”²³ for the University and is a sub-committee of the Council of the University. The Boards of Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies are sub-committees of Senate, as is the Committee for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching, the Internationalisation Committee, the Library Services Committee, the Quality Advancement Committee and the Research Committee. The Graduate Research Committee is a sub-committee of the Research Committee and the Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee is a sub-committee of the Graduate Research Committee. Divisional (academic) boards in each of the academic divisions are also sub-committees of Senate and refer matters from divisions to University committees for consideration. The academic committee structure is set out at <http://www.otago.ac.nz/council/committees/committees/index.html>²⁴.

A new constitution and Council for the University came into effect on 1 January, 2016. The new Council has twelve members.

¹⁶ AR15, p26.

¹⁷ AR15, p124.

¹⁸ Calculated from AR15, p126.

¹⁹ AR15, p127.

²⁰ AR15, p26.

²¹ SR, p34.

²² AR15, p7 <http://www.otago.ac.nz/about/official-documents/otago609967.pdf>; and additional document Central Organisation Structure as at 18 April, 2016.

²³ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/council/committees/committees/senate.html> accessed 20160517.

²⁴ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/council/committees/organisational-chart/index.html> accessed 20160808.

The University is ranked in the 201-250 band in the Times Higher Education Rankings, the 201-300 band for the Academic ranking of World Universities and 173rd in the QS World University rankings. Its Dental School is ranked eighth in the world in the QS rankings²⁵. The educational performance indicators published by the TEC show that the University typically performs in the first or second position for New Zealand universities across course completion, qualification completion, student progression to higher level study and student retention indicators²⁶.

Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan

The Vision and Mission of the University of Otago are set out in the University of Otago Strategic Direction to 2020 (SD 2020). The Vision is “A research-led University with an international reputation for excellence” and the Mission is “The University of Otago will create, advance, preserve, promote and apply knowledge, critical thinking and intellectual independence to enhance the understanding, development and well-being of individuals, society and the environment. It will achieve these goals by building on foundations of broad research and teaching capabilities, unique campus learning environments, its nationwide presence and mana, and international links”²⁷.

The Strategic Direction to 2020 document sets out the core values of the University and seven strategic imperatives for which the University has synthesised its position and intentions in the form of observations and responses to:

- Excellence in Research
- Excellence in Teaching
- Outstanding Student Experiences
- Outstanding Campus Environments
- Commitment as a Local, National and Global Citizen
- Strong External Engagement
- Sustaining Capability.

Each of the strategic imperatives is accompanied by a whakatau.

The University considers that it has a special character derived from its position as the first university to be established in New Zealand, its research intensity and the role that residential colleges play in the personal as well as academic development of its graduates. The Panel heard these characteristics being reflected throughout discussions with members of Council, staff and students.

The Vice-Chancellor briefed the Panel on a series of change initiatives underway at the University at the time of the academic audit. The most significant of these are a redevelopment and repositioning of the Division of Commerce, a review of support services and the implementation of a new student management system, plus an ongoing campus development plan (see section 1.4) that includes a

²⁵ AR15, p12.

²⁶ TEC Performance information for 2012, 2013 and 2014, <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Tertiary-Sector/Performance-information/> accessed 20160801.

²⁷ SD2020, p2.

significant building programme. All of these are multi-year initiatives with clear involvement and leadership from the senior management of the University.

The Support Services Review²⁸ will consider how the University supports its teaching, learning and research activities and also how it provides career pathways for staff involved in delivering these services. The first phase involved research and scoping activities and the University is now moving into a second, solution design, phase for Finance, IT, HR, Marketing and Administration processes²⁹.

The Support Services Review reflects the University's approach to change which is highly research and evidence informed and consultative. The consultative approach does mean that change can take time to achieve, but when it does occur staff, students and other stakeholders are well informed and engaged. In a number of areas in which the University is considering change or enhancement, it draws on the expertise from amongst its academic and professional staff to design, evaluate and develop solutions.

The implementation of a new student management system (eVision) has been a significant undertaking for the University, as it replaces a longstanding in-house system. The change to the new system has had impacts on many student administrative processes, from enrolment, to the monitoring and reporting of progress, to graduation. The full implementation programme for eVision occurs over a period of several years. The first phases of implementation have created a number of challenges for both staff and students but there appears to be a clear set of objectives for the ongoing roll out, underpinned by a clear promotion of the benefits of introducing eVision.

The Panel was also briefed on a number of changes in the senior management of the University. These included the recent (June 2015)³⁰ appointment of a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (External Engagement) to consolidate a number of externally-oriented activities; a recent appointment of a Pro-Vice-Chancellor Humanities, a recruitment and appointment process underway for a Pro-Vice-Chancellor Commerce, and the appointment of a new Chief Operating Officer. Other recent changes include the Director Planning and Funding and Chief Financial Officer reporting directly to the Vice-Chancellor. The Panel considered that University management was conscious of the ongoing impacts of change, including fatigue associated with large scale building developments and was taking steps to mitigate any impacts on student learning and support.

²⁸ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/support-services-review/index.html> accessed 20160517.

²⁹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/support-services-review/otago611482.pdf%20%20> accessed 20160609

³⁰ AR15, p42.

1. Leadership and Management of Teaching and Learning

As indicated in the Preface, the senior management of the University comprises a Vice-Chancellor, supported by three Deputy Vice-Chancellors, four Pro-Vice-Chancellors and a Chief Operating Officer. The Director Māori Development, Chief Financial Officer, Director Human Resources, Registrar and Secretary to Council, Director Planning and Funding and Head Internal Audit also report directly to the Vice-Chancellor. These roles form the senior management team or Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group (VCAG), which is an important decision-making body for strategic and policy matters. The Vice-Chancellor is also supported by a series of advisory committees, one of which is an Equity Advisory Committee, which responds to a recommendation (# 12) in the Cycle 4 academic audit of the University. Academic decision making is the responsibility of the Senate of the University. The Vice-Chancellor chairs the Senate which is a sub-committee of Council.

1.1 Delegations

Universities should have clear delegations for decision-making related to teaching and learning quality and research supervision, and for accountability for quality assurance of programmes and courses.

A delegations schedule is reviewed and approved annually by the Council of the University³¹. The Council members, Senior Managers and Heads of Department and other staff the Panel spoke to were clear about the delegations they held and the processes and decisions for which they were responsible.

There is particular significance in having effective delegations operating successfully, given that the University of Otago operates a devolved structure and places emphasis on this as a contributor to the success of the University. The view expressed by the University is that the department (or discipline) is the intellectual home of the student or staff member and the department is best placed to support staff and students, working within the overall framework of the University and meeting external requirements such as qualification design. While this does lead to some differences between departments and divisions, the senior leadership of the University is very clear that differences do not mean a lack of equity in opportunity or experience.

The University assures itself that delegations are being effectively and consistently discharged (with regard for meaningful disciplinary differences) by engaging in considerable dialogue between decision-makers, both vertically and horizontally. The Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group meets twice monthly³² and provides a mechanism whereby the senior management of the University are assured that delegations are being enacted appropriately. A DVCs/PVCs group also meets at least monthly and provides further assurance that delegations are being enacted as envisaged. The Panel heard that the DVCs/PVCs group frequently discusses issues of intra-University equity related to both staff

³¹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/otago120303.pdf> accessed 20160518.

³² <http://www.otago.ac.nz/council/committees/committees/otago086575.html> accessed 20160714.

and students. Within divisions, the Pro-Vice-Chancellors meet formally with deans and/or heads of department, both together and individually, on a regular schedule.

This frequency of meetings and dialogue gives the University confidence that any undesired departures from an agreed direction or inconsistency in decision-making would become apparent and could be redressed. Other mechanisms, such as commonality between academic divisional administrative structures, cross-divisional committee membership and divisional membership on university-level committees, also provide mechanisms for promoting consistency of decision-making.

University senior management recognises that differences in approach may occur, but the preferred approach is to address departures or inconsistencies, rather than to attempt to mandate against their occurrence. This places a high level of trust and responsibility on delegation holders and decision-makers. The Panel did not hear any views expressed to the contrary and heard from heads of departments and deans that they understood and took responsibility for decisions that have been delegated to them. Importantly, the Panel was not aware of major differences in the support and direction provided to staff and students. The one exception was funding for conferences and international travel for staff and postgraduate students, where the main differences were most likely to be linked to variations in the levels of external research funding across disciplines.

In support of the devolved structure and associated decision-making, the University has placed a great deal of emphasis on developing and equipping deans of schools and the College of Education and heads of departments (third and fourth tier academic managers) with the tools to be effective in their roles and to be able to implement the strategic direction of the University. Formal support for leaders, including understanding delegations, is delivered through the Academic Leadership Development Programme (ALDP)³³ and the Panel heard a number of highly supportive comments about this Programme. The University also places emphasis on ensuring that data are made available to departments to inform their direction setting and decision-making and the Panel heard that departments 'own' the data and are expected to respond to them.

Commendation: *The Panel **commends** the University on its well-regarded Academic Leadership Development Programme that identifies future leaders, and equips and supports them to deliver on their delegated responsibilities.*

The Panel was pleased to note that the ALDP included workshops on academic policies "to support common understanding and application of policy"³⁴. It considers that this, and further activity in the orientation and induction for new staff (see section 6.1), provide evidence that the University has responded to the Cycle 4 academic audit recommendation (# 1) that "the University determines which policies and processes are sufficiently critical to meeting its objectives that it must ensure their common understanding and application".

³³ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/humanresources/training/academic-staff/academic-leadership-development/> accessed 20160518.

³⁴ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/humanresources/training/academic-staff/academic-leadership-development/programmes/index.html> accessed 20160601.

While the University intentionally promotes a devolved approach to decision-making and associated responsibility for those decisions, the Panel understood that there were a number of areas where the University had determined that services could be better delivered or outcomes achieved by taking a central approach to specific issues. The establishment of the Director, First-Year Experience position is an example of this, where the University has consolidated a number of initiatives from different parts of the University in order to be able to scale the approach across the University. The Review of Support Services may identify other areas that would benefit from a more centralised or co-ordinated approach. In undertaking this review, the University will need to be mindful of the potential for impact on the provision of services to students.

1.2 Strategic and operational planning

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

The University of Otago has a clear and coherent planning framework for its teaching and learning and student support activities. As indicated in the Preface, the Strategic Direction to 2020 document uses seven strategic imperatives to set the University's direction and intentions. The Strategic Direction to 2020 is underpinned by a Teaching and Learning Plan. Neither the Strategic Direction to 2020 nor the Teaching and Learning Plan contain high level KPIs or other indicators of success. Instead these are included in the Statement of Objectives 2015-2017, where they link to each of the strategic imperatives, including achievement of attributes in the University Graduate Profile (see section 3.2). The Panel was shown a detailed University of Otago Developmental Action Plan that is intended to support the University in achieving its Strategic Direction.

The Teaching and Learning Plan (2013-2020) reflects the imperatives in the Strategic Direction to 2020 (as do many of the subsidiary strategic documents, with the Pacific Strategic Framework 2013 – 2020 being an exception as it pre-dates the Strategic Direction to 2020) and contains the University of Otago Graduate Profile, Guiding Principles and Overarching Goals for teaching and learning. The Teaching and Learning Plan is in turn underpinned by Guidelines for Teaching³⁵ (for staff), which does contain indicators of success, and by Guidelines for Learning (for students)³⁶.

The University reports on progress on its strategic imperatives in both narrative form and against KPIs in the Statement of Service Performance Section in the Annual Report³⁷. The Vice-Chancellor and other senior staff commented that the success of the University's strategy is seen through the quality of its graduates and the overall satisfaction those graduates have with their experience at the University.

In keeping with the devolved approach, academic divisions, schools, departments and service divisions are expected to use the Strategic Direction to 2020 and associated plans to develop their

³⁵ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/staff/otago027122.pdf> accessed 20160518.

³⁶ <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Guidelines-for-Learning.pdf> accessed 20160714.

³⁷ AR15, pp48-56.

own plans, and the Panel heard that the University's strategic documents informed teaching and research within departments. Coherence with University plans and direction is confirmed through the Departmental Review Process³⁸.

Commendation: *The Panel **commends** the University for its coherent strategic planning framework and associated objectives which are incorporated at an operational level into individual academic divisions, schools and departments in ways that are relevant, meaningful and disciplinary specific.*

The University of Otago follows a research-led and consultative process in developing strategy and policy and undertaking changes. The Panel heard many references to the availability of data, the usefulness of data and the expectation to respond to data. Comprehensive surveys of student and graduate opinion (see sections 5.5 and 5.6) are widely used to assess progress on strategic imperatives, inform departmental and programme reviews and identify areas for further development. The University also pilots interventions, in order to assess their effectiveness, before deploying them more widely.

Commendation: *The Panel **commends** the University for its strong culture that recognises that all developments should be thoughtful, and supported by data and research.*

The Committee for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching (CALT) has a particular role in the strategic development of learning and teaching at the University of Otago and the Panel was appraised of the strategic projects it had overseen since the last audit³⁹. One of the terms of reference for CALT is to "encourage the international dimensions of learning and teaching" and the Panel was advised that CALT works alongside the Internationalisation Committee in this regard. The Internationalisation Committee administers and assesses grants for internationalisation of the curriculum. Notwithstanding these complementary roles, the Panel notes that minutes of the recent meetings of CALT make little reference to internationalisation and considers there is scope for the University to clarify further CALT's role in internationalisation and other strategic initiatives and developments. These could include progress on the use of technology in teaching and learning, directions signalled in the (draft) Māori Strategic Framework 2020 and benchmarking of teaching and learning.

*The Panel **recommends** that the University consider whether the Committee for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching is giving full effect to its strategic role and contribution, including implementation and monitoring of progress of strategic direction and initiatives.*

The Panel was pleased to see that the University was implementing the Cycle 4 academic audit recommendation (# 3) that it "develop an overarching quality assurance framework to encompass all processes, both implicit and explicit, and policies by which it ensures itself of academic quality". It

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<http://www.otago.ac.nz/quality/docs/Review%20Terms%20of%20Reference/Dept%20Review%20Terms%20of%20%20Reference%202014.pdf> accessed 20160518.

³⁹ Additional document provided during the site visit.

felt that progress on this had taken rather more time than might have been expected and noted that the Quality Advancement Framework for Teaching and Learning it was provided with was yet to be endorsed by the Senate of the University⁴⁰. The Panel considers however, that it is a well-constructed and useful document⁴¹.

1.3 Student input

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

The University of Otago has a strong relationship with the Otago University Students' Association (OUSA) and students at the University. The Vice-Chancellor meets frequently with the Student Association President and many University committees, including the University Council, Senate, Boards of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies, have student membership. Academic committees within divisions also have student membership and the Panel heard of a number of staff/student liaison committees in departments. The Panel noted that there does not appear to be student representation on the Internationalisation Committee, which given the University's commitment to student participation in internationalisation developments, processes and networks, such as the Matariki Network of Universities, could be considered further.

OUSA administers a class representative system and provides training and support for representatives. The Class Representative System Policy⁴² applies across the University and to OUSA. Although the Policy contains explicit reference to supporting the University's strategic imperatives of 'Excellence in Teaching' and 'Outstanding Student Experiences', the University does not appear to seek student feedback on their experience of the class representative system.

The University acknowledges that it did not support the legislative change to voluntary membership of students' associations. However, it considers that the relationship between the University and OUSA has strengthened considerably since the legislation came into effect. This view was endorsed by OUSA and the Panel heard other comment that reinforced the strength of the relationship between the University and its Students' Association. Consistent with the nature of this relationship, the University has retained the President of OUSA on its revised Council.

