

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO CYCLE 6 ACADEMIC AUDIT

1 YEAR FOLLOW-UP REPORT - DECEMBER 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

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TE WHARE WĀNANGA O WAIKATO

Cycle 6 Academic Audit one-year follow-up report

The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities released the Cycle 6 academic audit report on the University of Waikato on 13 December 2023. The report made 11 recommendations, 15 affirmations and 19 commendations.

The University reviewed the recommendations and agreed that changes were warranted in respect to the areas mentioned. During 2024, work began to address many of the recommendations and progress the affirmations. This included the identification of staff responsible for each recommendation and affirmation.

This report provides an update on the progress that the University of Waikato has made in relation to each of the recommendations and affirmations made by the audit panel in the [report of the 2023 Academic Audit of the University of Waikato](#).



Professor Neil Quigley
Vice-Chancellor
13 December 2024

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Context

*Ko Kīngi Tuheitia Pōtatau Te Wherowhero te Tuawhito ki te rangi, otira, ko Kuini Nga wai hono i te po
Pōtatau Te Wherowhero te Tuawaru ki te whenua – pai mārire!*

Since the University of Waikato's Cycle 6 academic audit report, several leadership changes have occurred. In addition, the fiscal position of the University, whilst trending more positively, continues to impact the resources the University can allocate to enhancements. These matters are relevant to the context of this report.

Leadership changes

In March 2024, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic, Professor Robyn Longhurst left the University. Professor Jennifer Milam assumed the role in November. At the same time Pro Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning, Associate Professor Tracy Bowell, who had been serving as Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic, transitioned into a new role of Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality and Learner Success.

In February, Professor Gary Wilson was appointed as Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, taking over from Professor Karin Bryan, who had been acting in that role. In October, Dr Emma Nicholson took up the role of Dean of Te Mata Kairangi School of Graduate Research following Professor Bryan's departure in April.

2024 also saw the resignation Professor Patrick Leman, the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Division of Arts, Law, Psychology and Social Sciences. New appointments included Professor Claire McLachlan and Professor Jo Lane as the Pro Vice-Chancellors of the Division of Education and the Division of Health respectively.

Following the departure of the Director of Student Services, Mr Mike Calvert, two new roles were created. Dr Brett McEwan was appointed Director of Student Services and Pastoral Care, and Ms Tricia Finn was appointed Director of Student Systems and Administration. Both new roles now report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic. Lastly, in July the Director of Te Puna Ako Centre for Tertiary Teaching and Learning, Dr Nicole Pepperell, resigned and Dr Anthony Richardson has been serving as Acting Director.

Strategy development

A new University Strategy for 2025 - 2029 has been developed to replace the University's 2022 – 2024 Strategy. At the time of writing, the new Strategy had undergone significant consultation with staff and is subject to approval by the University's Council.

Financial

Alongside most other tertiary institutions, the University of Waikato has experienced financial difficulties because of Covid-19. The University experienced a significant decline in revenue from international students, coinciding with significant inflation in operating costs. While the University has not needed to undertake a large-scale staff reduction, it has had to significantly constrain its expenditure. This has meant that some planned initiatives have had to be delayed or cancelled.

In 2024, the University is placed to end the year with a close to break-even financial result. This is due, in part, to increased volumes of domestic students and a strong rebound in international enrolments. While initial enrolment projections for 2025 appear encouraging, the University remains under pressure to return to its required minimum 3 per cent surplus as a percentage of revenue. This will require continued financial restraint with prudent investment into the future.

Summary of progress

Table key:

Complete	<i>Or substantially complete, or nothing further to do</i>
Well Advanced	<i>Substantial work has been completed, approval path set out, implementation planned</i>
In Progress	<i>The University is addressing the issues raised in the recommendation and progress is underway</i>
Early Stage	<i>Scoping completed with plans for exploring options but work not underway</i>
Not yet addressed	<i>But there is an intention to do so</i>
Will not address	<i>The University has set out reasons why a recommendation will not be followed</i>

- A1 The Panel affirms the development and implementation of the Student-Staff Partnership Framework between the University and the Waikato Students' Union.
- A2 The Panel affirms the University's enhancement initiative to create an Academic Risk Register.
- A3 The Panel affirms the University's commitment to creating a sense of belonging for Pacific students and its data-informed and holistic support model to improve success for Pacific students.
- A4 The Panel affirms the University's plans to develop its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to further support consistent advising practices.
- A5 The Panel affirms the University's enhancement initiative to develop facilitated processes for complaints resolution within a Pacific cultural context.
- A6 The Panel affirms the implementation of the University's Disability Action Plan across teaching, learning, assessment and support activities.
- A7 The Panel affirms the University's Paper Information Project and the enhancement initiative to make graduate profiles more visible and auditable.
- A8 The Panel affirms the University's enhancement initiative to review assessment guides and resources to ensure they reflect the University's principles for assessment.
- A9 The Panel affirms the University's plan to review moderation practices.
- A10 The Panel affirms the University's approach to academic integrity—which includes education, assessment design, support and reporting—and encourages the University to continue to develop its thinking on the use of generative AI and other emerging technologies that may have implications for academic integrity.
- A11 The Panel affirms the University's review of its policy on Use of Māori for Assessment.
- A12 The Panel affirms the University's range of initiatives to increase the numbers of Māori and Pacific staff employed at the University.
- A13 The Panel affirms changes the University has made to the academic promotions system, particularly the explicit inclusion of Mātauranga Māori in the expected teaching narrative.



