UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND
Te Whare Wananga o Tamaki Makaurau

ACADEMIC AUDIT REPORT

CYCLE 3

OCTOBER 2004
This audit Report is the second report of Cycle 3 academic audits to be conducted by the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit during the period 2003-2006. The focus for Cycle 3 audits is:

- teaching quality
- programme delivery, and
- the achievement of learning outcomes

The hardcopy printed version of this report is the version authorised by the Board. An electronic version of the report is posted on the Unit’s website.

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Preface

Background

The New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit was established in 1993 to consider and review New Zealand universities' mechanisms for monitoring and enhancing the academic quality and standards which are necessary for achieving their stated aims and objectives, and to comment on the extent to which procedures in place are applied effectively and reflect good practice in maintaining quality.¹

Cycle 1 academic audits were full institutional audits of the then seven universities; they were conducted during the period 1995-1998. Cycle 2 academic audits focussed on research policy and management, the research-teaching nexus and the support of postgraduate students, as well as a theme specific to each university; they were conducted during the period 2000-2001. In 2001, a full institutional academic audit was conducted in the eighth New Zealand university - the newly-created Auckland University of Technology.

Cycle 3 academic audits, of which this audit of the University of Auckland is the second, are focused on:

- teaching quality,
- programme delivery, and
- the achievement of learning outcomes,²

and are being conducted over the period 2003-2006.

The process of audit

The process of audit requires a self-review which informs an audit portfolio (structured with respect to the Cycle 3 framework) in which the university evaluates its progress towards achieving its goals and objectives related to the focus of the audit, identifies areas for improvement, and details intended plans, strategies and activities with respect to enhancement initiatives. After examining the portfolio, and seeking further information if necessary, the Audit Panel conducts interviews in an Audit Visit to the university to seek verification of materials read, and to inform an audit report which is structured in accordance with the framework for the conduct of Cycle 3 audits as set down in the Unit's 2002 Academic audit manual.³ The report commends good practice and makes recommendations intended to assist the university in its own programme of continuous improvement of quality and added value in the activities identified by the Unit as the focus of Cycle 3 audits.

Soon after the publication of the audit Report, the Unit will discuss with the university the way follow-up action to audit that is undertaken by the university might be monitored by the university and reported to the Unit.

University of Auckland academic audit

The University of Auckland agreed to an academic audit visit in early August 2004, requiring the submission of the self-review portfolio by the first week of May 2004. The Audit Panel appointed to carry out the academic audit of the University met in Wellington on 28 May 2004 for a Preliminary Meeting at which it evaluated the material it had received, and determined further materials required. The Chair of the Panel and the Director of the Unit undertook a Planning Visit to the University on 15 June 2004 to discuss the supply of the further materials requested as well as arrangements for the Audit Visit.

¹ See Appendix 2 for the Unit's complete terms of reference, its vision and its objective with respect to academic audit.
² See Appendix 3 for the framework for Cycle 3 academic audits.
³ John M. Jennings (compiler), Academic audit manual for use by the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit, December 2002, Wellington, the Unit, 2002.
The Planning Visit also offered an opportunity to talk about the audit process, its aims and the University’s expectations with the outgoing Vice-Chancellor, Dr John Hood. The four-day Audit Visit to the University took place from 2-5 August 2004, hosted by the Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Raewyn Dalziel. During the Visit, the Panel interviewed nearly 200 members of staff, students and stakeholders; for most of one afternoon, interviews were also conducted on the Tamaki Campus.

The self-review portfolio submitted by the University comprised a portfolio text and 99 supporting documents. The University is commended for the comprehensiveness of the report and for the extent to which the portfolio text included a self-evaluation of the effectiveness of processes and procedures. This, in turn, assisted the University to identify in the text 23 enhancement initiatives which the University considers as priorities for the next three years. The Panel paid close attention to these initiatives in formulating its recommendations.