The University is conscious of the challenges that students can face in gaining familiarity with University committees and their role on committees and has, jointly with OUSA, utilised its leadership development capability to develop an induction programme for student leaders⁴³. It has also developed some information resources for student (or recent graduate) members of review panels to help support and facilitate their contribution to reviews⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ The University advised following the Panel visit that the Quality Advancement Framework for Teaching and Learning had been endorsed by the Senate of the University.

⁴¹ Additional document, Quality Advancement Framework for Teaching and Learning, provided April 2016.

⁴² <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago003107.html%20> accessed 20160621.

⁴³ SR, p16.

⁴⁴ SR, p16.

As indicated above, the University makes considerable use of large scale surveys of student and graduate opinion and these are utilised in planning, policy development and evaluation of impact. Students are also invited to have input in to department and programme reviews and student input is required when developing new courses. A number of departments or disciplines have student clubs or associations. Other mechanisms for student input include feedback on teaching (see section 5.5), a twice yearly summit between OUSA and VCAG and opportunities for OUSA to bring items to VCAG⁴⁵.

In addition to formal mechanisms, the Panel saw that the Vice-Chancellor is personally committed to and engaged with the student body and encourages her senior managers to reflect this engagement. This takes a variety of forms including attendance at student events, joining residential students for meals and being available to be approached by individual students. This commitment is reflected in other senior members of the University who also attend student events.

The Panel saw the myriad of ways the University of Otago captures student input as a strength, as well as how this leads to genuinely viewing students as partners in the institution. The Panel was impressed by the level of systematic student input into planning and policy development.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for its overall commitment and systematic approach to gaining student input into the activities and processes of the University.*

1.4 Infrastructure

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

Infrastructure development at the University of Otago is guided by its strategic imperative to develop 'Outstanding Campus Environments'. The Panel received evidence that the University has in place a series of steps in the areas of facilities, technology, sustainability and safety to progress this imperative. It heard comments which reflected that technology development was closely aligned with building development and that a framework had recently been presented to CALT to guide the development of teaching technology.

The University has a Campus Plan (scheduled for review in 2016) and a rolling 15-year Priority Development Plan. Considerable development has taken place or is planned on the Dunedin campus, including the redevelopment of the Dental School and facilities, a refurbishment of the main Science building and a redevelopment of the Commerce building⁴⁶. A seismic assessment/strengthening programme is ongoing.

⁴⁵ SR, p15.

⁴⁶ AR15, p35.

The University's Christchurch campus suffered serious damage from the Canterbury earthquakes. The main building, which adjoined the Christchurch Hospital, was repaired and strengthened in 2011 and 2012⁴⁷. During the repair and strengthening period, staff and students needed to be temporarily relocated across the wider Christchurch area. Despite very difficult circumstances, students and staff continued to achieve at standards comparable to those on other campuses⁴⁸. The University's ability to manage teaching and student achievement without a long-lasting negative impact on student learning throughout this time was recognised in the Australian Medical Council's 2014 ongoing accreditation of the University⁴⁹.

In addition to the Campus Master Plan and associated processes, the University has processes in place to assess the space needs of departments and administrative units. A zero-based approach to timetabling is being introduced to enhance delivery from the perspective of both pedagogy and space utilisation.

The Panel was impressed with the Student Desktop initiative that allows students to access University computing resources from their own devices and in locations that do not necessarily have high-speed internet. It is thought that this will be particularly valuable for Health Sciences students who may be living, working and studying in rural areas. Although the Student Desktop has been recognised in ICT awards, the Panel heard comment that indicated, while the initiative was potentially extremely valuable, some further development including the access to library services and attention to awareness of its value among students, was required to make all aspects user-friendly for students.

Affirmation: *The Panel **affirms** the development of the Student Desktop and considers that, with fine-tuning, it will offer considerable benefit for students.*

The University seeks feedback from current students on the general campus environment, lecture theatres and other teaching spaces and the quality and availability of technology. The Panel heard evidence that this student feedback is considered carefully in the further development of teaching spaces and technology. The University also uses other processes to assure itself of the appropriateness of teaching and learning spaces and facilities. CALT receives a regular report from ITS that covers learning management system usage and development and current issues, *inter alia*. Teaching and Learning Facilities (a Department within ITS that is responsible for managing the University's teaching spaces and supporting teaching through technology) is subject to review processes run by the Quality Advancement Unit⁵⁰. The Higher Education Development Centre (HEDC) also has a role in the development and utilisation of educational technology.

As noted in section 1.2, the Panel suggests that there is scope for the University to consider whether the Committee for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching is giving full effect to its strategic role. The Panel was satisfied however, that the University of Otago has strategies and processes for

⁴⁷ AR11, p23.

⁴⁸ AR12, p13.

⁴⁹ SD July 2014 Response from the Australian Medical Council Ltd.

⁵⁰ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/quality/news/index.html> accessed 20160714.

ensuring that teaching and learning facilities are appropriate and operate across all campuses and that the University actively monitors this and develops plans for enhancement.

1.5 Information resources

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

The University characterises its Library network as ten services points, including the Southland Campus Library in Invercargill, the Canterbury Medical Library in Christchurch and the Wellington Medical and Health Sciences Library. The Library network includes the Hocken Library which curates resources related to the “history, cultures, development, and natural environment of New Zealand, the Pacific, early Australia, and Antarctica” with a “complementary framework for resources of Māori interest ...”⁵¹.

The University Library has developed its own quality assurance framework organised around a Plan, Implement, Review, Improve continuous improvement cycle. The Library’s Strategic and Operational Plan includes reference to being responsive to and supportive of clients’ current and future needs and national and international benchmarking⁵². The Library also participates in the University’s Quality Advancement review process.

The University seeks feedback on Library services through the Student Opinion Survey, the Library section of which was redesigned in 2013⁵³ and differentiates between students in their first, second, third and fourth year and above, in terms of their library use, the importance of collections and satisfaction with services⁵⁴. Other processes for ensuring that information resources are appropriate and efficient include the close relationships that librarians have with academic staff and the Panel heard of examples where Library staff were prepared to develop bespoke solutions for staff.

The Library facts and figures⁵⁵ suggest changing patterns in usage of library resources with increases in full text downloads and e-reserve and declines in subject guide access. Student Opinion Survey items about ease of navigation of library webpages and easy to use access tools have lower percentages of students who strongly agree with these statements, although they increased from 2014 to 2015. The Panel suggests that the Library and University continues to monitor and respond to these and other changes to ensure that access and currency are maintained for all user groups as continual advancements in technology lead to rapid changes in information resources.

⁵¹ Hocken Collection Development Policies (November 2007), <http://www.otago.ac.nz/library/pdf/Hocken%20CD%20policies.pdf> accessed 20160519.

⁵² http://www.otago.ac.nz/library/pdf/strategic_operational_plan_2014.pdf accessed 20160519.

⁵³ SR, p21.

⁵⁴ KD11, Student Opinion Survey 2014 Summary Report, pp74-91.

⁵⁵ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/library/about/libraryinformation/otago040381.html#jandec2015> accessed 20160519.

1.6 Risk management

Universities should have recovery plans and procedures which are designed to facilitate continuity of teaching and learning in instances of infrastructure system failure.

The Self-review Report indicates that the University considers and has processes for risk management, emergency management and business continuity; and that the 2011 (and ongoing) Christchurch earthquakes and a hoax threat to student safety on the Dunedin campus have both increased the University's focus on these matters and provided live tests of systems and processes.

The University operates a central risk register and University reporting is designed to capture risks feeding up into the central register. At the highest level, the risk register is overseen by the Audit and Risk sub-committee of Council. The Panel heard that the risk register was undergoing review and some items had been referred for a more strategic assessment of the risk.

The Panel heard that student safety was considered among the risks that the University seeks to manage and that considerable effort had been directed to reducing risk. This included safety associated with student behaviour and safety of students in residential colleges. The Panel heard universally positive comments about the introduction of Campus Watch and the impact it, and other initiatives, have had on improving student safety (see also section 5.3). The Panel was impressed at the level of planning and testing of processes and systems for residential colleges. These systems include a 56-point check-list that is reviewed on a monthly basis and staff ensuring that all colleges had supplies of food, water and emergency supplies, located at the colleges for easy access in an emergency.

Emergency management is co-ordinated from the Proctor's office and the Panel heard that the University's new Emergency Operations Centre is approaching completion. As noted above, the Christchurch earthquakes and a hoax threat to student safety have provided live tests of emergency management systems. The University also undertakes emergency management tests.

Continuity of teaching and research is the responsibility of academic divisions, departments and service divisions who are required to have business continuity plans. The University provides central resources to support the development of business continuity plans⁵⁶.

The Panel was satisfied that the University has effective recovery plans and procedures to facilitate continuity of teaching and learning in the event of a major emergency.

⁵⁶ SR, p23.

2. Student Profile: Access, Transition and Admission Processes

The University of Otago student profile in 2015 was⁵⁷:

	All students	%
Total students, Headcount	20,601	
Total students, EFTS	18,421	
Total students	Headcount	
Domestic students	87	%
International students	13	%
Total students (by ethnicity)⁵⁸	Headcount	
Pākehā/European students	73.4	%
Māori students	8.5	%
Pacific students	3.9	%
Asian students	18.8	%
Other students	7.2	%
Total students	Headcount	
Postgraduate students	19.5	%
Undergraduate students	72	%
Pre-degree students	2	%
Other students ⁵⁹	7	%

The majority of students (75% in 2015) comes from outside of Otago and Southland⁶⁰. The University aims to enrol a diversified student population with no more than 25% of the international cohort from one country⁶¹. In 2015, the United States and China were the two largest home countries for international students⁶². Health Sciences was the largest academic division in 2015 in terms of EFTS with 5,871 EFTS and Commerce the smallest with 2,928 EFTS⁶³.

⁵⁷ Calculated from AR15, p122-124.

⁵⁸ AR15, p123. Note: students may report more than one ethnic group and totals are greater than 100%.

⁵⁹ Certificate of Proficiency, interest only and other students, AR15, p122.

⁶⁰ AR15, p123.

⁶¹ AR15, p51.

⁶² AR15, p124.

⁶³ AR15, p122.

2.1 Admission and selection

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

The University's objectives with respect to the selection and admission of students are captured in the 'Excellence in Teaching' and 'Commitment as a Local, National and Global Citizen' imperatives in Strategic Direction to 2020, with further commentary in its Investment Plan 2015-17⁶⁴. Collectively, these indicate that the University wishes to "increase the calibre" of its student cohort⁶⁵ and in its Annual Report for 2015 the University states that it is "committed to eliminating unnecessary barriers to the admission and progress of students"⁶⁶.

The University refers to its Admission Statute as the reference for admission criteria⁶⁷. Other information including prospectuses for undergraduate⁶⁸, postgraduate,⁶⁹ distance⁷⁰ and international⁷¹ students; and guides to enrolments⁷² is available on the University's website. The University also produces specific guides for Māori students⁷³, Pacific Islands students, Australian students, parents and school careers advisors⁷⁴. Information for programmes with specific requirements, for example professional health sciences programmes, is also available⁷⁵.

The University differentiates between professional (specialised or restricted entry) bachelor's degrees and general bachelor's degrees. Admission to degrees with specific entry requirements⁷⁶ is managed by academic divisions⁷⁷. A limited enrolment scheme is in place for general undergraduate degrees, as part of a managed enrolment system introduced in 2011⁷⁸. Undergraduate students enter through preferential or competitive pathways⁷⁹. Preferential entry is available for students who have achieved merit or excellence in NCEA Levels 2 or 3 (or Cambridge international Examinations, International Baccalaureate or Australian equivalents), students who have accepted a place in a University residential college, students who have accepted a University undergraduate scholarship, Māori students and Pacific students of Polynesian, Melanesian or Micronesian descent⁸⁰.

⁶⁴ SR, p24.

⁶⁵ SD2020, p6.

⁶⁶ AR15, p60.

⁶⁷ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago031998.html> accessed 20160607.

⁶⁸ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/prospectivestudents/otago109002.pdf> accessed 20160607.

⁶⁹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/otago123580.pdf%20> accessed 20160607.

⁷⁰ http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/distance_study/ accessed 20160714.

⁷¹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/international/index.html> accessed 20160714.

⁷² <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/guidetoenrolment.html> accessed: 20160607.

⁷³ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/prospectivestudents/maori/> accessed 20160607.

⁷⁴ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/prospectivestudents/> accessed 20160607.

⁷⁵ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/healthsciences/otago088977.pdf%20> accessed 20160607.

⁷⁶ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/enrolment/specialised-bachelors.html> accessed 20160608.

⁷⁷ SR, p25.

⁷⁸ SR, p24.

⁷⁹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/enrolment/entrypathways.html#competitive> accessed 20160607.

⁸⁰ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/enrolment/entrypathways.html#preferential> accessed 20160608.

As noted in the Preface, the University is completing the multi-year implementation of a new student management system (eVision). Students apply and enrol online and are able to seek assistance through a live chat feature. Admissions processes for international students utilise the eVision student management system, but are managed separately through the International Office. The University seeks feedback on its enrolment processes in the Student Opinion Survey⁸¹ with items covering undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses, the guide to enrolment booklet and clarity of enrolment materials/forms. The Panel was not clear that the University had set target satisfaction levels for these items (see section 5.5) and notes that satisfaction levels for these items had dropped slightly from the preceding year. Satisfaction levels regarding the clarity of enrolment materials were lower than for the other admission/enrolment related items.

The Panel heard varying views in interviews with staff and students regarding the online application processes, although students were generally positive about the ease of use of the process, particularly if their enrolment was straightforward. Students with more complex programmes or who needed additional assistance indicated they had experienced some difficulties in knowing how to access help. The Self-review Report indicates that the University will be redeveloping the relevant section of the Student Opinion Survey to gain feedback in this area⁸². The Panel suggests that this redevelopment permit the ability to identify any differences in satisfaction between students who enter under preferential entry as opposed to competitive entry and those who are admitted to specialised versus general degree programmes.

The implementation process for eVision has involved training and support for staff and the University has convened an enrolment review forum⁸³ to seek specific feedback and identify opportunities for enhancement. However, the Panel understands that the University does not seek systematic feedback on university processes from staff (see also section 6.4).

Overall, the Panel recognises that significant change has occurred with respect to admission and selection processes with the implementation of the new student management system. It is satisfied that policies and practices are accessible and clear for students, that the University is redeveloping the relevant section of the Student Opinion Survey to enhance feedback with respect to these processes, and suggests that the University may wish to consider a more systematic approach to gaining feedback from staff.

2.2 Access and Transition

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

The Self-review Report⁸⁴ refers to the University's Statement of Objectives, Investment Plan and Annual Report, where the University's KPIs for priority groups identified in Strategic Direction to

⁸¹ KD11, p73 ff.

⁸² SR, p25.

⁸³ SR, p25.

⁸⁴ SR, p26.

2020 (high-calibre undergraduates, research degree postgraduates (see section 7), Māori and Pacific peoples, and international students) are set out and reported. The University has set targets for increasing the proportions of degree level students entering with NCEA Level 3 (or equivalent), postgraduate students⁸⁵, Māori students and Pacific students⁸⁶, and met these targets in 2015.