- A14 The Panel affirms the University's implementation framework and the priorities it has established for responding to recommendations made in the 2021 Master's and Honours Review.
- A15 The Panel affirms the University's initiatives to support equity for under-served groups, particularly Māori and Pacific students, in postgraduate research studies.
- R1 The Panel recommends that training and support for student members of committees and boards be provided consistently across the University.
- R2 The Panel recommends that the University consider how Māori models of wellbeing would better support Māori students.
- R3 The Panel recommends that the University review how it communicates expectations and provides guidance for engaging with the peer review of proposals (from other universities) submitted to the Committee on University Academic Programmes.
- R4 The Panel recommends the University progress its workforce development strategy and other deliberate initiatives as a means of building capacity of staff fluent and able to assess and supervise in te reo Māori.
- R5 The Panel recommends the University review its criteria for staff to participate in a structured induction to the University.
- R6 The Panel recommends the University ensure that new Heads of Department receive an induction specific to the expectations of their role.
- R7 The Panel recommends the work that Māori and Pacific staff undertake in supporting recruitment and induction processes is recognised appropriately.
- R8 The Panel recommends that, in renewing its teaching development framework, the University consider how expectations might be better connected to the Performance and Professional Development Framework or the Academic Workloads Guidelines.
- R9 The Panel recommends the University review the alignment between its expectations for engagement with the Objectives, Development and Review (ODR) process and engagement in teaching development to ensure that both processes are supporting capacity and capability building.
- R10 The Panel recommends the University take steps to increase response rates for student evaluations of papers and teaching.
- R11 The Panel recommends the University include questions about the adequacy of resourcing and future needs in six-monthly progress reports.

Progress on Cycle 6 audit affirmations

Section A: Leadership and management of teaching, learning and academic quality.

GS 2 Student voice

Improved outcomes for students are enabled through engaging with the student voice in quality assurance processes at all levels, and this is communicated to students.

A1 The Panel affirms the development and implementation of the Student-Staff Partnership Framework between the University and the Waikato Students’ Union.

Early Stage

This affirmation referenced the work underway to consolidate and document different types of student-staff engagement across the University. This has been renamed the *Student Engagement Framework*. The change in name reflects an intention to broaden its application across more areas of engagement.

The Framework includes processes and channels for deepening the integration of student voice across campus. It was last considered by the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive Leadership Committee in November 2022. In 2024, the Director of Student Services and Pastoral Care, and the Head of Library Engagement and Experience have recommenced a focus on the Framework. Alongside reviewing the Framework, this has also included an audit of the major survey’s engaging with student voice undertaken by both the University and the Waikato Student Union.

The next stage involves further engagement with the Waikato Student Union. The audit report makes specific reference to training and support for student committee members. The Director of the Academic Office is leading the implementation of this piece. More information on that is included under recommendation 1.

GS 5 Academic risk management

Potential disruption to the quality and continuity of learning and teaching at the university, including risks to infrastructure, is mitigated through effective risk management processes.

A2 The Panel affirms the University’s enhancement initiative to create an Academic Risk Register.

Well-Advanced

The Audit Panel supported the work of the University in establishing a register encompassing broad academic-related risks. The Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic completed an initial register in July 2024. This included risks in relation to programme offerings, emerging technologies, accessibility, compliance, and resourcing. The final version, which also embeds a process for ongoing review, will be circulated to the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive Leadership Committee and noted to the Health & Safety, Risk and Assurance Committee. Following committee approval, the Register will be

the responsibility of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic and subject to annual review through the University’s Enterprise Risk Management activities.

The process of approving the Academic Risk Register and embedding it in University work streams is expected to be complete by the end of quarter 1 2025.

GS 7 Progress on the Enhancement Theme (Pasifika students)

The university has achieved the objectives in its enhancement theme plan with respect to Pasifika students and successful practice has been embedded and is sustainable.

A3 The Panel affirms the University’s commitment to creating a sense of belonging for Pacific students and its data-informed and holistic support model to improve success for Pacific students.

Well-Advanced

The Audit Panel provided a summary of the University’s activities focussed on supporting Pacific students. They noted several areas where continued progress would be beneficial, whilst acknowledging the value of initiatives already in place.

In 2024, the University ran nine programmes dedicated to the advancement of the Pacific Strategic Plan and Pacific student success. These included the *Palu Navigators*, *Calling the Island* and *Challenge the Horizon* programmes – focussed on junior undergraduate, senior undergraduate and postgraduate students respectively. Of the nine programmes, five were new in 2024. It is too early to fully assess the impact of these programmes, however, new tools are being developed to enable this assessment in the future.

In addition to these dedicated programmes, the University’s broader learner success initiative continues to connect first-year Pacific students with Pacific study advisors. These advisors are trained to link new students with opportunities and services that support their sense of belonging and academic success. More information on this initiative is included under affirmation 4.

