

CYCLE 6 ACADEMIC QUALITY AGENCY (AQA) ACADEMIC AUDIT

ONE-YEAR UPDATE REPORT

Te Herenga Waka— Victoria University of Wellington

August 2024



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Ngā mihi

Tēnā koutou o Te Pokapū Kounga Mātauranga e manaaki nei i tēnei kaupapa whakahirahira mō ngā whare wānanga o te motu. Tēnei te reo rāhiri o Te Herenga Waka ki a koutou me ngā tutukinga whāinga hai hāpai ake i a mātou mahi ki konei. Tēnā koutou.

Introduction

In March 2023, the Cycle 6 AQA Audit Report for Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington was published.

The feedback from the Panel report included seven commendations, 11 affirmations, and 12 recommendations. In this one-year update, we provide details on the progress being made on the affirmations and recommendations made in the March 2023 report. This discussion begins, firstly, with a brief discussion of the changing context of Te Herenga Waka since the AQA audit report was first released.

The context of Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington since March 2023

Since the publication of the final audit report in March 2023, there have been several significant developments in the University's leadership, operations, and strategic context. There have also been several new challenges, linked mainly to the University's financial sustainability.

Despite the range of developments and challenges throughout 2023, the University community has maintained a focus on realising the affirmations and recommendations in the March 2023 AQA Audit Report. These affirmations and recommendations have proven especially beneficial as we navigate our present context. This is highlighted by the number of affirmations and recommendations we have already completed the work required or are making good progress.

We look forward to making more progress, over time, on other affirmations and recommendations. With the possible exception of affirmation 7, for which we have chosen a slightly different path, implementing these affirmations and recommendations will strengthen the outcomes our University aims to achieve for students and staff.

Our work on the affirmations and recommendations is part of a broader programme of development at Te Herenga Waka. While this update report does not attempt to capture all this work, it is useful for readers to understand that we operate in a fast-moving context. In

this regard, we have attempted to contextualise our progress on the affirmations and recommendations alongside our existing and emerging institutional priorities.

Leadership changes since March 2023

Professor Nic Smith commenced in his role as Vice-Chancellor of Te Herenga Waka in January 2023, just a couple of months prior to the release of the AQA report. Since this time Nic has been joined by several new colleagues in Te Hiwa, the senior leadership team. Tina Wakefield joined the University as the chief operating officer in September 2023, and Dr Logan Bannister and Professor Bryony James began their respective roles as deputy vicechancellor (students)—a newly created role—and provost in October 2023. Professor Rawinia Higgins is also acting in the role of deputy vice-chancellor (engagement) as well as her substantive role as deputy vice-chancellor (Māori). Professor Robyn Longhurst also started as deputy vice-chancellor (academic) in March 2024. Following chief financial officer Les Montgomery's resignation, Brendon Eckert was acting in this role, with Rachel Bruce officially starting in this role in May 2024.

Challenges in the current context: financial sustainability, post-COVID-19, and artificial intelligence

The progress the University has made on the affirmations and recommendations has occured alongside our work in response to the financial sustainability challenges of 2023. After a demanding year for domestic enrolments in 2022, the University had a difficult 2023 in the context of a drop of 975 equivalent full-time students (EFTS) (-6.2 percent). The loss of EFTS in 2023 contributed to a significant multimillion-dollar deficit forecast for 2023 (approximately \$30 million).

Ensuring the University has a firmer financial footing has dominated much of our planning, focus, since that time. There have been many changes made across the University to build systems and programmes. These actions have not only been a response to the financial deficit in 2023, but have also helped ensure we are well placed to operate sustainably in the future. Part of this work has resulted in high numbers of staff going through redundancy and redeployment processes. This has been stressful across the organisation and has understandably limited the extent to which other work could be completed, including our progress on the AQA audit affirmations and recommendations.

Other significant elements of the changing context include how we continue to manage the post-COVID-19 challenges in higher education. Like other institutions, we continue to learn how best to attract international students to our programmes and deliver engaging teaching and learning for all students.