As noted above, the University includes Māori students and Pacific students in the cohorts of learners eligible for preferential entry to general bachelor's degrees. To support access and transition for Māori students and Pacific students, the University has developed programmes to raise interest and increase academic preparedness prior to studying at the University, and then programmes to enhance engagement and academic success with tailored support programmes once students are enrolled⁸⁷. The University also reports in detail on progress on its Cycle 4 enhancement initiative (# 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". The University's progress report on its Cycle 4 academic audit enhancement initiative (# 18) "To finalise and begin to implement a University-wide Pacific Strategic Framework and a Pacific Research Protocol" also contains relevant comment on access and transition for Pacific students⁸⁸.

Initiatives to enhance access and transition for Māori students exist across all academic divisions of the University. They include a He Kākano Māori Entrepreneurship programme in the Commerce Division, the Tū Kahika transition programme from Foundation Studies in Health Sciences, Te Whakapuāwai also in Health Sciences, and Timata Pūtaiao in the Division of Sciences⁸⁹. Many of these initiatives are developed and delivered in conjunction with Te Huka Mātauraka – The Māori Centre.

The Pacific Islands Centre serves as a hub for academic support and mentoring for Pacific students. In common with Te Huka Mātauraka, it works in conjunction with divisional initiatives. These are articulated in the University's progress report on its Cycle 4 enhancements⁹⁰ and in its current Investment Plan⁹¹. Initiatives include early intervention programmes in the Division of Humanities and Division of Commerce, targeted support for Pacific students studying Health Sciences, professional development support for science teachers in schools with high proportions of Pacific students and research to identify success factors for Pacific students⁹². The Panel heard that the Pacific Islands Centre staff contact students to build relationships before they arrive at the University.

Indications that these access and transition initiatives are successful are provided by an increase in the numbers of Māori students gaining entry to the specialised, restricted entry health sciences professional programmes⁹³ and an increased percentage of first-year Māori students passing at least

⁸⁵ AR15, p49.

⁸⁶ AR15, p53.

⁸⁷ SR, p26.

⁸⁸ KD9, Academic Audit Cycle 4 Initial Report and Update, Enhancements # 13 and # 18.

⁸⁹ KD9, Academic Audit Cycle 4 Initial Report and Update, Enhancement # 13.

⁹⁰ KD9, Academic Audit Cycle 4 Initial Report and Update.

⁹¹ KD6 (updated), TEC Investment Plan 2015-2017, Attachment F.

⁹² KD9, Academic Audit Cycle 4 Initial Report and Update, Enhancement # 18.

⁹³ SR, p26.

two-thirds of their academic credits⁹⁴. The numbers of Māori students completing undergraduate qualifications dropped for 2015, but rose slightly for postgraduate qualifications⁹⁵. Other indicators of success are the satisfaction levels regarding the Māori Centre⁹⁶.

Numbers of Pacific students remain relatively low. However, the percentage of first-year Pacific students passing at least two-thirds of their academic credits also increased in 2015⁹⁷. Numbers of Pacific students completing both undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications dropped in 2015⁹⁸. Although the numbers are low, Pacific students do not seem to be as satisfied with the services provided by the Pacific Islands Centre⁹⁹.

The University also identifies international students as a priority group¹⁰⁰. Transition support initiatives for international students include tailored webpages¹⁰¹ and compulsory orientation/enrolment seminars for new international students¹⁰². International students reported comparable or slightly lower levels of satisfaction with prospectus and enrolment information¹⁰³. The Panel noted that the University does not appear to seek their feedback on the International Prospectus specifically, in the Student Opinion Survey.

The residential colleges at the University of Otago play a significant role in transition processes for new students. Colleges provide academic as well as pastoral and welfare support for students and appear to serve as a process that moderates between any divisional differences in support for students. University concerns that non-residential students did not have access to the same levels of support led to the establishment of a 'Locals' programme.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for its strong emphasis on student transition, including the relationship with residential colleges, and the range of programmes and processes for equity and other priority groups.*

The University of Otago has recently consolidated much of its transition activity for first-year students into a portfolio of activity to be coordinated by a Director, First-Year Experience and supported by a First-Year Experience Committee¹⁰⁴. This new role and new committee will be evaluated after two years. The Panel recognises that the University is also redeveloping its Residential Colleges survey to provide improved data on the first-year experience.

⁹⁴ AR15, p53.

⁹⁵ AR15, p53.

⁹⁶ KD11, p104.

⁹⁷ AR15, p53.

⁹⁸ AR15, p53.

⁹⁹ Compared with, for example, satisfaction levels of Māori students with the Māori Centre; KD11 Student Opinion Survey – 2014 Summary Report, p104, p108.

¹⁰⁰ SR, p26.

¹⁰¹ For example, <http://www.otago.ac.nz/international/internationalprearrivalinfo.html%20> accessed 20160609.

¹⁰² <http://www.otago.ac.nz/international/otago005495.html%20> accessed 20160609.

¹⁰³ KD11, p112.

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/otagobulletin/news/otago341801.html%20> accessed 20160609.

The Panel was impressed with the co-ordinated approach the University is taking with the establishment of the Director, First-Year Experience and the way in which it has built on, consolidated, and extended successful initiatives from parts of the University into a whole-of-University approach.

Affirmation: *The Panel **affirms** the consolidated approach to transition that the University is taking with the establishment of the Director, First-Year Experience position and committee.*

It also suggests that the University may wish to anticipate future transition processes for students, such as the transition to second year and moving to more independent living and whether other cohorts of students would also benefit from a co-ordinated approach.

2.3 Academic advice

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

Course information and course advice processes have also changed with the implementation of the eVision SMS. The Self-review Report states that a working party is underway to consider admission advice, course advice and course approval¹⁰⁵.

The Self-review Report also states "The University provides generic course advice to students through the University Course Advice Service, which is located in a very visible and central location on the Dunedin Campus. Designated academic divisional or specialised course advisers are also available to provide advice to students regarding their course. The Course Advice at Otago website¹⁰⁶ provides links to the extensive range of academic advice services available to support prospective, new and current students, ... "¹⁰⁷. The Panel noted that the current system relies heavily on course advisors who are professional staff. The reported reduction of significant and formal involvement by academic staff is an issue and should be considered as an element to be scrutinised in any formal review of current processes.

The Panel heard mixed views about the desirability and success of the changes to provision of course advice following the implementation of eVision. Concerns included the loss of some familiarisation and social benefits that were associated with the previous, manual, system of students needing to find their way around the University, having initial contact with academic staff and meeting other new students in queues for advice. The Panel also heard that some departments were developing *ad hoc* approaches to address course advice problems that they perceived had arisen from the change in systems.

Again the University utilises the Student Opinion Survey to seek feedback on course advice and the Panel noted variability between different cohorts of students with respect to their satisfaction with

¹⁰⁵ SR, p28.

¹⁰⁶ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/course-advice/services/> accessed 20160609. ¹⁰⁷ SR, p28.

course advice and approval processes¹⁰⁸. The Panel also noted that the University plans to ask new questions about course advice and approval processes to better reflect new processes and systems¹⁰⁹. The Panel recognises that the University has identified an enhancement "to reconsider course advising at an opportune point ..." ¹¹⁰ and that a review of course advice is scheduled. However, the Panel recommends that the University undertakes this reconsideration sooner rather than later.

Recommendation: *The Panel **recommends** that the University progress its intentions to review course advice as a matter of urgency.*

¹⁰⁸ KD11 Student Opinion Survey – 2014 Summary Report.

¹⁰⁹ SR, p28.

¹¹⁰ SR, p86.

3. Curriculum and Assessment

3.1 Programme approval

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

The University of Otago has well-established course and programme review processes which are aligned with the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) requirements. Guidelines and other resources, including best practice exemplars, are available on the University's website¹¹¹ and the process is set out in the Quality Advancement Framework for Teaching and Learning¹¹².

The process of developing a new programme begins with a concept which is set out in an indicative proposal. The indicative proposal is assessed in terms of its alignment with, and contribution to, the University's strategic direction and the Tertiary Education Strategy 2014-19, and whether it will attract funding and enrolments. If the indicative proposal is supported, a full proposal that addresses the purpose of the programme, evidence of demand, relevance and acceptability to key stakeholders, programme goals and aims, alignment to the Treaty of Waitangi, anticipated attributes and skills of graduates, teaching and delivery methods, student workload and assessment, resources and plans for monitoring is developed. This proposal is submitted to the relevant divisional academic board and subsequently the Board of Graduate or Undergraduate Studies, Senate and the University Council, before being submitted to CUAP. The proposal will be critiqued and modifications may be sought at any stage in the approval process¹¹³.

Evaluating the effectiveness of the University's programme approval processes entails consideration of whether programmes are approved by CUAP and its associated Graduating Year Review (GYR) process, understanding whether programmes are attractive to students and whether graduates of those programmes are sought by employers (and other stakeholders), and the contribution of programmes to the University's strategy. The Panel noted that the University had identified enhancements to its GYR processes in its Self-review Report and was implementing an annual programme reporting process as an internal precursor to the GYR¹¹⁴.

The Panel noted that the University has a number of programmes that are professionally accredited and appreciates that these provide a mechanism for stakeholder input into programme development and approval processes. Examples of professional accreditations in the Self-review Report include AACSB and EQUIS for Commerce programmes, the New Zealand Education Council for teacher education and the appropriate professional body for Health Sciences programmes¹¹⁵.

¹¹¹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/academiccommittees/proformas.html%20> accessed 20160601.

¹¹² Additional document, Quality Advancement Framework for Teaching and Learning, provided April 2016.

¹¹³ SR, p29.

¹¹⁴ SR, p34.

¹¹⁵ SR, p34.

Guidance for proposal development¹¹⁶ includes reference to requirements to be consistent with the University's commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and refers to the Māori Strategic Framework 2007. While the Panel was satisfied that course and approval processes were appropriate, one issue that it considers deserves further attention is how the University engages with Māori stakeholders and how Māori knowledge and pedagogy are incorporated and developed in courses and programmes.

The Panel heard that consultation with Māori and Pacific stakeholders did occur, but did not hear evidence of a systematic approach beyond having an Associate Dean for Māori in each academic division. The Panel noted that the numbers of Māori students have increased to 8.5% of enrolments, but there has not been the same level of growth in Māori staff numbers. This could lead to stretching of existing capability to facilitate effective stakeholder input.

During the visit the Panel was given a draft copy of the new Māori Strategic Framework (2020). The (draft) Māori Strategic Framework (MSF), in common with other strategic documents, follows the framework of Strategic Direction to 2020 and includes an action to profile good practice in the design, delivery and assessment of Māori curriculum across the University¹¹⁷. The Panel became aware that the University had also launched a research theme Poutama Ara Rau that will consider "how can mātauranga Māori and Māori pedagogies transform tertiary teaching and learning"¹¹⁸.

The Panel considered that other aspects of the (draft) Māori Strategic Framework 2020 relating to curriculum development address the recommendation (# 8) from the Cycle 4 academic audit "that the University develop and implement mechanisms whereby it can evaluate its achievement against the objectives of the (previous) Māori Strategic Framework in a robust and systematic manner". The Panel was less clear that the University had fully addressed the associated recommendations (# 9) that it "proceed with a review of its policy regarding the submission of theses in te reo Māori, [and] explores other ways in which the use of te reo Māori can be proactively encouraged where appropriate" and (# 10) "that the University develop a system of strategic workforce planning which pays attention not only to demographic impacts but also the recruitment of Māori and Pacific staff, as well as to succession planning and staff support". The Panel was conscious of the capacity challenges faced by all New Zealand Universities to recruit Māori staff and to have the resources to examine in te reo Māori. Nonetheless, the Panel recommends that the University should address progress on its Māori Strategic Framework further and, particularly in relation to the Curriculum and Assessment area, that it should consider how Māori knowledge and pedagogy can be incorporated into University curricula (see also sections 3.9 and 6.4). In doing this, the University would build on and leverage the range of curriculum developments reported in ongoing progress on its Cycle 4 enhancement initiative (# 14) that it "... "showcase" ... Māori curriculum developments ..."¹¹⁹. It would also build on initiatives the Panel heard about in the Division of Health Sciences, particularly.

¹¹⁶ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/academiccommittees/proformas.html> accessed 20160601.

¹¹⁷ (draft) MSF 2020, p4.

¹¹⁸ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/te-poutama-maori/research/otago330602.html%20> accessed 20160601.

¹¹⁹ KD9 Academic Audit Cycle 4 Initial Report and Update.

Recommendation: *The Panel **recommends** that that the University should address progress on its Māori Strategic Framework further and that it should consider how Māori knowledge and pedagogy can be incorporated into curricula.*

3.2 Graduate attributes

Universities should have clearly-defined intended graduate outcomes (graduate attributes) which are publically available and are accessible to students and staff.

The University of Otago has graduate profiles for Bachelor's degrees¹²⁰ and graduate profiles for postgraduate research degrees¹²¹, which are published on the University's website. The graduate profiles share a common set of thirteen attributes comprising what the University describes as "substantial affective elements"¹²² and attributes commonly sought by employers. The substantial affective attributes are:

- Global perspective^p
- Interdisciplinary perspective
- Lifelong learning^p
- Scholarship^p

The attributes most often sought by employers are:

- Communication^p
- Critical thinking^p
- Cultural understanding
- Ethics^p
- Environmental literacy
- Information literacy^p
- Research^p
- Self-motivation^p
- Teamwork

The superscript^p denotes the attributes which are "increasingly developed"¹²³ in postgraduate research qualifications. The Panel noted with interest the initiative to distinguish postgraduate research outcomes in this way.

The graduate profile is a key component of the University's Teaching and Learning Plan. The Guidelines for Teaching¹²⁴ and Learning¹²⁵ then provide further direction on how to incorporate

¹²⁰ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/otago078325.html> accessed 20160713.

¹²¹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/otago122601.pdf> accessed 20160713.

¹²² SR, p30.

¹²³ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/otago122601.pdf> accessed 20160713.

¹²⁴ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/staff/otago027122.pdf> accessed 20160518.

¹²⁵ <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Guidelines-for-Learning.pdf> accessed 20160518.

attributes in curriculum design and learning. Course and programme approval processes (see section 3.1) support the embedding of graduate attributes in new courses and programmes.

The Panel heard that academic divisions had undertaken, or were undertaking, structured programmes of work to ensure that more disciplinary specific attributes for their programmes aligned with the University graduate profile attributes and felt that good progress had been made on embedding the University graduate attributes into curricula. The Panel considered this showed a commitment to ensuring that the graduate profile be taken seriously as a set of attributes to be developed by all students.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for its development of University graduate profiles and for its systems and processes to embed the attributes from those profiles into curricula.*

In the Panel's view, the next challenge with graduate attributes will be to foster awareness of them among students. It noted that some lecturers are doing this as a matter of course, and that the Careers and Student Volunteer staff are making them explicit in their work, but the commitment to raising student awareness of the attributes was not clearly consistent across the University. The attributes represent long-term development goals for students and if they are to be embraced and achieved as outcomes, students need to be highly aware of them throughout their studies.

3.3 Graduate outcomes

Universities should have processes for ensuring students have the opportunity to meet the intended graduate outcomes (graduate attributes) during their period of study.

The processes that the University uses to ensure that graduates have the opportunity to meet intended graduate attributes are discussed in the previous section.

In its Self-review Report the University states that it "commits to targets in respect of graduate outcomes very publicly in the Statement of Objectives and reports on performance in the Annual Report"¹²⁶. In the Annual Report and Graduate Opinion Survey, the University assesses the extent to which its graduates consider they had the opportunity to develop attributes¹²⁷ and the extent to which they have applied these attributes in roles they have held since completing their studies¹²⁸.