The University has developed deeper data metrics for understanding trends with Pacific learners, including a tailored pass rate analysis. This data is accessible to a wide group of staff with a data ‘diving board’ launched in 2024. The University is also exploring ways to utilise its CRM to better track data for in-person programmes, such as the *Palu Navigators*, and to achieve greater insights where students engage across multiple support programmes.

The University considers support for Pacific students to be an ongoing focus of continuous improvement. Work is well-advanced under the direction of the University’s Pacific Strategic Plan.

Section B: Student life cycle, support and wellbeing.

GS 10 Academic advice

Student achievement is supported through consistent and clear academic advice, including course/paper information and programme planning, and guidance for students on completion of requirements.

A4 The Panel affirms the University's plans to develop its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to further support consistent advising practices.

Complete

This affirmation supported work to consolidate study advising information previously unrecorded or located across various systems. In February 2024, new functionality was added to the University's CRM as part of the Ōritetanga Learner Success programme of work.

Intensive training was undertaken with approximately 80 study advisors, covering topics such as system use, business process and protocols, and information repositories. As users have adopted the system, feedback has been incorporated through incremental improvements. Alongside the CRM, a 'diving board' feature has been created to provide detailed information on a student's academic progress at the paper level. Additionally, a portal has been developed that allows staff to request follow-up with a student. This is automatically routed to the appropriate study advisor, or other relevant services.

In 2024, study advising enhancements focused on pre-degree and first year students, with plans to extend support to other priority learner groups during 2025. The CRM has delivered a central place to record the academic advice and communications provided to these cohorts, as well as to create follow-up tasks. Whilst the University considers the work related to this affirmation to be complete in the context of the audit, work will continue to further embed CRM study advising processes and enhance functionality.

GS 11 Academic complaints appeals and grievances

Academic complaints, appeals and grievances are addressed consistently and equitably. Where appropriate, outcomes of these processes inform improvements.

A5 The Panel affirms the University's enhancement initiative to develop facilitated processes for complaints resolution within a Pacific cultural context.

Early Stage

This enhancement aligned with the University's Pacific Strategic Plan, in particular, the objectives of *delivering substantive outcomes for Pacific learners* and *fostering and supporting lifelong success*. A Pacific complaint resolution process is intended to sit parallel to the University's well-established Tikanga Māori process.

Development of this process is in its early stages. The Assistant Vice-Chancellor Pacific and the Proctor are leading this work. Initial discussions have been held, and a discussion paper will be drafted to outline the key elements of the process. This will include the purpose, structure, format, eligibility and outcomes of the process, and will be based in Pacific cultural contexts.

The discussion paper will be considered by key stakeholders including the Pacific Strategic Committee, members of the Student Discipline Committee, Student Services, and student representatives. Consultation is intended for the first half of 2025. Following the development of the process, regulations will be developed, and approval will be sought from the Academic Board. This

is expected to be undertaken in 2025, and a further update will be included in the two-year follow-up report.

GS 13 Safety and wellbeing

Student wellbeing is supported through the provision of appropriate pastoral and social support services in safe and inclusive environments.

A6 The Panel affirms the implementation of the University's Disability Action Plan across teaching, learning, assessment and support activities.

Well-Advanced

This affirmation supported the University's work in implementing its Disability Action Plan (DAP). It specifically referenced the contribution of that work to an inclusive and welcoming environment for disabled students.

The University has redesigned the governance structure for implementing the DAP. A Steering Committee, led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality and Learner Success (PVC AQLS), comprises key senior leaders who drive areas of activity related to their portfolios. A Stakeholder Group, co-chaired by a student representative and the PVC AQLS, provides broader representation from various areas of the University. Students are represented on both groups.

With this structure in place, considerable progress has been made on initiatives related to teaching and learning, work-integrated learning, and accessibility of the campus and its buildings, including student accommodation. The University has also implemented individual student accessibility support plans for Trimester-A 2025. These consolidate appropriate accommodations in a single place for lecturers, improving the experience for students when support is required.

It should be noted that, like other initiatives in this report, implementing the DAP will include continuous improvement to best support learners' accessibility needs. However, progress relating to this affirmation is well-advanced.

Section C: Curriculum, assessment and delivery.

GS 17 Graduate profile

Students are aware of and have the opportunity to achieve the intended attributes in graduate profiles and course/paper learning outcomes.

A7 The Panel affirms the University's Paper Information Project and the enhancement initiative to make graduate profiles more visible and auditable.

Well-Advanced

During 2024, the University completed its Paper Information Project by launching the annual prescriptions process within the Curriculum Manager system. Training and support on the new process was offered by staff in the Academic Office and Te Puna Ako Centre for Tertiary Teaching and Learning.

As noted by the Panel, the Paper Information Project introduced a change in how paper learning outcomes were stored and amended. This created a single source of truth for learning outcomes and established an approval pathway through the central Curriculum Committee. This change also made learning outcomes more clearly and consistently available for staff to review. In addition, reporting on the number of learning outcome amendments has been implemented.