The findings of the Panel as expressed in this report are based on the written information supplied by the University and on the information gained through interviews conducted during site visits. The Panel is pleased to recognise that a number of the initiatives in support of enhancing the teaching and learning experience of students at the University were undertaken independently of the specific requirements of this audit. It was clear to the Panel that the University has been proactive in undertaking its own investigations of aspects of its operations when and as issues arise.

JOHN M. JENNINGS

DIRECTOR

October 2004
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Summary

General

- The University of Auckland is a large and diverse institution with a devolved structure and responsibilities. To ensure it meets its own high expectations and the expectations of those who come to learn, the University must ensure that there are effective structures, support and monitoring systems for the effective implementation of its vision.

- The University declares its commitments to teaching and learning and to the learning environment in planning documents of various kinds. The implementation of plans is overseen by committees and undertaken by faculties and departments. The University would benefit from a clarification of the roles of committees and a stronger quality assurance framework for the reporting, dissemination, adaptation and implementation of enhancement initiatives across the University.

- The thoroughness of the work and reports of the Curriculum Commission and Student Life Commission are commended, as is the progress being made in addressing and implementing the commissions’ recommendations.

- The University is committed to internationalisation, but it needs to formulate a clear definition of what it understands to be the international and intercultural dimension in teaching and learning and to build a consensus as to the implications of its commitment to internationalisation for teaching, learning and the development of new programmes and courses.

- The impact of the work of the Schools Partnership Office and Equal Opportunities Office is commended, and the University is working positively in the area of mentoring disadvantaged and targeted groups of students.

Teaching quality

- The University recognises the unevenness of staff orientation and induction, the induction and training of casual and part-time staff, and the selection, training and professional development of tutors and demonstrators. The University is proactively addressing these issues.

- The University should ensure that the work of the Centre for Professional Development supports the strategic priorities of the University with respect to teaching and learning, particularly in the areas of international/intercultural dimensions, and competence in the use of new technologies. The Certificate in University Learning and Teaching (CULT), administered by the Centre, is an important development and the time commitment of staff who enrol for, and complete, the Certificate should be better recognised.

- The University recognises, and is addressing, the need to improve practices related to the evaluation of the quality of teaching. More consistency is required in evaluation practices across the institution. The University also recognises, and is addressing, the need to improve feedback on teaching and course evaluations.

Programme delivery

- Academic programmes are delivered on at least five campuses. The size and extent of facilities on these campuses influence the approach to the delivery and the quality of the learning environments. The Tamaki campus is developing a distinctive profile and is introducing innovations to teaching and learning, some of which are being transported and adapted on the City campus.

- The University is proactively seeking to strengthen the research-teaching nexus at undergraduate level. The University is aware of the potential for negative impact of the Performance Based Research Fund on teaching and will want to ensure that the teaching effectiveness is maintained and enhanced and
that the University’s research achievement record is translated into a research-teaching nexus across the institution.

- The University’s expectations with respect to postgraduate student support appear not to be matched in practice across the whole institution.

- There is enthusiastic affirmation by the University community of the CECIL (Computer-Supported Learning) Learning Management System and the University is commended for its development and implementation. CECIL is of importance in facilitating access to course materials and in assisting students engaged in flexible and distance learning.

- The University is commended for the high quality of the new Kate Edger Information Commons and for the Library’s proactive response to students’ learning needs.

- The University is committed to improving the effectiveness of mentoring programmes, and the University provides special mentoring for students who enter the University under one of the equal opportunity targeted enrolment schemes.

- The University is actively engaged in addressing the issue of English language proficiency throughout the institution, and the quality of advice on academic planning and course work requirements.

- The University intends to have a quality monitoring/management structure in place for all programmes.

- The University is encouraged to seek student input into the development of the policy and procedures for the review of the quality of established degree programmes.

**Achievement of Learning Outcomes**

- The Curriculum Commission initiated the revision of graduate profile statements. The University is implementing the Commission’s recommendations relating to the graduate profiles and the University needs to ensure that they are embedded throughout the institution.

- The University is addressing the issues arising from a revised policy on assessment of student learning.