Opportunities for graduates to attain attributes were reported to be embedded in the curricula of programmes and in extra-curricular activity at the University, such as the Volunteering Centre and residential colleges. While considerable variability in these opportunities and in their take-up by students might be expected, it was clear that there was commitment to the attributes in a number of areas. The 2015 Graduate Opinion Survey results indicate that almost half of graduates had

¹²⁶ SR, p30.

¹²⁷ AR15, p49.

¹²⁸ KD12 Graduate Opinion Survey – 2015 Summary Report.

participated in volunteering activity while studying and a third had also volunteered in the eighteen months since they graduated¹²⁹.

The Panel noted the effort that the University is making to gain feedback from students on the opportunities to meet intended graduate attributes. In particular, the Panel was impressed by the way the results from the Graduate Opinion Survey were fed back to departments and divisions and used to inform further curriculum development. The Panel heard that the Quality Advancement Unit (which conducts the Graduate Opinion Survey) provides comprehensive presentations to departments on the survey feedback from their graduates. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor for the relevant academic division also attend the presentation and will seek follow-up action from departments where needed. As part of the devolved nature of the University, departments are expected to 'own' the data and make appropriate changes if required in response to survey results. There are a range of other systems and processes, including department and programme reviews, to ensure that this does occur.

The Panel was also interested to note that in addition to seeking feedback from graduates on the extent to which they had opportunity to develop and then apply attributes, the University has sought feedback from employers¹³⁰.

*The Panel **commends** the University for its efforts to seek and use feedback from graduates and employers on the attainment of graduate attributes.*

As noted above, the next challenge for the University is to make students more aware of the graduate profile and attributes in order to encourage a more conscious engagement with them.

3.4 Programme review

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

The University of Otago has a long and well established programme of programme reviews, department reviews, administrative reviews and reviews of residential colleges. Department reviews also consider the qualification a department is responsible for delivering. The Review policy¹³¹ and cycle of reviews are set out on the University's website¹³², along with a comprehensive suite of resources for supporting reviews¹³³.

The Panel noted that the University had recently reviewed its reviews policy and had adopted a review cycle that allows a period of up to ten years between reviews. It understood that this move was informed by a 'review of reviews'¹³⁴. The Panel was initially concerned by the proposed length

¹²⁹ SR, p32.

¹³⁰ Additional document, Employers' Opinion of Graduate Attributes, provided April 2016.

¹³¹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago029244.html> accessed 20160714.

¹³² <http://www.otago.ac.nz/quality/> accessed 20160714.

¹³³ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/quality/reviews/index.html> accessed 20160714.

¹³⁴ SD Retrospective Analysis of Reviews 2010-2013.

of time between reviews, but on further exploration understood that ten years would be the maximum period between reviews and would only occur when mid-review processes provided sufficient evidence for not reviewing sooner. Provision exists for reviews to be undertaken on a shorter cycle-length.

The Panel consistently heard that reviews were taken very seriously by the University and that responses to recommendations and follow-up reports were part of the processes. Departments (and other units or services that are reviewed) are required to report on progress one and two years after the review. The Panel saw copies of departmental responses to reviews and Pro-Vice-Chancellor commentary on those responses.

Student input is included in review processes through the timing of Student and Graduate Opinion Surveys that provide data for the reviews. A student or recent graduate is included as a member of the review panel and again the University has provided resources to support their contribution¹³⁵. The Panel also heard that review panels meet with students and that students may make submissions to reviews. The Review Principles also make reference to “members of relevant employer groups and professional bodies” being included in the review panel¹³⁶.

The University is also subject to and participates in accreditation reviews for a number of professional bodies (see section 3.1). These include: EQUIS and AACSB International accreditation for the School of Business; accreditation by the relevant New Zealand and/or Australasian authority for the Division of Health Sciences’ professional undergraduate programmes; and review of teacher education programmes in the College of Education (Division of Humanities) by the New Zealand Education Council.

Given the comprehensive processes, the Panel was interested in how the University learnt whether themes or common areas for recommendations were developing across the reviews. It heard that the University does conduct meta-analyses of reviews to identify emergent themes and that the University’s approaches to management of teaching, learning and research spaces had been informed by these sorts of analyses. Reviews of large programmes, such as the Bachelor of Commerce, also help to identify cross-cutting issues.

The Panel was satisfied that the University has robust and comprehensive processes for reviews, including processes for following up on recommendations from reviews and that reviews are well supported by resources from the Quality Advancement Unit. It notes that the University’s response to a Cycle 4 recommendation (# 2) that it “reconsiders the processes for departmental, programme and service reviews to the ensure that reports and outcomes are reported at the appropriate level [and] the University established channels for ensuring that Senate and Council receive key information derived from reviews and surveys” was that it had considered these processes and was of the view that reporting processes were consistent with delegations. It has enhanced processes to

¹³⁵

http://www.otago.ac.nz/quality/docs/Review%20Policies_Flyers_Forms/StudentGrad%20rep%20flyer%2010-2-10.pdf accessed 20160714.

¹³⁶ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/quality/docs/Review%20Admin/ReviewPrinciples.pdf> accessed 20160714.

ensure that members of Senate are notified of the release of review reports¹³⁷. The Panel accepts this response to the Cycle 4 audit recommendation.

3.5 Benchmarking programmes

Universities should use processes for benchmarking curriculum and assessment standards to ensure they are internationally appropriate.

The University undertakes a range of activities¹³⁸ that contribute to the external referencing, calibration, and process improvement features of benchmarking. Internal benchmarking processes are well-developed with the Student and Graduate Opinion Surveys providing intra-university and longitudinal calibration of programmes. Externally, the University uses external examination processes for taught postgraduate papers and research theses and professional accreditation of programmes provides further assurance that curriculum and assessment standards are internationally appropriate.

The University is a founding member of the Matariki Network of Universities¹³⁹, comprised of universities with similar characteristics on key dimensions (programme portfolio, ethos, locations, and size). The Matariki Network partnerships and current activities include benchmarking and peer learning with regard to libraries and undergraduate research opportunities. In this respect, the University's relationship with its Matariki Network partners extends beyond benchmarking as it offers opportunities for staff and student exchange. The Panel heard that the University considered Matariki Network partners as 'trusted friends' with whom they could explore a range of issues as well as undertake benchmarking activities. The Panel also heard that the Matariki Network is still in its development stages but is expected to deliver considerable value for the University and the Panel agreed with this assessment.

Other processes for benchmarking include international rankings and rating systems. The University participates in international rankings, including the QS World University Rankings and Shanghai Jiao Tong Academic Ranking of World Universities, and is conscious of the challenges and limitations of such systems. It also participates in the International Student Barometer, which is internationally well-regarded, and Uniforum for international benchmarking of support services.

More recently, the University has initiated further discussion of benchmarking and how it can be used further. It has joined an international benchmarking initiative on "International Student Employability and Industry"¹⁴⁰.

The Panel was satisfied that the University had a range of processes in place to assure itself that curriculum and assessment standards are internationally appropriate. It also has, and is intentionally developing, professional relationships that support benchmarking across a range of University

¹³⁷ SR, p33.

¹³⁸ SR, p35.

¹³⁹ <http://matarikinetwerk.org/about/about/> accessed 20160714.

¹⁴⁰ SR, p36.

activities. The Panel also noted the opportunities for constructive staff and student connections with other Matariki Network Universities.

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms the University's development of the Matariki Network of Universities and considers that it offers considerable potential for benchmarking, opportunities for students and staff, and other organisational learning.*

3.6 Assessment

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

The Guidelines for Teaching at Otago document, which helps give effect to the Teaching and Learning Plan, “promotes alignment between assessment and intended learning outcomes as a key principle when designing courses and programmes”¹⁴¹. Further advice is provided by the “Guidelines for the Assessment of Student Performance”¹⁴² and its companion document “Best Practice in Assessment of Student Performance”¹⁴³. The Guidelines set out four overarching principles that assessment should reflect:

1. All internal assessment should inform learning.
2. Assessments will centre on essential knowledge and skills.
3. Both internal assessment(s) and final examinations will usually be necessary.
4. The workload associated with assessment requirements will be reasonable and the tasks will be fully described early enough to give students time to fit them alongside their other commitments.

The Guidelines are underpinned by policy positions on examination and assessment regulations, the University grading scale, academic integrity, academic misconduct, *inter alia*¹⁴⁴. Supporting documents provided evidence of the implementation of the guidelines and the Panel heard comments that indicated that academic staff were well informed about assessment processes and that there was scrutiny to ensure that assessments align with learning objectives. As indicated above (section 3.5), the University also uses external examiners for taught postgraduate papers and the Panel heard comments that this contributed to the moderation of assessment.

The Panel heard that processes and procedures for reviewing grade distributions of papers were well understood across the University and that head of department sign-off on final results provided a moderating mechanism across papers. Data from a ‘comparison of grades’ process are provided to heads of departments to support this process. It also heard from students that assessment requirements for papers were clearly set out. It noted however, that there had been a change in the

¹⁴¹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/staff/otago027122.pdf>, p4, accessed 20160714.

¹⁴² <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago078920.html%20> accessed 20160621.

¹⁴³ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/otago078718.pdf%20> accessed 20160621.

¹⁴⁴ SR, p37.

pattern of feedback from students on assessment in the Student Opinion Survey for 2014¹⁴⁵ and suggests that the University assures itself that contributing factors to this change have been examined.

The Panel was satisfied that there was broad appreciation of the importance of assessment across the University and noted that the University had developed a robust policy framework with supporting and resource materials to promote good practice in assessment.

3.7 Equivalence of learning outcomes

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

As indicated in the Preface, the University has campuses for Health Sciences in Christchurch and Wellington and for Education in Invercargill. Additionally, students in Health Sciences professional programmes undertake placements which can see them located throughout New Zealand. The Otago Medical School has invested in e-learning initiatives to support staff and students involved in this distributed delivery. Further, the Division of Health Sciences has developed a series of mechanisms to ensure that learning outcomes are comparable across different campus and study locations¹⁴⁶. The Panel heard that particular scrutiny was given to these processes after the Christchurch earthquakes to ensure that students based in Christchurch were not being disadvantaged.

For education programmes in Invercargill, the Panel heard that the same courses were taught in Invercargill and Dunedin and that regular moderation processes occurred, including both face-to-face and e-mediated processes.

In addition to Health Sciences delivery arrangements and Education delivery in Invercargill, the University also has a relatively small distance education programme which is set out in the Distance Education Strategy to 2020, available on the University's website¹⁴⁷. Results of Student and Graduate Opinion Surveys, course evaluations of distance taught courses and retention and pass rates of distance courses, *inter alia*, are reported annually to the Distance Learning Advisory Board.

Overall, the Panel was satisfied that the University had processes in place to ensure the equivalence of learning outcomes for students taught on campuses and in locations other than at the main Dunedin campus.

¹⁴⁵ KD11, Student Opinion Survey – 2014 Summary Report, p30.

¹⁴⁶ SR, p38.

¹⁴⁷ http://www.otago.ac.nz/courses/distance_study/otago084451.pdf%20 accessed 20160622.

3.8 Academic misconduct

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

The University has recently revised and approved an Academic Integrity Policy¹⁴⁸. This policy “affirm[s] the University’s commitment to academic integrity, affirm[s] that ... the University has a responsibility to educate students with regards to academic integrity, [and] define[s] the expectations and responsibilities of the University, staff and students as regards the fostering of academic integrity”¹⁴⁹. The Student Academic Misconduct Procedures then set out levels of academic misconduct and mechanisms for dealing with instances of misconduct¹⁵⁰.

The University’s first approach to academic misconduct and its treatment of the lowest level of misconduct is to take an educative approach. Extensive materials are available on the “Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Information for Students” website¹⁵¹ and course outlines refer students to these resources. The resources include modules for self-directed learning and links to other resource compilations, as well as text-based materials.

In an attempt to eliminate plagiarism, the University makes the SafeAssign tool available through its learning management system (Blackboard) for students and staff to use in a proactive, educative way as well as for monitoring and detecting plagiarism. The Panel considered that the uptake rate of 12% reported in the Self-review Report¹⁵² seemed low given the emphasis that the University had placed on this matter.

The Panel heard that the University had identified the potential for inconsistent treatment of academic misconduct across the academic divisions and had implemented a process to ensure consistency across divisions.

The University reports on cases of academic misconduct using a central register for higher level cases. Six-monthly and annual reports are compiled by the Manager of Student Administration and reported to Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Deputy Vice-Chancellors, the Vice-Chancellor and Council. This information is also used to identify trends, developments and repeat cases¹⁵³. The staff the Panel spoke with were aware of processes for reporting and dealing with cases of academic misconduct.

The Panel was satisfied that the University has good practice procedures in place for addressing academic misconduct and noted that this was a further instance where the University had taken a research informed approach to policy development and the development of good practice guidelines.

¹⁴⁸ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago116838.html%20> accessed 20160621.

¹⁴⁹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago116838.html> accessed 20160621.

¹⁵⁰ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago116850.html> accessed 20160621.

¹⁵¹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/academicintegrity/> accessed 20160621.

¹⁵² SR, p40.

¹⁵³ SR, p40.

In conjunction with this guideline statement, the Panel considered the University's processes for appeals against decisions related to academic misconduct and the role of OUSA in the appeals process. Appeals against level one academic misconduct may be made to the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor and appeals for higher level misconduct utilise the University's Appeals Statute¹⁵⁴. Under this Statute, Appeals Boards are formed from Council members and include, whenever possible, one student member.

3.9 Assessment in te reo Māori

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

The University's procedures for assessment in te reo Māori are incorporated into its Māori Language Policy – Ngā Kaupapa mō te reo Māori¹⁵⁵. The Self-review Report indicates low levels of usage of this provision with fewer than ten students making use of this provision in the last decade¹⁵⁶.

As noted in section 3.1, the Panel was not clear that the University had addressed the Cycle 4 recommendation (# 9) that it "proceed with a review of its policy regarding the submission of theses in te reo Māori". It did recognise that the University had indicated in its update on its Cycle 4 academic audit that it was addressing this recommendation as part of a collaborative work stream led by the Te Kāhui Amokura sub-committee of Universities New Zealand.

With the redevelopment of the (draft) Māori Strategic Framework 2020 which includes a goal of increasing the use of te reo and tikanga Māori and growth in Māori student numbers, it is possible that demand for assessment in te reo Māori may increase. Along with the capacity to conduct assessment in te reo Māori, the Panel heard that there is also likely to be a need to grow capability to convene and conduct PhD examinations, including oral examinations, in te reo Māori.

The Panel has recommended that the University address progress on implementing its Māori Strategic Framework 2020 further in section 3.1 and makes further comment in section 6.4.

¹⁵⁴ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago029949.html> accessed 20160621.

¹⁵⁵ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago003239.html> accessed 20160524.

¹⁵⁶ SR, p41.

4. Student Engagement and Achievement

The strategic imperatives ‘Excellence in Teaching’ and ‘Outstanding Student Experiences’ from the University’s strategic plan (Strategic Direction to 2020) frame the University’s intentions with respect to student engagement and achievement. Its strategic imperative of ‘Commitment as a Local, National and Global Citizen’ is also relevant to the guideline statements in this section, as it guides participation and achievement targets for Māori students and for Pacific students.