An initiative to make qualification graduate profiles more visible and auditable has also been progressed. In 2024, an audit of graduate profiles was completed, and a new repository was created on Te Hononga, the University's intranet, providing staff with a single source of truth and clear, consistent access. This initiative is now moving into its second phase, with profiles being made available on the University's public website. In collaboration with the Marketing Web Team, a 'graduate outcomes' tab has been included on qualification webpages, and an initial launch with Division of Health programmes has commenced. Completion of this second phase will include a review of graduate profiles, where required, before making all profiles publicly available. This is expected to be completed in 2025.

GS 18 Assessment

Assessment is appropriate and effective.

A8 The Panel affirms the University's enhancement initiative to review assessment guides and resources to ensure they reflect the University's principles for assessment.

Complete

This affirmation supported the University's review of its Staff and Student Assessment Handbooks, with a particular aim of reflecting the six overarching principles of assessment adopted by the University in 2021. This review was led by the Pro Vice-Chancellor Academic Quality and Learner Success and undertaken in Te Puna Ako Centre for Tertiary Teaching and Learning. It was completed during the third quarter of 2023 and, as such, the University considers work associated with this affirmation to be complete.

That said, the University acknowledges the evolving landscape around tertiary assessment practices and has planned a further revision to integrate insights from two key projects. The first project focuses on developing University-wide guidelines for staff and students in response to the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) by students. These guidelines, which will include a suite of teaching materials and updated assessment design principles, will be completed by mid-2025. The second project is the ongoing review of the University's approach to flexible teaching, which will formalise the full suite of delivery options, including face-to-face, online, and dual learning, to be offered from 2026 onwards.

Once these two projects are completed, new insights will be incorporated into the updated Staff and Student Assessment Handbooks. This will be an important element of the University's ongoing review of all assessment resources and policies.

GS 19 Assessment standards

Assessment and outcome standards are appropriately set and moderated.

A9 The Panel affirms the University's plan to review moderation practices.

Early Stage

The Audit Panel commended the University's consistent use of moderation across campuses and affirmed its planned review of practices. The Panel also affirmed the value of considering greater consistency of moderation practice between areas of the University. In advance of this work, the University's Staff Assessment Handbook has been updated to include a separate section on moderation.

The intended outcome of the moderation review is a set of university-wide guidelines for the moderation of student work. This review is currently in its early stages. It will begin with a discovery phase to assess existing practices. Following this, a draft set of guidelines will be developed and consulted on with staff and through the University's academic committee process. These guidelines will require approval by the University's Academic Board.

GS 20 Academic integrity

Universities promote and ensure academic integrity and demonstrate fairness, equity, and consistency in addressing concerns.

A10 The Panel affirms the University's approach to academic integrity—which includes education, assessment design, support and reporting—and encourages the University to continue to develop its thinking on the use of generative AI and other emerging technologies that may have implications for academic integrity.

Well-Advanced

Work on artificial intelligence and academic integrity has continued and is well-advanced in some areas. Through Te Puna Ako Centre for Tertiary Teaching and Learning, the University has redeveloped its academic integrity modules to include material specifically on the use of artificial intelligence in assessment and student research. These new materials focus on educating students about academic integrity in the University context.

The module will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary. All students will be required to complete the module each year. The University intends to monitor completion of these modules through Moodle Gradebook. A trial of this Moodle functionality was undertaken in Trimester B 2024 and operated successfully.

Alongside this module, the University has developed guidelines for staff, aimed at addressing the growing use of artificial intelligence in student work. These guidelines will include best practices and strategies for teaching, curriculum design and assessment to ensure academic integrity is upheld in this evolving landscape.

The University has also initiated a working group to establish a policy on the use of artificial intelligence in Higher Research Degrees, specifically theses. This work was endorsed by the University’s Postgraduate Research Committee in November and will proceed in 2025.

GS 21 Assessment in te reo Māori Assessment in te reo Māori, where appropriate, is facilitated by the University.

A11 The Panel affirms the University’s review of its Policy on Use of Māori for Assessment.	Not yet addressed
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The Audit Panel noted the University’s intention to develop a Te Reo Māori Strategy as part of its Te Rautaki Māori Māori Advancement Plan. As part of this, the University identified an enhancement initiative to review its Policy on Use of Māori for Assessment.

Work has begun on a Te Reo Māori Strategy. A first round of workshops, open to all staff and students, was held in 2023 and focused on aspirations for te reo across the University. Developing and operationalising the full strategy is a significant undertaking and, due to resource constraints, it has not yet progressed further. The University is seeing an increasing use of off-site assessment translation and recognises the need to review the Policy on Use of Māori for Assessment.

Advancement of this work is planned for 2025.

Section D: Teaching quality.

GS 22 Staff recruitment All staff who teach or supervise, or support teaching or supervision, are appropriately qualified and experienced (including in research as appropriate to role) upon appointment.
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A12 The Panel affirms the University’s range of initiatives to increase the numbers of Māori and Pacific staff employed at the University.	In Progress
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The Audit Panel recognised the positive approaches taken to increase the number of Māori and Pacific staff in teaching positions across the University. These approaches included focused attempts in some areas to change their staffing profile and encourage diverse applications by adjusting wording in position descriptions and developing a Pacific Candidate Pack. The Panel also noted the challenge of the University sector competing to recruit Māori and Pacific staff from a similar pool of candidates, and how the University has responded to this with dedicated scholarships to support academic career pathways.