While post-COVID-19 educational questions were part of the context for the Cycle 6 audit, new challenges have also emerged in relation to artificial intelligence (AI). In February 2023, software such as ChatGPT changed the learning, teaching, and assessment context for higher education providers. As a result, the University has formed a working group on AI and developed guidelines for staff and students on how to critically embrace it.

Emerging priorities and opportunities

In addition to the progress made on the affirmations and recommendations, Te Hiwa has overseen a range of strategic and operational developments. Key highlights from the scope of these activities are reflected in the <u>2023 Annual Report</u>.

Some of these aspects are also referenced below via the commentary provided on the affirmations and recommendations. This includes, for example, work done in the admissions and enrolment system, the Learner Success Plan, the Te Ara Taupuhipuhi—Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Ki te rā—Student Wellbeing Outcomes Framework, the Student Engagement Framework and, most importantly, the new university-wide Student Experience Committee (which began in July 2023).

Other Te Hiwa priorities have emerged too, and these continue to evolve in 2024 as we work through a strategic plan refresh and put in place, some key systems for identifying and responding to priorities across the University. These emerging priorities sit alongside, and indeed inform, the work being done in response to the AQA audit affirmations and recommendations. While Te Hiwa's priorities will continue to develop as the University works through its refresh of the strategy, the emerging priorities so far identified through this process include potential work on:

- an updated academic workload model
- a new academic promotions framework
- an engagement strategy (for students)
- a revised academic programme approvals process
- a greater focus on work-integrated learning
- a curriculum mapping exercise (which will inform the Curriculum Framework processes signalled in the AQA Audit).

Progress made on audit affirmations

Affirmation 1: The Panel affirms the University's investment in data capability to inform teaching and learning, performance monitoring and support for students, and suggests that further work provide support for staff to interrogate data for iterative enhancement.

Status: Well advanced

The University's Learner Success Plan (LSP) has provided a strategic starting point for ongoing data analysis to improve learning and teaching. Through the lens of the LSP, Titoko, our student success team, uses operational reports that identify students at risk of not completing their courses, to direct their resources to those who most require support. Additional reports related to the performance of equity groups at course level are available to enable more ready identification of courses where extremes of performance exist. Ongoing work is needed to realise the goals of the LSP and to develop an integrated approach to the use of data as the University builds a greater strategic focus on evaluation within educational initiatives. The Learning Analytics subcommittee of the Learning and Teaching Committee has been working to develop a principles framework guiding the development of systems, which was formally accepted in late 2023. This will guide development of associated policies and the training and support needed for staff and students.

Affirmation 2: The Panel affirms the development of Ngā Kīwai o te Kete—Student Engagement Framework and annual Student Agreement and encourages the University to keep progressing its work on building productive partnerships with students.

Status: Completed

The Ngā Kīwai o te Kete—Student Engagement Framework and the annual Student Agreement continue to strengthen our partnership with students. The framework will be reviewed by the end of 2024 to ensure student voice and partnership, participation and collaboration in decision-making, and initiatives to support the student experience are optimised. In addition, opportunities to embed a partnership approach in all aspects of university life, including the learning environment, will be explored. This review and exploration will be led by the deputy vice-chancellor (students) and the Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association, with support from the director, Te Pūrengi—Student Experience and Wellbeing.

Affirmation 3: The Panel affirms the model for supporting staff in implementing the new learning management system.

Status: Well advanced

We have continued to support the learning management system, but reductions in resources resulting from the financial sustainability changes in late 2023 mean that the scale and scope of the model have had to be reduced for 2024. Plans are being developed as part of the curriculum framework to address staff support for use of digital tools for learning and assessment.

Affirmation 4: The Panel affirms work underway across a portfolio of interdependent physical, but especially digital, projects to create an enhanced learning and teaching environment, with attention focused on the future development of an aligned curriculum framework and the building of staff capability.