4.1 Student engagement

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

In addressing this guideline statement, the University focussed on student engagement with the wider community including volunteering and work-integrated learning. Initially the Panel considered this to be a somewhat narrow perspective on student engagement. Discussions with members of the University however, which connected this issue to the University’s membership of the Matariki Network of Universities that had a ‘social change’ agenda, the inclusion of student altruism in the University’s response to its ‘Outstanding Student Experiences’ strategic imperative and the University’s graduate profile, convinced the Panel that the University was addressing this guideline statement from a whole-of-University and whole-of-student perspective.

As indicated above, the University is clearly committed to student engagement and its approach is framed by its strategic plan. The establishment of the Director, First-Year Experience position (see section 2.2) further reflects the holistic approach to student engagement. The Panel also heard of a range of other initiatives and processes that enhanced student engagement, including peer learning and student leadership programmes.

In the Self-review Report, the University comments that student feedback from a range of surveys had indicated that students were seeking more opportunity to engage with and prepare for the workplace. The University indicates that it has responded to this by developing more opportunities for work integrated learning and volunteering¹⁵⁷. The Panel did not gain a sense of how work-integrated-learning opportunities were being developed and suggests that the University may wish to consider how it communicates these. Students with whom the Panel met were aware of opportunities, but also indicated that more might be done to increase awareness. The Panel did note however, that professionally accredited degrees, particularly in Health Sciences, would include considerable engagement with the workplace.

The University reports on student engagement with the Volunteering Centre and cites data from the Student Opinion Survey (2014)¹⁵⁸ that over half of the respondents had undertaken, or planned to undertake, volunteering work before they graduate. This finding was supported by the Graduate Opinion Survey in which 49% of respondents indicated they had undertaken volunteering while

¹⁵⁷ SR, p43.

¹⁵⁸ KD11 Student Opinion Survey – 2014 Summary Report.

studying at the University¹⁵⁹. The Panel was provided with a copy of a recent monthly report on volunteering activity that indicated the range of activities and reporting that was undertaken¹⁶⁰.

The Panel was impressed with the University's emphasis on and approach to student engagement, and the senior leadership support of this. There was evidence of a broad focus on enhancing students' engagement with the inclusion of social and community oriented opportunities for engagement. The Panel made particular note of the Vice-Chancellor's commitment to student engagement as a key component to successful learning.

Commendation: *The Panel commends the University for its commitment to enhancing student engagement with their study and personal learning, including encouraging students to undertake volunteer work and develop a sense of social responsibility.*

4.2 Retention and completion

Universities should use processes for assisting the retention, academic success and completion rates for particular groups, including Māori and international students.

The University's targets for enrolment, retention and completion of Māori students and Pacific students are set out in the Statement of Objectives¹⁶¹ and the Performance Commitments attached to its 2015-17 Investment Plan¹⁶². Targets for international students are set out in the Statement of Objectives¹⁶³. Progress on achieving these targets is also guided by the (draft) Māori Strategic Framework 2020 and the Pacific Strategic Framework 2013-2020. The University indicates in the Self-review Report that it expects to develop an international strategy to guide processes for international students¹⁶⁴.

The Panel heard that data on academic performance that identifies these specific cohorts of students are provided to academic divisions and departments to allow them to monitor retention, completion and success, as well as develop initiatives to improve performance. Such data informed both the development of the 'Locals' programme and programmes in Sciences and Health Sciences for Māori students which focus on early intervention for some students and the importance of cultural connections. These developments, together with factors such as the identification of duplication of support in departments and divisions, further informed the establishment of the Director, First-Year Experience position and associated initiatives at University-level.

¹⁵⁹ SR, p43.

¹⁶⁰ UniCrew Volunteers Monthly Report, April/May, 2016. Additional document provided during the site visit.

¹⁶¹ KD5 Statement of Objectives 2015–2017.

¹⁶² KD6, TEC Investment Plan 2015-2017, p xv.

¹⁶³ KD5 Statement of Objectives 2015–2017.

¹⁶⁴ SR, p45.

The University has specific support processes and mechanisms for Māori students, Pacific students and international students, as well as students with disabilities. The University has also increased the number of Māori and Pacific Island Entrance Scholarships available¹⁶⁵.

The Panel heard that the Māori Centre - Te Huka Mātauraka acted as a 'hub' for students and connected and co-ordinated support across the University. In particular, the Māori Centre connects with Associate Deans, Māori and Kaiāwhina Māori in the academic divisions and departments. Interviewees that the Panel spoke with emphasised the importance of personal and relational approaches for Māori student retention. The Panel also heard that Health Sciences, in particular, were seeking to adapt their curricular to incorporate Māori pedagogy and pastoral care.

The University reports on Māori student achievement in its Annual Report and also in its Investment Plan. The form of the reporting differs between the two documents. The latest data the Panel had access to were in the 2015 Annual Report which gives the percentage of first-year Māori students passing two-thirds of their academic credits¹⁶⁶. The Panel noted that the percentage had increased from previous years. Further indicators are provided in the Investment Plan but the most recent data the Panel had access to were for 2014. These data showed generally improving performance on most indicators¹⁶⁷ and the Panel noted that the University was monitoring academic performance for Māori students and responding to that data. Māori student responses to the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) in the Graduate Opinion Survey (2014)¹⁶⁸ were largely in line with or slightly more positive than the responses for all respondents.

For Pacific students, the Panel heard that initiatives focussed on transition and prior engagement with the University, leading to engagement with around 80% of Pacific students before they reached the University (see section 2.2), also supported retention and completion for these students. A Ministry of Health-funded Foundation programme was seen as successful and opportunities were being sought to disseminate successful programmes and practices in Health Sciences across other academic divisions. Interviewees that the Panel met with commented that the relatively small cohorts of Pacific students could mean that feedback from these students was not as well represented in the University's Student and Graduate Opinion Surveys as they could be and suggested that the University could consider its sampling methodology with respect to this cohort. They recognised nonetheless, the value of these survey data in progressing discussions with other parts of the University. With the exception of the appropriate assessment scale, responses from Pacific students on the CEQ were in line or slightly more positive than the responses for all respondents¹⁶⁹. The University may wish to explore the factors contributing to the different pattern of response on the appropriate assessment scale, noting that this could be an artefact of a smaller cohort.

Specific support for international students is provided through the International Office. In addition, the University has Associate Deans, International in the academic divisions. The Panel did not

¹⁶⁵ SR, p44.

¹⁶⁶ AR15, p53.

¹⁶⁷ KD6 TEC Investment Plan 2015-2017, Attachment K.

¹⁶⁸ KD12 Graduate Opinion Survey – 2015 Summary Report, p55.

¹⁶⁹ KD11 Student Opinion Survey – 2014 Summary Report, p30 and p58.

consider any data on the academic achievement of international students in particular. As noted above, the University expects to develop an international strategy to guide further activity in this area.

In addition to exploring the processes for specific groups of students, the Panel also sought comment on processes for retention, completion and academic achievement for students who did not belong to a specific group. It heard that progress of all students was monitored and the responses from the Student and Graduate Opinion Surveys provided further insight as to where attention might be required.

The HEDC Academic Development Annual Report 2015¹⁷⁰ provides a synopsis of the academic support services available and their uptake by students on the Dunedin, Wellington, Christchurch and Invercargill campuses. It indicates that student learning development focuses on study skills, writing and language, statistics and mathematics and research and thesis writing and this is delivered through workshops, peer learning support programmes, individual consultations with learning advisors and printed and online resources.

The Panel noted that the overall Educational Performance Indicators (notwithstanding concerns about the construction of some of these measures shared by the University and the Panel) showed that the University was performing well at a university level¹⁷¹. The Panel was satisfied that the University has good processes for assisting retention, academic success and completion rates for particular groups, including Māori students, Pacific students and international students as well as students who do not fall into any of these groups.

4.3 Feedback to students

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

The University's expectations of feedback are set out in the Guidelines for Teaching¹⁷². The University comments in the Self-review Report that the Graduate and Student Opinion Surveys indicate a reasonable level of satisfaction with feedback¹⁷³. The Panel noted however that even by this assessment, there remained an important proportion of students who did not agree that they received helpful feedback on their progress.

The University notes that feedback to students is an area of activity that is expected to change with the further implementation and uptake of new functionality in the eVision student management system. This would include students being able to track their academic progress more easily. However, the Self-review Report indicates that only 15% of papers are currently using the

¹⁷⁰ <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Annual-Report-2015-1.pdf> accessed 20160622.

¹⁷¹ <http://www.tec.govt.nz/Reports/2014/University-of-Otago.pdf> accessed 20160525.

¹⁷² <http://www.otago.ac.nz/staff/otago027122.pdf> accessed 20160714.

¹⁷³ SR, p45.

functionality (Results2) that would allow this. The Self-review Report suggests that this is expected to rise over time but the Panel was unclear on the priority given, or the processes being followed, by the University in order to achieve this outcome¹⁷⁴.

Students and others that the Panel heard from indicated that students, apart from those in priority groups, did not consistently receive useful feedback on their progress. Students whose academic performance dropped below a threshold level were identified and the University processes with respect to these students are commented on in section 4.4 below. However, students who did not trigger this threshold and who could benefit from early feedback on their progress do not seem to be identified at an appropriate stage. The Panel did hear of examples of good practice with respect to course advising that would also be relevant here; but as noted in section 2.3, those practices did not seem to be widespread and were often *ad hoc* and outside the current formal framework for providing advice. The Panel appreciates that the Director, First-Year Experience and the Academic Transition Project¹⁷⁵ might address this issue and the re-development of the College Residential Survey may provide further insight. However, it suggests that the University should consider how it identifies students at risk of under-performance (as opposed to poor performance) early in their studies and consider how the University ensures that all students receive useful feedback on their performance. This is particularly relevant for students who are not in priority groups and who do not have comprehensive monitoring and review frameworks, and for second and higher year students.

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends that the University consider how it identifies students at risk of under-performance early in their studies and how it ensures that all students receive useful and timely feedback on their performance.*

4.4 Under-achieving students

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

The University's approach to identifying under-achieving students is set out in its Academic Progress Policy¹⁷⁶¹⁷⁷. However, as suggested above, under-performance of students who are capable of attaining higher grades may not be the same as performance considered under this policy which is triggered when students fail more than half of the points they were enrolled for in a semester (or summer school).

Students who fail half or more of their points in a semester are identified and receive information about the Academic Progress Policy and the support services that are available. If a student again fails more than half of their points in a second semester, they are placed on 'conditional enrolment'. This status requires students to meet with a designated advisor and complete a study plan. Students

¹⁷⁴ SR, p45.

¹⁷⁵ SR, p47.

¹⁷⁶ Specific regulations apply to specialised Health Sciences programmes.

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago002988.html> accessed 20160525.

who are on conditional enrolment and again fail more than half of their points are suspended from the University for two years¹⁷⁸.

The Self-review Report presented data on students who had been placed on conditional enrolment and the Panel noted that, for the year data were provided, over half of the students did not re-enrol¹⁷⁹. Given that a student would have met entrance requirements, spent a year (two semesters) at University and been identified at the end of the first semester, the Panel considered that this proportion of non-continuing students was quite high. While the University's retention rate for the proportion of students retained in study in 2014 was the highest in the University sector, the attrition of students subject to conditional enrolment affected over 500 students. The Panel was unable to ascertain whether the data provided in the Self-review Report were typical of the level of attrition for the University.

The Panel heard of a number of initiatives whereby departments attempted to identify students at risk of under-performing early and before the processes under the Academic Progress Policy would be triggered. As noted above, the Panel considered that with the functionality available through eVision, the University should consider how students at risk of under-performance can be identified early.

Once students at risk of under-performing are identified, they are directed towards a range of support services. As noted previously, specialist support services are available for Māori students, Pacific students, students with a disability and international students and the Panel heard a range of positive comments about these services.

While the Panel recognised that the University does have robust processes for identifying students who are under-achieving and that it does have a range of services that are available to assist students, it has recommended in section 4.3 that the University consider how students might be identified earlier (before they trigger the provisions of the Academic Progress Policy). It also notes that while the percentage of students placed on conditional enrolment is low, a significant number of individual students are affected, reinforcing the need to identify these students earlier.

4.5 High-achieving students

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

In its Strategic Direction to 2020, the University indicates it “will strive to further increase the calibre of [its] student cohort”¹⁸⁰. The Panel heard that the University recognises the importance of this goal as it seeks to increase its proportion of postgraduate students. The Self-review Report sets out

¹⁷⁸ SR, p46.

¹⁷⁹ SR, p46.

¹⁸⁰ SD2020, p6.

a range of opportunities for and ways in which the University identifies and supports high achieving students¹⁸¹.

Opportunities include progression to postgraduate study, participating in the leadership programme offered through the Student Learning Centre (SLC), being a peer leader in the Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) programme, being a residential college assistant, undertaking summer research scholarships and participating in the Matariki Undergraduate Research Network. Recognition and support of high achieving students includes letters acknowledging achievement from heads of departments, Pro-Vice-Chancellors and the Vice-Chancellor, prizes and awards, scholarships, travel awards and other awards from the Vice-Chancellor to students representing the University at recognised international competitions or events (for example, business case or debating competitions) and profiles of high achieving students in newsletters and promotional material.

Further initiatives including a leadership programme for “top commencing” students are under consideration¹⁸².

The Self-review Report also indicates that while the University has had many high-achieving students, this cohort has not been identified in student reporting. Again the Panel considers that the eVision student management system offers the potential to identify and report on progress for this cohort.

¹⁸¹ SR, pp47-48.

¹⁸² SR, p48.

5. Student Feedback and Support

The use of student feedback receives a number of comments in this report. As noted elsewhere the University utilises comprehensive Student and Graduate Opinion Surveys as ongoing sources of data. This section comments further on those and other sources of student feedback. Student support services are considered here and elsewhere in this report as it can be difficult (and not always useful) to delineate between support services and other services or activities, for example access and transition, that also support students.

5.1 Academic appeals and grievances

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

The University's policy framework for academic appeals and grievances is set out in its Student Academic Grievance Procedure¹⁸³ and Appeals Statute¹⁸⁴. The Procedure was updated between the submission of the Self-review Portfolio and the visit of the Panel to the University and sets out the scope, responsibilities and processes to be followed. A University Mediator is also available to help resolve conflicts¹⁸⁵ and OUSA provide support for students throughout the process¹⁸⁶.

The University seeks feedback from students on their "access in matters of grievance" in the Student Opinion Survey. The Self-review Report notes that a small minority of students who responded to the question were dissatisfied. However, almost half of respondents responded neutrally, leaving less than half as satisfied or very satisfied. The Panel noted that second-year and international students were less satisfied with this access¹⁸⁷ and recognises that the University has initiatives underway that may address this.

The University comments in its Self-review Report that assessing consistency of decision-making between academic divisions can be a challenge¹⁸⁸. The Panel notes that the University has established mechanisms for promoting consistency of treatment of academic misconduct between divisions (see section 3.8) and that its reporting of student feedback in the Graduate and Student Opinion Surveys allows for department-level data to be collected. It wonders if those mechanisms would also support consistency of treatment of academic appeals, or help identify any areas for further investigation.

The Panel was satisfied that the University had policies and procedures to address academic appeals and noted that the procedures had recently been updated.

¹⁸³ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago002982.html> accessed 20160526.

¹⁸⁴ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago029949.html> accessed 20160526.

¹⁸⁵ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/mediation/> accessed 20160526.

¹⁸⁶ SR, p50.