The University has seen some changes in the number of permanent and total Māori and Pacific academic staff in the past year.

	<i>Permanent staff</i>		<i>Total staff</i>	
	2023	2024	2023	2024
<i>Māori</i>	46	52	104	103
<i>Pacific</i>	11	13	24	25

Whilst the total number of Māori academic staff dropped by one, there has been a notable increase in the number of permanent Māori staff. Pacific academic staff numbers have increased slightly in permanent and total roles.

The University is a strong supporter and participant in Universities New Zealand's Piki Ake Transition Programme. This university-sector initiative is intended to grow the Māori academic workforce across the country. The University has supplemented this programme by implementing a structure whereby early participants take on mentoring roles for upcoming cohorts. The University also held its Māori Research Symposium in 2024 with specific sections tailored to support early career researchers as well as mid and senior level academic staff. Additionally, when recruiting directly into Māori-specific staff roles, advertisements are now produced in te reo Māori.

The University of Waikato Academic Pathway Doctoral Scholarship has continued in 2024 and 2025. The propose of this scholarship is to support pathways into academic careers for outstanding Māori and Pacific students. Additional initiatives in 2024 have included the *Challenge the Horizon* and *Te Pōkingā Ngaru* programmes. *Challenge the Horizon* targets postgraduate Pacific students, including those in PhD programmes, to recognise leadership and maximise scholarship, research, academic and career opportunities. *Te Pōkingā Ngaru* seeks to empower Pacific staff in their leadership journeys and careers at the University.

The University's efforts to increase Māori and Pacific staff numbers continues to be a focus and remains in progress. The University recognises the value in consolidating existing and new initiatives under a unified strategy. This approach would better enable the tracking, reporting and adjustment of these initiatives to enhance their effectiveness.

GS 26 Teaching recognition

High-quality teaching is recognised and rewarded.

A13 The Panel affirms changes the University has made to the academic promotions system, particularly the explicit inclusion of Mātauranga Māori in the expected teaching narrative.

In Progress

This affirmation recognised changes made to the staff portfolio used in the University's academic promotions process. Specifically, it noted the inclusion of Mātauranga Māori in the expectations for promotion. At the time of the audit, the Panel felt it was too early to assess any impact on teaching or promotion rates for Māori staff.

Development of the academic promotions system has continued. The University has upgraded the platform used to conduct the promotions process. The current Academic Staff Promotions process asks staff to reflect on commitments and contributions to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi, embedding

Mātauranga Māori in teaching, and the use of different strategies to make teaching more inclusive for all.

The University intends to continue developing the new platform and the way in which a teaching portfolio, like the existing research portfolio, could be used to inform academic promotions. This development will continue to include a Mātauranga Māori component.

Relatedly, the University has also reviewed its Staff Excellence Awards and expanded the place of Mātauranga Māori within them. Rather than being under the umbrella of research excellence, there is now a broader category which recognises excellence in incorporating Māori knowledge, perspectives, world views and kaupapa in teaching, research or university-wide service delivery.

Section E: Supervision of postgraduate research students.

A14 The Panel affirms the University’s implementation framework and the priorities it has established for responding to recommendations made in the 2021 Master’s and Honours Review.	In Progress
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Following a review of Master’s and Honours programmes, the University developed an implementation framework to progress recommendations. There were 42 recommendations in total and work on the overall programme continues.

In 2024, a process for suspending work on master’s theses has been developed and regulations to implement that practice were drafted. These will proceed through academic committees for consideration and approval in the first half of 2025. Additionally, work on orientation activities and induction materials for new master's and honours students is underway.

There is not currently an estimated completion date for resolving all 42 recommendations. However, the University continues to address these points through various workstreams and standalone initiatives.

GS 27 Supervision quality The quality of postgraduate research supervision is ensured.

A15 The Panel affirms the University’s initiatives to support equity for under-served groups, particularly Māori and Pacific students, in postgraduate research studies.	In Progress
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This affirmation supported the Graduate Strategic Research Plan’s *Equity and Diversity* goal. Specifically, the Panel highlighted actions on targeted scholarships, culturally responsive supervision and support, and training on bias in decision-making.

As mentioned under affirmations 3 and 12, the *Challenge the Horizon* programme for Pacific postgraduate students was launched in 2024. This programme includes student-led reading and reflection groups, workshops to develop research and writing skills, and opportunities to share

research with colleagues at the University and beyond. This programme had engaged with 121 students at the time of writing.

Similarly, the University has continued to run the Te Toi Matariki and MAI programmes for Māori masters' and PhD students respectively. Tukuna Kia Rere, a Māori Three Minute Thesis competition, was also reestablished in 2024 and a group of Māori PhD students were supported on an indigenous knowledge exchange to Canada.

In addition, Te Mata Kairangi School of Graduate Research (SGR) includes a Higher Research Degrees Advisor with a specific focus on supporting Māori students and supervisors. Working closely with Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao Faculty of Māori and Indigenous Studies, the role has been a successful addition to the School. The University has also implemented new Māori & Psychology Research Unit (MPRU) awards. These scholarships and prizes facilitate the professional development of Māori researchers to develop future leaders in Māori-focused research and psychology.