Status: Well advanced

We continue to develop a range of physical and digital projects, but financial sustainability processes have been prioritised over the development of a curriculum framework in 2023. In 2024, the University plans to lay the groundwork for extensive development of a curriculum framework addressing several improved outcomes that are enabled by updated systems, processes, and capabilities. This work will commence with a curriculum mapping process, drawing on the information now available via the Mata software platform.

Affirmation 5: The Panel affirms the University's implementation plan for recommendations from its Te Tiriti o Waitangi audit.

Status: Well advanced

Twenty-seven of the 32 recommendations of Te Tiriti o Waitangi audit have now been advanced or completed. During 2023, the financial sustainability processes temporarily

slowed the extent to which progress was made on the few remaining areas and we continue to work through these remaining recommendations in 2024. Changes now in place as a result of Te Tiriti self-review include:

- bespoke Tiriti references now included in all new or revised policies—10 to date, with others currently under review
- Te Aka Matua terms of reference revised and a programme of mātaitanga established
- bespoke PBRF programme of support for Māori researchers developed
- te reo Māori assessment register established
- Māori panellists included as part of the Academic Programme Review process
- programme of promotion workshops developed and delivered for Māori academic staff
- Māori student recruitment plan is now under development
- new te reo Māori and Māori values resources and courses for staff developed and delivered through the organisation development team.

Affirmation 6: The Panel affirms the University's Enhancement Initiative 7 that it "progress the development of the Fale Malae to increase the engagement with Pasifika communities, students, and schools in university life and to enhance Pasifika students entering university and achieving academic success".

Status: Early stages

The Fale Malae community engagement role is being recruited at the time of writing. This role is funded by the Falae Male Trust. The University's financial sustainability programme paused capital contribution to the Fale Malae project in 2023 but work on the project is ongoing. The University has two representatives on the Trust: the assistant vice-chancellor (Pasifika) and the University's chief financial officer. The University maintains its links with the project and supports it from a governance perspective. While there is no date set to provide capital contribution, the University will work through this in 2024.

Affirmation 7: The Panel affirms the University's intention to review access pathways for EDI (equity, diversity and inclusion) focus-group students and suggests that this include specification for future reporting that is comprehensive and systematic.

Status: In progress

The University has a plan to review access pathways for EDI focus-group students using the existing, internal monitoring and evaluation systems. This approach will be applied to the University approach to Discretionary Pathways, Provisional Admission, the Tohu Māoritanga programme and the Pasifika Pathways programme.

Affirmation 8: The Panel affirms the development of the holistic advising model and the establishment of Tītoko to support it.

Status: Completed

Tītoko continues to develop a holistic model of student support. In 2023, all undergraduate and postgraduate students had dedicated advisers. There was a special emphasis on prioritising Māori and Pasifika students, who had both general advisers and advisers from Pasifika and Āwhina support services. In 2024, despite more limited resources, we have integrated KPIs and targets from the Learner Success Plan (LSP) into the annual operation plans.

Affirmation 9: The Panel affirms the University's initiative to develop a wellbeing outcomes framework.

Status: Completed

The Ki te Rā—Student Wellbeing Framework was published in October 2023. Te Hiwa and the University Council have endorsed Ki te Rā, and socialisation and implementation of this framework is underway. Progress on implementation will be reported to the Student Experience Committee, co-chaired by the assistant vice-chancellor (Māori), assistant vice-chancellor (Pasifika), and deputy vice-chancellor (students).

Affirmation 10: The Panel affirms the University's intention to review its graduate profile as part of the curriculum framework project and engage widely across the University in this process.

Status: Early stages

The development of the University's graduate profile will be considered as part of the work to be undertaken on a curriculum framework during the remainder of 2024 and 2025.

Affirmation 11: The Panel affirms the University's plans to progress the assessment framework and work on innovative assessments in a digitally enhanced learning environment.

Status: In progress

An assessment framework discussion paper has been prepared and considered by the new assessment subcommittee of the Learning and Teaching Committee. Progressing the University's assessment framework, including digital assessment practice, will be considered within the curriculum framework project.