¹⁸⁷ KD11 Student Opinion Survey – 2014 Summary Report, p73, p81 and p122.

¹⁸⁸ SR, p50.

5.2 Learning support

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

The University considers its learning support to be a distinctive characteristic of the University and sets out the learning support services it offers across all student cohorts, as well as services that are tailored to specific cohorts of students in the Self-review Report¹⁸⁹. At the time of the audit, a review of learning support services for first-year undergraduate students was underway to ensure that services are sustainable and access equitable.

The Student Learning Centre is part of the Higher Education Development Centre and has a wide range of learning support services including one-on-one consultations, workshops, peer-assisted and online modes¹⁹⁰. Other central services supporting learning are provided by the Library and ITS and tailored services by the Māori Centre, Pacific Islands Centre and Disability Information and Support. Learning support is also provided through the residential colleges for first-year students.

The Self-review Report notes satisfaction levels for the above services. While the Panel continued to be impressed by the extent to which the University sought student feedback on services and clearly used that feedback to enhance services, it queried whether the University had determined target levels of the level of satisfaction that it was seeking to achieve for different service areas (see also sections 2.1 and 5.5) and whether more impact or effectiveness measures might be included. It did recognise however that academic staff within SLC are research active and their research also informs practice change. The Panel considered the research-led approach to many of these issues was very positive.

The Self-review Report notes that the International Office does not provide learning support itself but often acts as a first point of contact for international students¹⁹¹. The SLC offers writing workshops for international students. The Panel also heard that the University had initiated an employability project with careersnz and the Career Development Centre to provide job readiness support for international students.

The Panel initially considered that students with disabilities received little mention in the Self-review Report. However, the University's reporting in the Graduate and Student Opinion Surveys identifies and reports on these students as a cohort, allowing changes over time to be identified and comparisons with other groups to be made. The Annual Report also specifically reports on the numbers of students and provision of services to students with a disability¹⁹².

The Panel was satisfied that the University provides opportunities for all students to access learning support services and has services that support international students and others with specialised

¹⁸⁹ SR, pp51-52.

¹⁹⁰ <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Annual-Report-2015-1.pdf>, p6, accessed 20160530.

¹⁹¹ SR, p52.

¹⁹² AR15, p30.

needs. As noted above (section 4.4), the Panel considered that with the implementation of eVision, there may be opportunity to connect students to learning support services earlier in their studies.

5.3 Personal support and safety

Universities must provide safe and inclusive campus environments and should provide opportunity for all students to access appropriate pastoral and social support services.

The University's 'Outstanding Student Experiences' strategic imperative frames its response to this guideline statement. The Self-review Report anticipates that a new advisory group to the Vice-Chancellor – the Healthy University Advisory Group will further shape how the University supports the "health, well-being and resilience of Otago students and staff"¹⁹³.

The Self-review Report again highlights the contribution of the residential colleges and the 'Locals' programme to the student experience at the University¹⁹⁴. The Self-review Report also sets out the range of pastoral and social support services available at the University and the levels of student satisfaction with these services¹⁹⁵. These include:

- Residential Colleges and University-owned flats
- The Locals programme
- Campus Watch
- The International Office
- The Career Development Centre
- Disability Information and Support
- Student Health services, including physiotherapy offered as part of patient interaction opportunities for undergraduate students and dentistry services offered at lower than normal cost.
- Recreation
- Support for ethical behaviour
- Childcare services
- Support and services provided by OUSA.

The Panel was impressed with the extensive research-informed intervention initiatives, including those with OUSA at student events, designed to provide safe and inclusive campus environments. It heard that the University collects data on student conduct and behaviours that cause concern and can demonstrate that occurrences of these incidents are reducing. The Panel heard positive comment about the contribution that Campus Watch makes to supporting student life. The University clearly recognises the challenge of eliminating non-students from student events and managing student behaviour on private property.

¹⁹³ SR, p53.

¹⁹⁴ SR, p51.

¹⁹⁵ SR, pp54-56.

Commendation: *The Panel **commends** the University's commitment, led by the Vice-Chancellor, to, and development of, research-led interventions that help contribute towards, creating a safer and more inclusive campus environment.*

5.4 Support on other campuses

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

As signalled earlier in this report, the University has campuses in Christchurch and Wellington (the 'Northern campuses') as part of the Division of Health Sciences, the Invercargill campus as part of the College of Education (Division of Humanities) and a campus in Auckland that supports distance learning students and provides an Auckland base for the University. While the Division of Health Sciences plays a large role in the provision of learning and pastoral support services on the Northern campuses and for regionally located students, other central University services, including HEDC and SLC, ITS and Library are also available.

The University has recently undertaken a review of the support services needed on the Northern campuses and how these could best be provided¹⁹⁶. For the Christchurch campus, this review follows a period of major disruption to the student (and staff) experience caused by the Christchurch earthquakes and the need to undertake major building remediation.

Library and ITS services are also available on the Invercargill campus and the University is considering whether SLC services could be made available on site. The Panel did not meet with any students studying at either the Northern, or Invercargill campuses. It notes however, that the University has identified the need to redevelop the Student and Graduate Opinion Surveys so that feedback from these cohorts of students can be identified.

The Panel was satisfied that the University was taking steps to ensure that students at the Wellington, Christchurch and Invercargill campuses had good access to learning and pastoral support services and that good progress was being made on improvements.

Affirmation: *The Panel **affirms** the University's review of Northern campuses' support services and its signalled intention (enhancement # 6) to better capture feedback from students on other campuses.*

¹⁹⁶ Additional document Terms of Reference Northern Campuses Student Support Working Group, provided during the site visit.

5.5 Feedback from students

Universities should use processes for gaining feedback on student satisfaction with teaching, courses and student services and should be able to demonstrate that feedback is used to inform improvement initiatives. (See also 7.5 re thesis students)

As referenced throughout the Self-review Report and this report, the University of Otago makes extensive use of its Graduate and Student Opinion Surveys and Residential Colleges Survey to inform developments and enhancements and identify areas to be investigated further. Not all departments or programmes are surveyed every year with the survey schedule being constructed so as to align with and provide data for department and programme reviews. These surveys have been running for many years and provide the University with a robust evidence base of changes over time. The survey reports identify results for specific cohorts of students including, first, second, third and fourth year students, postgraduates, Māori students, Pacific students, international students, distance students and students with a disability. Survey results are also available at departmental and divisional levels. The Panel received copies of presentations delivered to departments that focussed on student feedback from surveys for that department. The Panel noted that the College Residential Survey is in the process of being redeveloped to better align with the University's focus on the first-year experience.

A number of services such as the SLC also undertake surveys or other feedback processes to gain more targeted feedback. The University also undertakes course and lecturer evaluations which are considered in section 6.3 and makes the point that programme and course reviews (see section 3.4) are a further feedback process¹⁹⁷.

In addition to considering the University's use of feedback on satisfaction with teaching courses and services to inform improvements and initiatives to be evidence of good practice, the Panel was also impressed by the way in which the University designed research trials to assess the impact of interventions, initiatives or pilot programmes and considered these results in deciding whether to take an initiative to scale across the University.

The Panel heard of many examples, including the development of the Student Desktop, and heating systems and sightlines in lecture theatres, where improvements had been initiated as a result of, and informed by, student feedback. What was less clear however, were the processes by which students were made aware of the impact of their feedback. The Student Opinion Survey data is considered to be 'owned' by departments and departments report on responses. The University is confident that feedback has been considered, but not necessarily clear that students have been made aware of any resulting changes. The Panel accepts that there are challenges with changing cohorts of students but suggests that improvement could be made in ensuring that students are made aware of the changes and improvements that have been informed by their feedback. It notes that this comment is consistent with the Cycle 4 recommendation (# 5) that the University "becomes more proactive in closing the loop following course and teaching evaluations and surveys, and develops ways of ensuring actions from these are communicated to students and staff" and

¹⁹⁷ SR, p57.

considers the University could continue to make further efforts to make students, in particular, aware of the impact of their feedback.

Recommendation: *The Panel **recommends** that the University develop mechanisms for ensuring that students are made aware of changes and improvements that are informed by their feedback.*

The Panel recognises that much of the value derived from the long-running Student and Graduate Opinion Surveys (see section 5.6 below) is the ability to track changes over time. It notes that for some measures contained in the surveys, particularly those that serve as indicators for progress on strategic imperatives, the University has determined target satisfaction levels. It suggests that the University consider target satisfaction levels more generally to assist with planning and prioritisation.

5.6 Feedback from graduates

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

As noted above, the University also seeks feedback from its graduates in a Graduate Opinion Survey. The Graduate Opinion Survey seeks graduate perceptions on their course experience (for undergraduate, taught postgraduate and thesis students), the extent to which they had opportunities to develop graduate attributes and then apply those attributes. It also gathers graduate destination data regarding employment or other study. The Graduate Opinion Survey is based on longstanding instruments and again allows the University to track changes over time¹⁹⁸. Consistent with the Student Opinion Survey, the Graduate Opinion Survey also allows the University to report data by department and division and for specific cohorts of students.

As noted previously (see section 3.3), the University reports in its Annual Report on the extent to which graduates have developed attributes in the University graduate profile. The Graduate Opinion Survey further reports on the extent to which graduates considered they had applied those attributes since graduating.

The University recognises the importance of building and maintaining relationships with alumni and suggests that efforts here contribute to the University achieving good response rates in the Graduate Opinion Survey.

Again, the Panel heard a number of examples of how data from the Graduate Opinion Survey (and other sources) were used to inform change. It was impressed by the connection between the processes for seeking feedback from graduates and other quality assurance processes, in particular the GYR process and programme reviews. The GYR process specifies that data from the Graduate

¹⁹⁸ SR, pp60-61.

Opinion Survey should be gathered as part of the GYR process and programme reviews are also expected to utilise these data.

The Panel also heard positive comment regarding the presentations made by the Quality Advancement Unit, as well as some comment that further assistance in interpreting what can be quite detailed data may be useful. Consistent with the comments in section 5.5, the Panel was confident that good use was being made of graduate feedback, but was not clear how graduates were made aware of how their feedback had informed change.

The Panel was satisfied that the University has good processes for gaining and using feedback from graduates. It recognises the University has made recent changes to better capture feedback from postgraduate students. It also noted that the University has recently changed its protocol to survey graduates from all programmes every year and considers that this is a positive development.

6. Teaching Quality

In this section of the report, the focus is on processes that the University uses to ensure that academic staff are effective in their roles in ensuring good academic quality and evidence of that effectiveness.

In 2015, the University of Otago reported a staff profile of (FTE)¹⁹⁹:

Academic (and research-only)	1,619
Professional service ²⁰⁰ staff	2,184
Total staff	3,803

The University does not report on the proportions of Māori and Pacific staff, but does report on the gender profile of its staff. Female staff make up 47% of academic and research-only staff and 57% of all staff.

6.1 Staff recruitment and induction

Universities' processes for recruitment and induction should ensure that all teaching staff are appropriately qualified, according to the level(s) at which they will be teaching (i.e. degree level; postgraduate; sub-degree) and that all teaching staff receive assistance to become familiar with their university's academic expectations.

The University's strategic framework for staff recruitment is articulated in its Teaching and Learning Plan which, *inter alia*, has a principle of "investing in ... outstanding staff"²⁰¹. The Self-review Report explains that recruitment is the responsibility of the divisions, within a framework of 'Authority to Appoint Academic Staff'²⁰². Divisions are responsible for identifying suitable candidates for appointments. However, only Human Resources (HR) can issue a formal offer of appointment. Divisional recruitment is supported by the Human Resources Recruitment Team, with personnel dedicated to divisions, and a recruitment module in an HR Toolkit.

Once an offer has been accepted, a further 'onboarding' module in the HR Toolkit is initiated²⁰³. This covers the period from acceptance to three months after arrival. The onboarding process comprises an online system which includes a number of check-lists, videos, tasks and alerts to parts of the University who need to be aware of a new appointment, a 'starting essentials' seminar, support from Human Resources, and Department Induction Facilitators as first points of contact for new staff. Position descriptions have been developed for the Department Induction Facilitators and the process includes a series of workflows and monitoring of key steps. The onboarding process ensures that new appointments receive consistent and comprehensive information and support for starting

¹⁹⁹ AR15, p126.

²⁰⁰ The University uses the term 'General' staff.

²⁰¹ SR, p62.

²⁰² <http://www.otago.ac.nz/cs/groups/public/@humanresources/documents/webcontent/otago062188.pdf> accessed 20160629.

²⁰³ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/humanresources/toolkit/onboarding/> accessed 20160624.

their roles at the University. The Panel was impressed by the progress the University had made in developing holistic and useful tools to facilitate and support recruitment and orientation processes.

The 'onboarding' process includes reference to key University policies. As noted in section 1.1, the Panel considered that this provided evidence of the University's response to recommendation # 1 in its Cycle 4 academic audit that it "determines which policies and processes are sufficiently critical to meeting its objectives that it must ensure their common understanding and application".

The University's Higher Education Development Centre provides an academic orientation programme for new academic staff. The academic orientation programme entails²⁰⁴:

- A two-day event at the beginning of the semester with workshops on theories of learning, course design, lecturing, using technology wisely, assessment and evaluation,
- New Academic Staff Conference – an annual two-day event which includes a welcome session with the Vice-Chancellor.
- A new Teachers' Support Group which meets throughout the year, starting with the New Academic Staff Conference.

While the Self-review Report describes participation in the academic orientation as voluntary, staff the Panel spoke with did not realise it was voluntary and considered that it was both good practice and useful. The Panel was advised that the academic orientation was required for new staff on confirmation track and that the University had additional processes to support these staff.

In contrast to its approach to students, the University does not appear to seek systematic feedback on staff satisfaction with their experiences and services. The Panel raises this as an observation only as it is satisfied that the University does have good processes for staff recruitment and induction.

6.2 Research-active staff

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

The University frames its response to this guideline statement by referring to the principle in the Teaching and Learning Plan of "achieving a synergy between teaching and research"²⁰⁵. It cites a percentage of 78% of teaching/research staff among all staff with teaching responsibilities as being high; but the Panel was unclear what comparative framework was used to make this assessment.

At the time of the audit, workload principles for the University were under reconsideration. The Panel was provided with a copy of the draft principles and heard that the University's considered approach was to establish overarching principles based on equity, fairness and transparency and expect departments and divisions to implement these in ways consistent with the teaching and research requirements of their disciplines. This was preferred over attempting to construct rules that would capture all disciplinary differences. Staff that the Panel spoke with appreciated both the

²⁰⁴ SR, p63.

²⁰⁵ SR, p64.

flexibility and responsibility this provided for and placed on departments. The Panel was also reminded that workload policies and practices would be considered in departmental reviews.

The Panel spent some time exploring whether the University's approach to workload management led to inequities between departments and academic divisions in terms of staff being recognised through promotion or other processes. It heard that opportunities for promotion were as open as they could be, criteria were well defined and that the University had processes, including cross-divisional membership of promotions committees, to assist with consistency of decision-making.

Overall the Panel was satisfied that the University had given considerable thought to an approach to workload management that was both a good fit for its ethos and would allow it to respond to its strategic imperatives. It was also satisfied that sufficient cross-University processes existed to both identify and address any inequities. It considered that the University had responded to the Cycle 4 academic audit recommendation (# 11) that it "... develop a generic set of principles and guidelines which underpin workload allocations and lead to more apparent equity, transparency and consistency across the University".

6.3 Teaching quality

Universities should use processes for assessing teaching quality and for monitoring and enhancing individual teaching capability of all teaching staff.