Progress on Cycle 6 audit recommendations

Section A: Leadership and management of teaching, learning and academic quality.

GS 2 Student voice

Improved outcomes for students are enabled through engaging with the student voice in quality assurance processes at all levels, and this is communicated to students.

R1 The Panel recommends that training and support for student members of committees and boards be provided consistently across the University.

Complete

The Audit Panel heard varied accounts of training and support for student members on boards and committees, ranging from “great” to “nothing”. Following this recommendation, the University’s Academic Office adapted an existing practice to reach a broader audience of student committee members. This resulted in an expanded reach from 12 student representatives up to 37 and now covers ten academic committees instead of one.

The practice involves meeting with students before each committee meeting to brief them on agenda items, including background, and relevance to University operations within a student-focussed context. The purpose is to increase familiarity with the subject matter discussed at committees and to build networks between student representatives. The first of these discussions took place in September and was well received, with positive feedback.

The University is working with the Waikato Students’ Union (WSU) to further integrate this practice with the advice and support provided by the WSU. It is intended that this practice will continue with five meetings per year and will include a fuller induction briefing at the start of each year for the incoming cohort of student representatives.

The establishment of this new forum provides a strong vehicle for continued engagement to take place consistently, across a wide group, and informed by feedback from student representatives. As such, this recommendation has been marked as complete.

Section B: Student life cycle, support and wellbeing.

GS 13 Safety and wellbeing

Student wellbeing is supported through the provision of appropriate pastoral and social support services in safe and inclusive environments.

R2 The Panel recommends that the University consider how Māori models of wellbeing would better support Māori students.

Well-Advanced

In making this recommendation, the Audit Panel acknowledged that the University’s health and wellbeing services have innovated and adapted to new challenges and needs as required, including the provision of targeted health promotion services for specific groups. The Panel also noted the high

proportion of Māori students at the University and recommended consideration of Māori models of wellbeing.

The University's Student Health Service currently integrates Māori models of wellbeing into the daily practices of all staff. It does this through an interdisciplinary approach to student care, facilitating referrals between the general practice team, mental health and wellbeing team, and chaplaincy services to ensure we connect each Pō within the Te Whare Tapa Whā model. Further, the general practice service incorporates both Te Whare Tapa Whā and the Meihana model into service delivery. Clinicians recognise and acknowledge the many interconnected facets of wellbeing, including physical, spiritual, mental, and whānau health.

To support this approach, the Student Health Service has undertaken two full-day training sessions with a local Māori mental health provider. This training involved learning about Māori cultural and clinical practices, and reflection on the Student Health Service's journey to incorporate these values into future practice. At present, tikanga practices are incorporated into Student Health service delivery where individual staff members feel capable and confident to do so. The Mental Health and Wellbeing team base their service delivery on a Te Whare Tapa Whā model of care.

The Student Health team are also working through a Cultural Capabilities workplan. The workplan was initially developed by student service managers following a two-day noho marae experience. It was then picked up by a working group comprising the individual student service areas who are leading the implementation. Monthly progress reports are provided to the Student Services leadership meeting.

Further, as a component of the Te Whatu Ora tertiary mental health contract, the Student Health team refer students on to local Māori-centred mental health and wellbeing providers. These providers utilise a wide range of traditional Māori healing modalities, incorporating holistic aspects of mind, body and spirit, which may include mirimiri, whitiwhiti kōrero and karakia.

Outside of the Student Health Service, the University also incorporates Māori models of wellbeing in dispute resolution and student support. The Tikanga process focusses on a restorative outcome through addressing issues that can underpin health and wellbeing. Student support includes whanau groups, providing localised connection with students. These whanau groups are connected through the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Māori ensuring a connected system that can respond appropriately to key issues.

The University considers the inclusion of Māori models of wellbeing to be an ongoing journey and has marked this recommendation as being well advanced.

Section C: Curriculum, assessment and delivery.

GS 14 Programme approval

Programme standards and relevance are maintained through internal course and programme approval processes that meet national (CUAP/NZQF) expectations and, where appropriate, expectations for other jurisdictions.

R3 The Panel recommends that the University review how it communicates expectations and provides guidance for engaging with the peer review of proposals (from other universities) submitted to the Committee on University Academic Programmes.

Well-Advanced

This recommendation relates to the process of reviewing and providing feedback on proposals for academic developments from other universities, conducted through the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP).

The scope for review of other universities proposals is articulated in the CUAP handbook and is provided to reviewers as part of the Academic Office's *Academic Developments Proposal Planning Guide*. In September, a survey was conducted with all staff who had reviewed a proposal in past two years. A total of 37 responses were received, with 78 per cent of respondents noting that they were familiar with CUAP's scope and the Academic Office's guide.

One third of survey responses noted challenges including overall timeframes and issues related to the information provided by other universities. However, several key themes emerged that presented opportunities to assist reviewers, including options for a more collaborative approach, exemplars of previous reviews, checklists, and more information about the purpose and principles behind the CUAP exercise.

The University intends to enhance support given to reviewers, based on this feedback, for CUAP rounds in 2025.

GS 21 Assessment in te reo Māori

Assessment in te reo Māori, where appropriate, is facilitated by the university.