Progress made on audit recommendations

Recommendation 1: The Panel recommends that evaluation plans are developed for all teaching, learning, and supervision initiatives.

Status: Early stages

The development of the University's new Learner Success Plan (LSP) has provided a platform for the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of student success, especially that of Māori and Pasifika students. In particular, the LSP has provided a set of targets for improved outcomes as well as a strong focus on using evidence to understand and respond to significant learning and teaching challenges. Further work on developing wide-ranging evaluation plans and processes for all teaching, learning, and supervision initiatives will be considered as part of the ongoing development of curriculum policy in 2024 and 2025. This will include the role played by evaluation and self-review to inform improvements in learning, teaching, and supervision.

Recommendation 2: The Panel recommends that academic policy be included in the academic quality framework anticipated in Enhancement Initiative 7.

Status: Early stages

The University's approach to an academic quality framework is at an early stage. The direction of any academic policy framework will be linked to the development of the curriculum policy in 2024 and 2025. In the interim, academic policy development and review is supported by a range of new subcommittees that have been established for the Learning and Teaching Committee: the Assessment subcommittee, the Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) subcommittee, Learning Analytics subcommittee, and Learning Environments subcommittee.

Recommendation 3: The Panel recommends the University address remaining recommendations in the post-implementation of the Pasifika Student Success team.

Status: In progress

Progress on the post-implementation plan for the Pasifika Student Success team is ongoing, although this work was impacted in 2023 by the financial sustainability process. In 2024, progress has now resumed with a focus on the key objectives of the post-implementation plan for the Pasifika Student Success team.

Recommendation 4: The Panel recommends the University give greater strategic focus to attracting Māori students and Pasifika students to postgraduate, particularly doctoral, study.

Status: Early stages

There are a range of initiatives being developed that reflect the greater strategic focus towards attracting Māori and Pasifika students to postgraduate, particularly doctoral, study. The Learner Success Plan provides a key strategic start to this work through a focus on improving the overall number of Māori and Pasifika students completing a graduate qualification. The plan sets out the commitment to achieve Level 7 qualifications parity for Māori and Pasifika students by 2030. The LSP has been endorsed by the Tertiary Education Commission.

The Pasifika Roadshows is a new initiative implemented in late 2023 to build relationships with Pasifika families and communities. The focus of this initiative is in developing long-term relationships to support Pasifika student graduation numbers. Data is collected to help track how this initiative supports increasing numbers of Pasifika graduates, including the number of students going on to post-graduate success.

In the final quarter of 2023, we introduced scholarships designed to support Pasifika and Māori students throughout their academic journey, from undergraduate to postgraduate study. We will be monitoring the uptake of these scholarships.

Recommendation 5: The Panel recommends the University focus its enhancement initiative to embed support for transitions and particularly for employability in the curriculum.

Status: Well advanced

The Work-Integrated Learning subcommittee of the Learning and Teaching committee was established in 2023. In 2024, the structural changes needed to facilitate an increase in work-integrated learning offerings will be scoped. A streamlined student-centric agreement process has already been developed, which supports the scaling up of work-integrated learning. Changes to the University's student-leadership programmes are being piloted in 2024 with a focus on providing industry networks and employability skills. Options for increasing internships are also being explored in 2024. The work on the curriculum framework in 2024 and 2025 will embed a structured focus on priority outcomes, including employability, and ensure that the transitions into, during, and at the end of study are well designed to enable student success.

Recommendation 6: The Panel recommends the University progress with urgency its work on reviewing the Academic Grievance Policy and developing clear guidance for students and staff in raising and resolving complaints.

Status: Well advanced

In 2023 team from Tauria-Student Interest and Conflict Resolution worked with Digital Solutions to launch a custom built, confidential case management system for managing complaints, and other sensitive and confidential student matters, such as sexual harm, behavioural issues, and critical incidents. The case management system integrates with the broader Kurawai CRM infrastructure, which enables complaints data to be reported via the Pastoral Care Code self-attestations from 2024, in accordance with the Code Administrator requirements. Web content for complaint pathways was also refreshed, including enhancing content on the staff intranet site. This approach includes clear guidance for staff and students in raising and resolving complaints, including some that have an academic dimension.