As set out in sections 5.5 and 5.6, the University has strong processes for considering and responding to student feedback. This section of the report focuses on processes for assessing teaching quality and for monitoring and enhancing the teaching capability of academic staff. The importance of student feedback in improving the student experience is articulated in the University's Guidelines for Teaching which sets out a range of sources of feedback²⁰⁶.

The Self-review Report indicates that courses should be evaluated every three years. The Panel was cognisant that this was consistent with a recommendation (# 4) in the Cycle 4 academic audit but questioned whether, in the case of a course that was delivered twice (or three times) a year, this could mean that six or more deliveries could occur between evaluations. From the staff it heard from however, it concluded that such a situation was unlikely to occur and that courses were likely to be evaluated more frequently. The Panel also noted that the University had a number of other processes for assessing and monitoring teaching quality, including specific support for staff on confirmation track appointments and evaluation approaches tailored to disciplinary needs including for medical education.

While the Self-review Report articulates the expectation that "responsibility for responding to and acting on student feedback resides with individual staff and HoDs"²⁰⁷, the Panel heard strong evidence of oversight of this responsibility, including confirmation track, annual review and

²⁰⁶ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/staff/otago027122.pdf>, p6, accessed 20160528.

²⁰⁷ SR, p58.

promotion processes. It was impressed with the University's approach in which all academic staff have an annual review that includes their 'schedule of teaching' (number of courses, level, class size, and student evaluations of teaching (or other appropriate evidence)²⁰⁸. Professors and Associate Professors are reviewed biennially. The Vice-Chancellor reviews all Professors and Associate Professors and will provide feedback to individuals. Schedules of teaching responsibilities, evaluations of teaching and a teaching portfolio are required for promotions applications. Detailed criteria for promotion, including teaching criteria, are set out in the Academic Staff Promotions Guide²⁰⁹

Commendation: *The Panel **commends** the University for its staff review processes, including the biennial review of Professorial and Associate Professorial staff and for its promotion of, and support for, a culture of teaching excellence.*

In the Self-review Report the University identifies challenges with its processes for assessing teaching quality and monitoring capability. It suggests that the lack of benchmark or threshold standards means that staff do not have a useful frame of reference within which to consider their feedback. The University's Higher Education Development Centre (HEDC) is investigating how to address this issue.²¹⁰

A second issue identified by the University was that 'non-continuing' staff are not necessarily included in evaluations of teaching. The Self-review Report suggests and the Panel heard that many non-continuing staff do seek student feedback on their teaching and some departments have policies that monitor the teaching quality of these staff.

The Panel understood that changes to the process for evaluating courses and teaching were being implemented. These changes comprise the move to an online platform for managing evaluations, having a composite evaluation instrument for course and teaching evaluations (to reduce the response burden on students) and making the evaluation reports available to heads of departments. It endorses these developments and considers that the University is aware of and is taking steps to alleviate any issues, for example a decline in response rates, that could arise from these changes.

Affirmation: *The Panel **affirms** the University's enhancement initiative to implement a new course and teaching evaluation system and to produce summary reports for heads of departments.*

²⁰⁸ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/humanresources/training/academic-staff/performance-appraisal/> accessed 20160530.

²⁰⁹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/humanresources/otago552401.pdf> accessed 20160530.

²¹⁰ SR, p66.

6.4 Teaching development

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

The Higher Education Development Centre (HEDC) is the main provider of teaching development and support for the University. It delivers professional development and educational technology workshops, as well as formal qualifications at postgraduate levels and support for applications and initiatives funded through teaching development or internationalisation grants. HEDC is an academic department and, according to its website, one of the oldest departments of its kind in the world²¹¹. As an academic department, it is subject to departmental reviews and its staff are expected to undertake research as well as teaching and service activities. HEDC's strategic direction is strongly aligned with the University's Teaching and Learning Plan, particularly with respect to the role of educational technology²¹².

The Educational Technology group within HEDC has developed a three-year strategy for educational technology that they consider to reflect contemporary trends in higher education²¹³. Other teaching development is provided through ITS and the Medical Education Group (MEG)²¹⁴.

HEDC workshops include Treaty Education, Tutor/Demonstrator training, Distance Teaching, Community-engaged learning, Postgraduate supervision (see also section 7.1), Learning with technology, teaching, CALT awards and activities associated with Ako Aotearoa. In 2015, the Tutor/Demonstrator training and Postgraduate supervision workshops had the most attendees. There is an extensive list of the areas in which HEDC can provide advice on its website²¹⁵.

The HEDC Annual Report provides qualitative commentary on activity and quantitative data on participation and uptake. Consistent with the lack of systematic feedback from staff (see also sections 2.1 and 6.1) on their satisfaction with services or activities, the report does not provide any comment on staff satisfaction. The Panel understands however that HEDC does seek evaluative feedback on its teaching and workshops and also benchmarks its activities with other universities, including those in the Matariki Network of Universities. The Panel heard positive comment on HEDC workshops from staff that it spoke to including, for example, that they appreciated both support and the flexibility that existed for them to develop their teaching.

The Panel considered that staff were well supported in the development of their teaching practice, particularly with respect to technology. These opportunities are in-turn supported by the research driven approach of the Higher Education Development Centre and project funding to investigate innovative teaching.

²¹¹ <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/> accessed 20160530.

²¹² <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Annual-Report-2015-1.pdf>, p5, accessed 20160630.

²¹³ <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Annual-Report-2015-1.pdf>, p4, accessed 20160624.

²¹⁴ SR, p67.

²¹⁵ <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/about-us/advice/> accessed 20160530.

Commendation: *The Panel **commends** the University for its research-led approach to teaching development and for its commitment to project-funding to support innovative teaching.*

It was less clear, although expertise is available in the Māori Centre and Pacific Islands Centre, what support was available for staff to develop pedagogy that facilitated learning for Māori learners or Pacific learners. The Panel notes however, that an objective in the (draft) Māori Strategic Framework 2020 is to deliver “quality programmes that are culturally inclusive and enable students to participate and achieve as Māori” and that this includes developing “models of good practice in the design, delivery and assessment of Māori curriculum”²¹⁶ (see section 3.1). The Panel suggests the University consider whether current resources are optimally configured to support achieving these objectives.

6.5 Teaching support on other campuses

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

The Self-review Report states that teaching support offered by central units on the Dunedin campus such as HEDC and ITS is also made available on other campuses. ITS support is made available either through online delivery or by staff based on the other campuses²¹⁷. HEDC and ITS both have staff based on the Wellington and Christchurch campuses. The HEDC 2015 Annual Report comments that the Educational Technology Group has initiated a project that records workshops and makes them available online²¹⁸. HEDC also reports on the numbers of attendees for workshops and other activities at the Wellington and Christchurch campuses. Additionally, staff on the Wellington and Christchurch campuses are supported by the Medical Education Unit and Medical Education Advisor and Clinical Skills Advisor positions.

Members of the University on other campuses that the Panel spoke to confirmed that they did feel part of the University in terms of the strategic direction for teaching and the support for teaching that was available. The Panel also heard that staff on the other campuses collaborated with HEDC colleagues in educational research projects.

The Panel was satisfied that appropriate teaching support was available for staff on other campuses and those staff were supported by and engaged with teaching support across the University.

²¹⁶ Draft MSF, p4.

²¹⁷ SR, p68.

²¹⁸ <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Annual-Report-2015-1.pdf>, p5, accessed 20160530.

6.6 Teaching recognition

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

As discussed in section 6.3, the University's review and promotion processes require evidence of teaching capability and the Panel has commended the University for its staff review processes and for its promotion of, and support for, a culture of teaching excellence.

Further, the University has a series of teaching awards at both University and academic division levels which recognise teaching excellence²¹⁹. OUSA also administer teaching awards which are based on votes from students. A number of recipients of University teaching awards have also been recognised with national teaching awards, with the University receiving at least one national award every year for the last eleven years²²⁰. The Prime Minister's Supreme Award has been awarded to an academic from the University of Otago for the last four years.

The Panel explored the factors that members of the University felt contributed to the considerable success and recognition of teachers and teaching at the University. They were told that the University was clear in its commitment to excellence and provided both freedom and flexibility for staff to develop their teaching in ways that were appropriate for their students and their disciplines. The availability of grants for developing teaching innovations was also considered valuable, as was support from HEDC.

Recipients of a University Teaching Awards are invited to join the Socrates Group. This group provides mentoring for other staff and contributes to teaching policy and strategy development. The Panel heard that the Socrates Group had developed into a valuable source of guidance and a mechanism for influence.

Commendation: *The Panel **commends** the University for its support for and recognition of teaching excellence and for the development and contribution of the Socrates Group.*

²¹⁹ SR, p69.

²²⁰ <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/teaching/teaching-awards/teaching-award-winners/> accessed 20160530.

7. Supervision of Research Students

This section focuses on postgraduate research students, i.e. master's thesis and doctoral students. Comments from students enrolled in taught Master's or Honours degrees who were interviewed have been incorporated into previous sections.

In 2015, the University recorded the following profile of postgraduate students²²¹:

Taught postgraduate	1,503 ETFS
Research postgraduate	1,589 EFTS

Postgraduate students are one of the University's priority groups of students and it has set targets to increase the proportion of these students. Associated with this, the University has a committee and administrative infrastructure to support postgraduate students. The Graduate Research School (GRS) acts as the 'central link' for committees and services and for liaison with academic divisions²²². Dedicated support is available centrally through the GRS, HEDC, Library, Māori Centre, Pacific Islands Centre, and International Office. Specific support for postgraduate research students is also available from the Library²²³. The University's residential characteristic extends to postgraduate students with Abbey College's services, activities and support tailored to postgraduate students²²⁴.

The University has comprehensive guides for PhDs and Research Master's degrees. The University of Otago Handbook for PhD study (2014)²²⁵ covers matters including entry, admission, roles and responsibilities, attributes of ideal supervisors and ideal candidates, challenges and substantial shortcomings, ethics, intellectual property, progress reporting, thesis preparation and examination and resources and support. The advice is organised by the early, mid and later stages of candidature. The University of Otago handbook for Research Master's Degrees (2013) covers the Master's process, resources and support²²⁶.

Administrative processes for enrolling, monitoring and reporting progress for postgraduate research students have recently moved onto the eVision (student management system) platform.

²²¹ Additional breakdown of postgraduate students provided on request.

²²² SR, p71.

²²³ <http://otago.libguides.com/c.php?g=171526&p=2772642>, accessed 20160624.

²²⁴ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/abbeycollege/collegelife/index.html%20> accessed 20160601.

²²⁵ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/phddoctoral/programme/otago400006.html> accessed 20160531.

²²⁶ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/masters/handbook/> accessed 20160714.

7.1 Qualification of supervisors

Universities should use documented processes for ensuring staff supervising research students are appropriately trained and experienced as supervisors, including processes to enable new or inexperienced staff to gain experience as supervisors.

The University has criteria and processes for assigning supervisors and the requirements for staff supervising PhD students are set out in the University's PhD handbook²²⁷ and on the University's website²²⁸. Distinctions are made between primary and co-supervisors and a PhD candidate should have more than one supervisor. Primary supervisors should be supported by the appointment of one or more co-supervisors or by a departmental advisory panel²²⁹. Criteria for PhD supervisors are: that they are research active; the primary supervisor is a leading researcher of international or very good national standard; the primary supervisor may not be external to the University; at least one supervisor (providing at least 33% supervision) has previously supervised a PhD to submission; supervisors have been carefully matched with the candidate; the workloads of the supervisors have been carefully considered and they have the capacity to supervise the candidate; and the supervisors have agreed to supervise the candidate (and, by implication, are able to provide support for the candidate's research project)²³⁰.

Heads of departments are responsible for ensuring these criteria are met and their endorsement is captured in a 'Research Proposal and Programme Application Approval Form' generated from the eVision SMS²³¹. With the transition to an online admission and enrolment process using eVision, the University has been able to configure the system so that only staff who meet the criteria for PhD supervision can be selected as supervisors. Further steps in the approval process require endorsement of the Research Proposal and Programme Application Approval Form by the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) and the Graduate Research Committee. Research Master's admission is approved by the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor²³².

The Panel was satisfied that the University had comprehensive and well-structured processes for admitting research students and assigning supervisors. It considered that the move to online processes provided benefit for both students and the University.

One question that arose from the Panel's deliberations however, was a figure presented by the University that 30% of PhD students changed supervisor during their candidature²³³. This was explored in interviews and did not align with the experience of any of the groups interviewed. Further information provided by the University indicated that this was a potentially misleading measure in that it could capture many different forms of change in supervision from the appointment of a new primary supervisor to the addition of a supervisor to a departmental advisory

²²⁷ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/otago604830.pdf> accessed 20160531.

²²⁸ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/otago041042.html> accessed 20160531.

²²⁹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/otago604830.pdf> (The University of Otago Handbook for PhD Study), p15, accessed 20160531.

²³⁰ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/otago041042.html> accessed 20160531.

²³¹ SR, p72.

²³² SR, p73.

²³³ SR, p80.

committee. The Panel queries the usefulness of this indicator and suggests the University consider whether it is capturing the information that it is seeking.

In terms of training and support for supervisors, the Self-review Report indicates that the New Academic Staff conference (see section 6.1) includes sessions on supervision. New supervisors are strongly encouraged to undertake the supervision workshops co-ordinated through HEDC²³⁴ and HEDC advises staff on the availability of further resources, including the Australian Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT)'s Research Supervision Toolkit²³⁵. The most heavily utilised HEDC workshops are also offered on the Christchurch and Wellington campuses²³⁶. The HEDC Annual Report includes the number of postgraduate workshops offered and number of attendees.²³⁷

The Self-review Report comments²³⁸ and the Panel heard that the University has been considering whether there is a need for more co-ordinated training of new supervisors. At the time of the audit a proposal was to be considered by the Board of Graduate Studies. The Panel sees this as a positive development as training for new PhD supervisors needs to be effective, co-ordinated and mandatory, reflecting the importance of this area.

Affirmation: *The Panel **affirms** the University considering making training for new PhD supervisors mandatory.*

7.2 Resourcing of research students

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

As indicated above, processes for admission of research students give consideration to the level of support and resources that will be available for the student. The PhD and Master's degree guides include sections on resources and these are further set out in the "Resources for Graduate Research Candidates – Guidelines"²³⁹. The Self-review Report comments that resources are monitored through annual progress reports and student feedback on resourcing is captured in the PhD Completion Questionnaire, the Student Opinion Survey and the Graduate Opinion Survey²⁴⁰. Survey results are considered by the Graduate Research Committee and follow-ups are initiated if required. Resourcing issues may also be raised in the Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee.

Evidence from the Graduate and Student Opinion Surveys presented in the Self-review Report demonstrates that the majority of PhD and master's students consider that they are adequately or appropriately resourced. The Panel suggests that although this is important to understand,

²³⁴ <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/supervisor-programme-2016-2/> accessed 201605.

²³⁵ <http://researchsupervisiontoolkit.com/> accessed 20160531.

²³⁶ SR, p73.

²³⁷ <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Annual-Report-2015-1.pdf>, p2, accessed 20160531.

²³⁸ SR, p73.

²³⁹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago003277.html> accessed 20160531.

²⁴⁰ SR, p74.

consideration might be given to exploring whether postgraduate students consider they are well, rather than adequately, resourced.