R4 The Panel recommends the University progress its workforce development strategy and other deliberate initiatives as a means of building capacity of staff fluent and able to assess and supervise in te reo Māori.

Early Stage

The Audit Panel recommended that the University be more deliberate in its efforts to build capacity of fluent te reo speakers with disciplinary expertise. This was viewed as an important part of advancing its goals under Te Rautaki Māori Māori Advancement Plan.

This work is closely related to the Te Reo Māori Strategy initiated in 2023 and noted under affirmation 11. The first step in building capacity is an audit of current fluency across campus, noting specific disciplinary expertise. This work will also feed into the National Assessors Database thereby helping to address this challenge across the country rather than solely at an institutional level. The next step will be developing specific workforce requirements for development of te reo fluency.

The University is continuing with its existing professional development programme for staff to access its Te Tohu Paetahi programme in 2025. This programme provides an opportunity for staff to fully participate in this unique te reo Māori immersion programme.

A further update on this recommendation will be provided in the two-year follow-up report.

Section D: Teaching quality.

GS 23 Induction and ongoing expectations

New staff who teach or supervise, or support teaching or supervision, become familiar with academic policies and expectations of the university through effective induction processes, and the university has processes to enable all staff to maintain currency with academic policies and expectations.

R5 The Panel recommends the University review its criteria for staff to participate in a structured induction to the University.

Complete

In making this recommendation, the Audit Panel noted that only staff on contracts of two years or longer were expected to participate in an induction. The University has reviewed this, and now all staff employed on contracts of three months or longer are required to undertake an onboarding induction. Where staff are employed outside of this criterion, the hiring manager is expected to determine the appropriate induction based on the role and duration of employment.

An important part of this induction is participation in the Kanohi ki te Kanohi programme. This aims to introduce new staff to the University’s cultural narrative, as well as providing a common basic understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the University’s Treaty Statement, and the Kīngitanga. It is expected that new staff will attend this programme within the first three months of their employment.

Induction processes have been further developed with the introduction of a systemised ‘Onboarding Journey’ within the University’s new HCM software. This is supplemented by updated information on the University’s intranet including tools, guides, checklists and templates for both new staff and managers.

The University now considers work on this recommendation complete.

R6 The Panel recommends the University ensure that new Heads of Department receive an induction specific to the expectations of their role.

Well-Advanced

In making this recommendation, the Audit Panel observed that current induction processes for new Heads of Department / School were inconsistent and relied somewhat on existing familiarity with the University. Work on addressing this recommendation is well-advanced, with the development of specific induction resources and tools. These resources are intended to ensure Heads of Department / School are aware of information and expectations specific to their role and have opportunities to build capability in day-to-day operational areas.

A survey of Heads of Department / School was completed in July 2024 to gain a deeper understanding of their personal induction experience and help inform the development of the future process. The responses from this survey revealed that more reference point information would be helpful, as well as more initial support with finance and human resources matters.

Based on this feedback, various options were explored including new digital resources, training sessions on operational areas including finance, employment and recruitment, as well as checklists

to help integrate new Heads of Department / School into other relevant induction activities. Each of these resources is currently being developed and will initially be used with the survey respondents to gain further feedback and inform refinement. It is expected that some of these developments will also be helpful to induct staff into other roles. Completion of this work is expected in the first quarter of 2025.

- R7 The Panel recommends the work that Māori and Pacific staff undertake in supporting recruitment and induction processes is recognised appropriately.**

Early Stage

The Audit Panel noted the load placed on Māori and Pacific staff when contributing to welcome and induction processes. Whilst the Panel acknowledged that these practices were culturally affirming, they emphasised the need for this workload to be appropriately recognised.

The University is conscious of this issue and recognises the cultural labour undertaken by Māori and Pacific staff across a range of contexts. The Kanohi ki te Kanohi programme, a key element of the onboarding programme for new staff, has centralised a significant amount of work, alleviating some pressure on individual staff across the campus. Further work on this recommendation is intended and is in early stages.

Whilst there have been individual instances of good practice, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Māori, Assistant Vice-Chancellor Pacific, and Director of People and Capability are working to scope the resourcing required to more consistently recognise the contribution of Māori and Pacific staff to recruitment and induction. The University anticipates addressing this recommendation in 2025 and can provide an update on this work in the two-year follow-up report.

GS 24 Teaching development

Staff who teach or supervise, or support teaching or supervision, are supported to take up opportunities to develop their practice, including the use of innovative pedagogy and new technologies.

- R8 The Panel recommends that, in renewing its teaching development framework, the University consider how expectations might be better connected to the Performance and Professional Development Framework or the Academic Workloads Guidelines.**

Early Stage
- R9 The Panel recommends the University review the alignment between its expectations for engagement with the Objectives, Development and Review (ODR) process and engagement in teaching development to ensure that both processes are supporting capacity and capability building.**

Early Stage

Recommendations 8 and 9 both relate to better alignment of processes and documentation supporting the professional development of teaching staff. In making recommendation 8, the Audit Panel specifically cited the value in connecting the expectation of teaching staff to undertake “at least two tertiary teaching activities per year” to the Framework and Guidelines noted above. Recommendation 9 referenced linkages to the ODR process to further reinforce alignment.