In terms of formal academic complaints that escalate to the level of Academic Grievances – those which are received in terms of the current Academic Grievances Policy – work is underway to complete a more thorough, considered and deliberate set of processes than currently exists. This is work that will be led by the deputy vice chancellor (academic). The development of the formal Academic Grievance policy and system will be aligned with the work already undertaken by the staff from Tauria-Student Interest and Conflict Resolution.

Recommendation 7: The Panel recommends that data regarding student cohort access to various forms of learning support be collected for monitoring utilisation trends and evaluating the efficacy of service provision.

Status: Well advanced

There is a growing focus on using student data and learning analytics to improve student learning and support. The Learner Success Plan, and the work we have started to examine learner analytics, provide a platform for continuing to develop this work across the University.

Recommendation 8: The Panel recommends the University consider embedding learning support and academic skills development in the curriculum.

Status: Early stages

Embedding learning support and academic skills in the curriculum will be addressed as part of the curriculum framework project. The work will also consider how student support systems and curriculum changes can work with the systems, processes, and software platforms that are now in place for learning and teaching.

Recommendation 9: The Panel recommends the University consider whether the composition of its programme review panels provides sufficient breadth of perspectives in reaching evaluative conclusions.

Status: Completed

The Reviews and Monitoring policy has been updated, and we are currently appointing internal Māori and Pasifika panel members as part of the 2024 Academic Programme Review processes.

Recommendation 10: The Panel recommends the University complete the operationalisation of its new academic integrity policy with urgency.

Status: Completed

The policy has been operational since 14 November 2022. Training sessions, guides, and communications around the changes were rolled out to support the operationalisation of the policy towards the end of 2022, continuing into 2023. Further policy updates will occur later in 2024.

Recommendation 11: The Panel recommends the University complete its review of ongoing training for postgraduate supervisors and enforce responsibilities for ensuring training is undertaken.

Status: Well advanced

The University has implemented a new training approach for postgraduate supervisors in 2023, which provides for a wider range of training. In 2025, we will be rolling out new

candidature management software, which includes facilities for tracking and reporting on training activities.

Recommendation 12: The Panel recommends that compliance with progress-reporting requirements for postgraduate research students be enforced.

Status: Well advanced

The University's approach to progress reporting has continued to develop with good levels of reporting compliance (only 35 of our 1,000 PhD students have not completed a progress report in the past 18 months). In 2025, we will be rolling out new candidature management software, which will further improve our ability to track progress.

Appendix: Progress in addressing recommendations and affirmations made in the 2023 AQA Academic Audit Report

Recommendation/affirmation	Not yet	Early	In	Well	Complete/
	addressed	stages	progress	advanced	BAU
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 1—Planning and Reporting	GUIDANCE STATEMENT 1—Planning and Reporting				
R1. The Panel recommends that evaluation plans are developed for all teaching.					
A1. The Panel affirms the University's investment in data capability to inform					
teaching and learning, performance monitoring, and support for students, and					
suggests that further work provide support for staff to interrogate data for iterative enhancement.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 2—Student Voice			-		•
A2. The Panel affirms the development of Ngā Kīwai o te Kete—Student					
Engagement Framework and annual Student Agreement and encourages the					
University to keep progressing its work on building productive partnerships with					
students.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 3—Teaching and Learning Environments					
A3. The Panel affirms the model for supporting staff in implementing the new					
learning management system.					
A4. The Panel affirms work underway across a portfolio of interdependent physical,					
but especially digital, projects to create an enhanced teaching and learning					
environment, with attention particularly focused on the future development of an					
aligned curriculum framework and the building of staff capability.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 4—Academic Delegations					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 5—Academic Risk Management					
R2. The Panel recommends that academic policy be included in the academic quality					
framework anticipated in Enhancement Initiative 7.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 6—Enhancement Theme (Māori Students)					
A5. The Panel affirms the University's implementation plan for recommendations					
from its Te Tiriti o Waitangi audit.					