The Cycle 4 academic audit of the University had recommended (# 6) that “closer attention be paid to ensuring [postgraduate distance students] receive appropriate supervisory support and have adequate supervisory interaction”. The Self-review Report notes that in response the University has undertaken a needs analysis for these students²⁴¹ and has, *inter alia*, developed a workshop for staff supervising postgraduate research students at a distance²⁴². The University also identifies postgraduate distance students in the Graduate and Student Opinion Surveys. No particular areas of concern for postgraduate research students are evident from the reports submitted as part of the Portfolio. The Panel is satisfied that the University has addressed this recommendation.

The Self-review Report indicates that the University is aware of some areas of disparity across the University, particularly around support for students to present at one or more international conferences during their candidature. The Panel also recognises the University’s plans to undertake a review of Master’s by research programmes to explore resourcing, equity and quality matters and considers that this development should lead to improved experience and outcomes for master’s students. Master’s students indicated lower levels of satisfaction than other research students. Increased monitoring of processes across departments, student-supervisor agreements and required progress reporting may assist in improving satisfaction levels for master’s students.

The Panel recognised the totality of resources and support available for postgraduate students, but considers that further efforts could be made to ensure that postgraduate students are aware of this support and how it can be accessed, and to assess the impact of support availability for postgraduate students across all four academic divisions. It also notes that the Cycle 4 academic audit of the University recommended (# 7) that “the University find ways of ensuring more consistency across departments in the application of key policies regarding supervision and support for postgraduate students”. Progress in this direction would promote improved equity of opportunity and support for postgraduate students across the University.

Recommendation: *The Panel recommends that the University assess and consider the impacts of variations in availability of departmental and academic division support for postgraduate research students.*

²⁴¹ SR, p77.

²⁴² <http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/programmes/distaid-programme/> accessed 20160601.

7.3 Research supervision

Universities should use documented processes for ensuring supervision of research students is effective and that student progress and support are appropriately monitored.

The University's processes, including expectations for both students and supervisors, are set out in the PhD and Master's handbooks. These include research-derived qualities of ideal supervisors and candidates. Mutual expectations of the supervisory relationship are set out in a Student-Supervisor Agreement. This agreement is required for PhD students and should be submitted with the first progress report. It is encouraged, but not required for Master's degree supervision²⁴³.

Progress reporting requirements are also set out in the PhD Handbook. Progress reports are required every six months until a candidate is confirmed and annually thereafter. The Panel questioned whether annual reporting of PhD progress is adequate in order to be able to identify and address issues contributing to slow or poor performance. The progress reporting processes have been transitioned to an online platform, the eVision SMS. The Panel heard of some implementation challenges but is confident that the University is taking steps to resolve these and that it had developed a good practice model for PhD progress reporting. It notes that with the further implementation of eVision, some processes around PhD supervision may in the future be able to be extended to research Master's candidates.

Affirmation: *The Panel affirms the continuation of improving processes for the reporting of doctoral candidates' progress using eVision.*

Progress reporting is monitored by the Graduate Research School and where a candidate's progress is assessed as fair or unsatisfactory, the Graduate Research School follows up in the first instance with the primary supervisor. If the factors contributing to lack of progress are considered to be ongoing, a candidate would be subject to the University's 'Under Review Procedure for Doctoral Candidates making Unsatisfactory Progress'²⁴⁴.

The University monitors the quality of supervision and support for postgraduate students through its Graduate and Student Opinion Surveys and other processes set out in section 7.5. Results from these surveys indicate that students are satisfied with the supervision they receive, although master's students are less satisfied. It does note however that these responses are from smaller cohorts and further assessment should occur before finalising a conclusion.

A wide range of workshops are offered by the Graduate Research School, the Student Learning Centre and other parts of HEDC. The University collects data on skills, infrastructure and intellectual climate support for its postgraduate research students as well as on their goals, professional development, teaching opportunities, expectations and motivations²⁴⁵. The Panel was impressed by and heard positive comment regarding a personal performance development and coaching service offered by the Graduate Research School. Currently students pay a small charge to access this

²⁴³ SR, p79.

²⁴⁴ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/administration/policies/otago078792.html%20> accessed 20160531. ²⁴⁵ KD11 Student Opinion Survey – 2014 Summary Report, pp32-35.

service. The Panel suggests that the University consider whether this service can be made more widely available and without charge.

7.4 Thesis examination

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

Examination Regulations for PhD and research Master's degrees are set out in the University Calendar²⁴⁶ and with more detail on process in the PhD and Master's Handbooks and on the University website²⁴⁷. Examination regulations for both PhD and Master's degrees require at least one examiner to be external to the University.

For examination of PhDs, at least one of the external examiners must be an overseas examiner. Examiners are nominated by the primary supervisor and endorsed by the head of department and Dean of the Graduate Research School. Two of the three examiners for a PhD must have previously examined at least three PhD theses. Supervisors, including former supervisors, and members of a candidate's departmental advisory committee may not be examiners and are precluded from being appointed in the eVision system. PhD examiners are explicitly asked to assess whether the thesis "meets internationally recognised standards for the conduct and presentation of research in the field"²⁴⁸. An oral examination is required as part of the examination process for all PhD candidates enrolled after January 2014. PhD thesis examiners are overseen by an independent convenor. The role of the convenor is set out in the Procedure for Convening Doctoral Examinations²⁴⁹.

Examination of Master's theses is the responsibility of the relevant division and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor is responsible for approving the appointment of examiners for Master's theses. As noted above, at least one examiner for a Master's thesis must be external to the University.

The administration of PhD examinations by the Graduate Research School has facilitated the compilation of data that tracks the time taken for examination and the Self-review Report notes that this has decreased slightly. The Panel was pleased to see that the University offers Postgraduate Publishing Bursaries to support students for up to three months to write papers in the time between thesis submission and examination²⁵⁰. The Self-review Report also comments on the aggregate trends of PhD examination outcomes²⁵¹. Again it is anticipated that with further use of eVision, this reporting will become available for research Master's.

²⁴⁶ KD7 University of Otago Calendar 2015.

²⁴⁷ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/phddoctoral/programme/otago486803.html> and <http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/researchmaster/programme/otago471601.html> accessed 20160801.

²⁴⁸ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/study/phd/handbook/otago001990.html%20> accessed 20160601.

²⁴⁹ <http://www.otago.ac.nz/research/graduate/otago103862.pdf> accessed 20160601.

²⁵⁰ SR, p83.

²⁵¹ SR, p83.

The Graduate Research School runs workshops on examining PhD theses and on convening examinations. The Panel believes the practices in these areas are good and designed to provide candidates with a fair examination experience that reflects appropriate international practice.

The current regulations refer to theses being submitted for examination in soft bound format²⁵². They do not make reference to electronic submission for examination and the University may wish to consider this. As part of their final arrangements, candidates are required to deposit an electronic copy of their final thesis with the Library.

The Panel was satisfied that the University's examination processes ensures that thesis standards are internationally benchmarked.

7.5 Postgraduate student feedback

Universities should use processes for gaining feedback on student satisfaction with supervision and support for postgraduate students and be able to demonstrate that feedback is used to inform improvement initiatives.

Consistent with its use of comprehensive surveys for seeking student feedback, the University includes postgraduate students (both research and taught) in its Graduate and Student Opinion Surveys. These surveys have been redeveloped to include specific sections and scales for postgraduate students. The University also uses a PhD exit survey which is collated monthly and presented to the Graduate Research Committee. Other processes for seeking feedback include the Graduate Research Student Liaison Committee and postgraduate committees in departments. A postgraduate society also provides an avenue for feedback.

The Self-review Report presents examples of where postgraduate student feedback has been used to inform improvement initiatives. These include the development of sections in the Graduate and Student Opinion Surveys tailored to postgraduate students, the development of a career development workshop series and changes to processes for conferring degrees so that students could have their degrees conferred outside of a graduation ceremony²⁵³.

The Panel was satisfied that the University has well-developed and comprehensive processes for gaining feedback from postgraduate students and can demonstrate that this feedback is used to inform improvement initiatives.

²⁵² <http://www.otago.ac.nz/graduate-research/study/phddoctoral/programme/otago406402.html#submission> accessed 20160801.

²⁵³ SR, p84.

Conclusion

During the site visit the Panel interviewed 99 staff and 22 students. It found staff to be well versed in their portfolio areas and prepared to engage well with the Panel. Students spoken to were articulate and frank and supportive of the University and its intentions. The Panel also met with four members of Council. Those that the Panel spoke to individually and collectively recognised that the University of Otago is an important institution to them and will continue to make a positive contribution to New Zealand and internationally.

The Panel reviewed the University's response to the 2012 Cycle 4 recommendations and has commented on the University's response as they relate to guideline statements in the Cycle 5 framework. The Panel was broadly satisfied that the University has made good progress in response to the Cycle 4 recommendations, although it considered that progress in some areas had been slower than it would have expected. The Panel has made further recommendations in some cases, for instance closing the loop in providing feedback to students, support for postgraduate students across the University and further progress of its Māori Strategic Framework and the use of te reo Māori.

At the time of the audit, the University was engaged with a series of changes. These included the implementation of a new student management system (eVision). Although the technical installation of this was almost complete, changes to staff and student processes were either still ongoing or being embedded. Several of the affirmations or recommendations that the Panel has made refer to the potential to further leverage the benefits of this new system.

The Panel has made a series of commendations, affirmations and recommendations. It has made relatively few recommendations and this reflects the Panel's assessment that the University of Otago is performing well across the activities and areas that are the subject of the Cycle 5 academic audit.

The Panel had no issues of serious concern regarding conformity with the expectations expressed in the Cycle 5 guideline statements. The University meets the Guideline Statements, and in a number of cases demonstrates good practice in advance of the statement. Where the Panel has made recommendations, these are intended to assist the University, in keeping with the enhancement-led ethos of academic audit.

The University is expected to report on its response to the recommendations made by the Panel in twelve months' time (September 2017) and again at the time of the next academic audit.

Commendations

- GS 1.1 C1 The Panel **commends** the University on its well-regarded Academic Leadership Development Programme that identifies future leaders, and equips and supports them to deliver on their delegated responsibilities.

GS 1.2	C2	The Panel commends the University for its coherent strategic planning framework and associated objectives which are incorporated at an operational level into individual academic divisions, schools and departments in ways that are relevant, meaningful and disciplinary specific.
GS 1.2	C3	The Panel commends the University for its strong culture that recognises that all developments should be thoughtful, and supported by data and research.
GS 1.3	C4	The Panel commends the University for its overall commitment and systematic approach to gaining student input into the activities and processes of the University.
GS 2.2	C5	The Panel commends the University for its strong emphasis on student transition, including the relationship with residential colleges, and the range of programmes and processes for equity and other priority groups.
GS 3.2	C6	The Panel commends the University for its development of University graduate profiles and for its systems and processes to embed the attributes from those profiles into curricula.
GS 3.3	C7	The Panel commends the University for its efforts to seek and use feedback from graduates and employers on the attainment of graduate attributes.
GS 4.1	C8	The Panel commends the University for its commitment to enhancing student engagement with their study and personal learning, including encouraging students to undertake volunteer work and develop a sense of social responsibility.
GS 5.3	C9	The Panel commends the University's commitment, led by the Vice-Chancellor, to, and development of, research-led interventions that help contribute towards, creating a safer and more inclusive campus environment.
GS 6.3	C10	The Panel commends the University for its staff review processes, including the biennial review of Professorial and Associate Professorial staff and for its promotion of, and support for, a culture of teaching excellence
GS 6.4	C11	The Panel commends the University for its research-led approach to teaching development and for its commitment to project-funding to support innovative teaching.
GS 6.6	C12	The Panel commends the University for its support for and recognition of teaching excellence and for the development and contribution of the Socrates Group.

Affirmations

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|--------|----|--|
| GS 1.4 | A1 | The Panel affirms the development of the Student Desktop and considers that, with fine-tuning, it will offer considerable benefit for students. |
| GS 2.2 | A2 | The Panel affirms the consolidated approach to transition that the University is taking with the establishment of the Director, First-Year Experience position and committee. |
| GS 3.5 | A3 | The Panel affirms the University's development of the Matariki Network of Universities and considers that it offers considerable potential for benchmarking, opportunities for students and staff, and other organisational learning. |
| GS 5.4 | A4 | The Panel affirms the University's review of Northern campuses' support services and its signalled intention (enhancement # 6) to better capture feedback from students on other campuses. |
| GS 6.3 | A5 | The Panel affirms the University's enhancement initiative to implement a new course and teaching evaluation system and to produce summary reports for heads of departments. |
| GS 7.1 | A6 | The Panel affirms the University considering making training for new PhD supervisors mandatory. |
| GS 7.3 | A7 | The Panel affirms the continuation of improving processes for the reporting of doctoral candidates' progress using eVision. |

Recommendations

- | | | |
|--------|----|---|
| GS 1.2 | R1 | The Panel recommends that the University consider whether the Committee for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching is giving full effect to its strategic role and contribution, including implementation and monitoring of progress of strategic direction and initiatives. |
| GS 2.3 | R2 | The Panel recommends that the University progress its intentions to review course advice as a matter of urgency. |
| GS 3.1 | R3 | The Panel recommends that that the University should address progress on its Māori Strategic Framework further and that it should consider how Māori knowledge and pedagogy can be incorporated into curricula. |

- | | | |
|--------|----|---|
| GS 4.3 | R4 | The Panel recommends that the University consider how it identifies students at risk of under-performance early in their studies and how it ensures that all students receive useful and timely feedback on their performance. |
| GS 5.5 | R5 | The Panel recommends that the University develop mechanisms for ensuring that students are made aware of changes and improvements that are informed by their feedback |
| GS 7.2 | R6 | The Panel recommends that the University assess and consider the impacts of variations in availability of departmental and academic division support for postgraduate research students. |

Acknowledgments

The Panel thanks in particular Professor Harlene Hayne, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Otago and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Vernon Squire for their warm welcome to the University and their support of the audit process.

The preparation and submission of the University's Self-review Portfolio was managed by Margaret Morgan and Jacqueline Fraser. AQA is grateful for their assistance throughout the audit process. The effort of all those who contributed to the University's self-assessment process, preparation of the Self-review Report and the organisation associated with the site visit is appreciated.

The Panel is most grateful for the open interaction and frank comments and observations of all those staff, students and Council members who gave their time to appear before it during the site visit. The Panel also appreciated the access the University provided to additional information to enable it to better understand the University.

Audit Panel

Emeritus Professor Roger Field <i>Chair of the Panel</i>	Education Consultant and former Vice-Chancellor, Lincoln University
Emeritus Professor Debbie Clayton	Education Consultant, Australia (international member of the Panel)
Associate Professor David Crabbe	Victoria University of Wellington
Professor Robyn Longhurst	University of Waikato
Associate Professor Catherine Moran	University of Canterbury

Secretariat

Sheelagh Matear	Executive Director Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities
Heather Dickie	Education Consultant

The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities

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

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

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

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

Further information is available from the AQA website: www.aqa.ac.nz.

Cycle 5 Academic Audit Process

Key principles underpinning academic audits carried out by AQA are:

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

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

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

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

Cycle 5 Academic Audit Framework

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

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

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

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

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

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

Phone +64 (0)4 801 7924
email comms@qa.ac.nz



AQA | Academic
QualityAgency
For New Zealand Universities

Level 9, 142 Lambton Quay
PO Box 5787, Wellington 6145, New Zealand
p +64 4 801 7924 | **e** admin@aqa.ac.nz | **w** www.aqa.ac.nz