Work to address these recommendations will be centred around the renewal of the Teaching Development Framework (referred to as the Performance and Professional Development Framework above). The renewed framework will include both qualitative and quantitative measures and provide alignment with the Academic Workload Guidelines and will incorporate the ODR process.

A further update on this recommendation will be provided in the two-year follow-up report.

GS 25 Teaching quality

The quality of all teaching is appropriate and is enhanced by feedback and other processes. Quality shortfalls are addressed proactively, constructively and consistently.

R10 The Panel recommends the University take steps to increase response rates for student evaluations of papers and teaching.

In Progress

The Audit Panel recommended steps to increase the response rate to paper and teaching evaluations. In particular, the Panel noted that higher response rates, whilst potentially challenging to achieve, would be beneficial for confidence in the responses.

Te Puna Ako Centre for Tertiary Teaching and Learning has implemented several measures to address this recommendation. The integration between the University's evaluation platform and Moodle has been optimised so that the overall system can send more frequent and specifically targeted reminders to students who have not completed evaluations. These adjustments were tested in October 2024 and are scheduled for release in time for Trimester A 2025 evaluations.

The University has also been exploring best practices from other institutions to inform further changes that encourage participation. These include:

- The development of three short, animated videos that guide students through the evaluation process, while emphasising its importance. These will be used in Trimester A 2025.
- Ongoing engagement with staff to review and refine the question bank used in surveys. This will ensure relevance and clarity and make the evaluation surveys more relevant to current students.
- Embedding strategies to promote evaluations during class time, which has proven effective in similar contexts. These include setting aside time to complete evaluations during the last class of each trimester.
- Funding a prize draw for students who complete their evaluations.

Section E: Supervision of postgraduate research students.

GS 28 Resourcing of postgraduate research students

Postgraduate research students are appropriately resourced and supported to undertake their research.

R11 The Panel recommends the University include questions about the adequacy of resourcing and future needs in six-monthly progress reports.

Early Stage

The Audit Panel noted that the University's current six-monthly progress reports for PhD candidates had relatively little reference to resource adequacy or future needs. It was felt that inclusion of such questions would assist students in building research planning experience.

Amendments to the six-monthly progress reports, including these questions, is intended for 2025. The questions will appear alongside other enhancements. These additional enhancements will be informed by a review of the reports and considered by the University's Postgraduate Research Committee.

In the meantime, the University continues to conduct its mid-candidature survey twice a year. This survey asks questions about the provision of research and resource support as well as any future needs. In October 2024, the survey found 81 per cent of candidates felt they had appropriate support. Those who did not feel they had adequate support provided feedback on what they felt was missing. Additionally, a higher degree's completion survey asks whether resource provision was suitable and helps to inform future candidate needs.

A further update on this recommendation will be provided in the two-year follow-up report.

Cycle 6 audit commendations

- C1 The Panel commends the University for the ways in which it responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, learnt from its experience, and embedded new or revised practices arising from the experience.
- C2 The Panel commends the University for its coherent strategic framework, including how the University's Treaty of Waitangi Statement is informing plans.
- C3 The Panel commends the University for its commitment to data availability and usage to inform planning and reporting.
- C4 The Panel commends the University for its work with the Waikato Students' Union to establish a comprehensive and supported class representative system.
- C5 The Panel commends the University for its development of The Pā and the Tauranga campus as valuable additions to the teaching and learning environment of the University.
- C6 The Panel commends the University's development of flexible learning (FLEXI papers)—which has provided resilience for the University and supported accessibility for students—and encourages its further development.
- C7 The Panel commends University's mature approach to managing risks to the quality and continuity of teaching and learning.
- C8 The Panel commends the University for the progress it is making in improving access and achievement for Māori students through its data-informed and whole-of-system (Ōritetanga) approach to learner success.
- C9 The Panel commends the University for its attention to and support of first-year students' transitions into the University.
- C10 The Panel commends the University for its support of transitions to employment and its commitment to work-integrated learning to strengthen these transitions.
- C11 The Panel commends the University for its commitment to equivalence of student experience across the multiple campuses of the University.
- C12 The Panel commends Te Whare Pukapuka – The Library for its commitment to the strategic direction of the University, including Te Aurei, and its student-centric approach to meeting student needs.
- C13 The Panel commends the University, the Māori Academic Board of Studies, and the Pacific Strategic Committee for their robust scrutiny of academic proposals that contribute to strategic direction for the University.
- C14 The Panel commends the University for the creation of the Curriculum Design Framework and the review to ensure its ongoing fitness for purpose.
- C15 The Panel commends the University's consistent use of moderation across campuses.
- C16 The Panel commends the University for ensuring that staff based offshore receive an induction process that reflects both the University and the specific context of their campus and programme.
- C17 The Panel commends the University and Te Puna Ako for the range of teaching development opportunities available and the ways in which these support the University's strategic priorities.
- C18 The Panel commends the University's timely responsiveness to initial enquiries from prospective PhD students and the follow-through with these students to enrolment and orientation.
- C19 The Panel commends the University for the ways in which it is enacting its Treaty of Waitangi Statement across the University and the establishment of Te Aurei.



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