Recommendation/affirmation	Not yet	Early	In	Well	Complete/
CUUDANCE CTATENENT 7 Enhancement Themes (Designs Chudents)	addressed	stages	progress	advanced	BAU
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 7—Enhancement Theme (Pasifika Students)	Т	1			
R3. The Panel recommends the University address remaining recommendations in					
the post-implementation of the Pasifika Student Success team.					
A6. The Panel affirms the University's Enhancement Initiative 7 that it "progress the					
development of the Fale Malae to increase the engagement with Pasifika					
communities, students, and schools in university life and to enhance Pasifika					
students entering university and achieving academic success".					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 8—Access					
R4. The Panel recommends the University give greater strategic focus to attracting					
Māori students and Pasifika students to postgraduate, particularly doctoral, study.					
A7. The Panel affirms the University's intention to review access pathways for EDI					
focus-group students and suggests that this include specification for future reporting					
that is comprehensive and systematic.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 9—Transitions					
R5. The Panel recommends the University focus its enhancement initiative to embed					
support for transitions and particularly for employability in the curriculum.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 10—Academic Advice					
A8. The Panel affirms the development of the holistic advising model and the					
establishment of Titoko to support it.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 11—Academic Complaints, Appeals, and Grievances					
R6. The Panel recommends the University progress with urgency its work on					
reviewing the Academic Grievance Policy and developing clear guidance for students					
and staff in raising and resolving complaints.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 12—Learning Support					
R7. The Panel recommends that data regarding student cohort access to various					
forms of learning support be collected for monitoring utilisation trends and					
evaluating the efficacy of service provision.					
R8. The Panel recommends the University consider embedding learning support and	1				
academic skills development in the curriculum.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 13—Safety and Wellbeing					

Recommendation/affirmation	Not yet addressed	Early stages	In progress	Well advanced	Complete/ BAU
A9. The Panel affirms the University's initiative to develop a wellbeing outcomes framework.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 14—Programme Approval				·	·
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 15—Course/Paper and Programme Monitoring					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 16—Review					
R9. The Panel recommends the University consider whether the composition of its programme review panels provides sufficient breadth of perspectives in reaching evaluative conclusions.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 17—Graduate Profile					
A10. The Panel affirms the University's intention to review its graduate profile as part of the Curriculum Framework project and engage widely across the University is this process.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 18—Assessment					
A11. The Panel affirms the University's plans to progress the assessment framework and work on innovative assessment in a digitally enhanced learning environment. GUIDANCE STATEMENT 19—Assessment Standards					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 20—Academic Integrity					
R10. The Panel recommends the University complete the operationalisation of its new academic integrity policy with urgency.					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 21—Assessment in Te Reo Māori					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 22—Staff Recruitment					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 23—Induction and Ongoing Expectations					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 24—Teaching Development					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 25—Teaching Quality					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 26—Teaching Recognition					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 27—Supervision Quality					
R11. The Panel recommends the University complete its review of ongoing training for postgraduate supervisors and enforce responsibilities for ensuring training is undertaken.					

Recommendation/affirmation	Not yet	Early	In	Well	Complete/
	addressed	stages	progress	advanced	BAU
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 28—Resourcing of Postgraduate Research Students					
GUIDANCE STATEMENT 29—Postgraduate Research Student Progress					
R12. The Panel recommends that compliance with progress-reporting requirements for postgraduate research students be enforced.					

Key to table of progress

Complete	or substantially complete, or nothing further to do
Well advanced	draft policy or framework developed, substantial work completed, approval path set out, implementation planned
In progress	the university is clearly addressing the issues raised in the recommendation and progress is underway; or mixed in that some aspects are well advance but other less so, pilots completed
Early stage	scoping, reviews, or reports completed, discussion papers or proposals for change developed, but work not underway, or only initial changes made, plans for exploring options
Not yet addressed	but there is intention to do so