- The University is committed to benchmarking academic programmes to ‘high international standards in an intellectually rich and diverse environment’. However, there appears not to be a structured framework (such as the University’s commitment might suggest) for ensuring that the results of benchmarking are used in effective ways.
Commendations and recommendations

Key: C = Commendations        R = Recommendations

NOTE: The words ‘the University’ in each recommendation is intended to refer to the agency within the University of Auckland that the University itself deems to be the one most appropriate to address and progress the recommendation.

GENERAL

Academic planning and management

R 1  The Panel recommends that the University reviews the roles and responsibilities of key committees, Deans and Heads of schools and departments with the aim of:
   • confirming accountabilities,
   • clarifying the understanding of roles and responsibilities, and
   • strengthening the alignment of committee work at all levels with the University’s goals, objectives and strategic priorities.

R 2  The Panel recommends that the development of teaching and learning plans and strategic statements at faculty level ensures:
   • that they are well aligned with University plans and priorities,
   • that they are well understood by the units that must operate within them,
   • that the plans contain reporting processes that provide robust accounts and measures to ascertain progress towards objectives,
   • that the reporting processes require the information gathered in reports from faculties and departments to be forwarded to central committees to allow the University to evaluate progress against University goals and objectives and to inform high-level future plans, and
   • that the plans contain processes that will facilitate the dissemination, adaptation and implementation of new enhancement initiatives both within each faculty and across faculties where practicable.

Quality assurance framework

R 3  The Panel recommends that the University develops quality assurance processes for teaching and learning that are more coherent and effective, and that provide a systematic University-wide framework for monitoring and reporting against University, faculty and departmental goals and objectives.

R 4  The Panel recommends that the University develops mechanisms to facilitate a more effective promulgation and implementation of good practice.

Programme development, amendment and approval

C 1  The Panel commends the University for the thoroughness of the work of the Curriculum Commission and the progress made already in addressing and implementing the recommendations contained in the Commission’s report.
R 5  The Panel recommends that the Universityformulates a clear definition of the international and intercultural dimension in teaching and learning, communicates that definition both internally and to its stakeholders, and builds consensus as to the implications for teaching, learning and the development of new programmes and courses.

Effective involvement of students, staff and other communities of interest

C 2 The Panel commends the University for the thoroughness of the work of the Student Life Commission and the progress made already in addressing the recommendations contained in the Commission’s report.

C 3 The Panel commends the University for the Schools Partnership Office and the initiatives it has taken as a proactive interface between schools and the University.

Equal Opportunities

C 4 The Panel commends the University for the Equal Opportunities initiatives and mentoring schemes for targeted groups of students, and for the monitoring of these activities.

Maori and Pacific Island staff and students

C 5 The Panel commends the University for its commitment to improving the learning outcomes of M_ori and Pacific Island students and the employment opportunities for M_ori and Pacific Island staff.

R 6  The Panel recommends that the University ensures:

• that the mechanisms for support of M_ori and Pacific Island students and staff are robust and effective in meeting their needs, and

• that there is appropriate recognition in the promotion and reward system of the pressures on M_ori and Pacific Island staff arising from their additional responsibilities to their communities inside and outside of the University.

Teaching quality

Appointment and induction of new staff

R 7 The Panel recommends that the University ensures that there are assessments of teaching competence of applicants who are to be offered teaching appointments and that appropriate and timely professional development be undertaken by new staff with the design of this support taking into account the teaching experience of each new staff member and any special requirements of that member’s academic discipline.

R 8 The Panel recommends that the University requires mandatory and timely participation by all new appointees to the academic staff of the University in induction and orientation programmes that are strongly linked with the academic duties and responsibilities to students, the University and the discipline.

Tutors and demonstrators

R 9 The Panel recommends that the University develops an institution-wide framework for the development of faculty and departmental guidelines for the selection, training, professional development and monitoring of tutors and demonstrators.
Development of teaching competence

R 10  The Panel recommends that the University:

- ensures professional development courses are designed to support the strategic priorities of the University, and
- increases the staff professional development focus in the areas of international/intercultural dimensions, and competence in the use of new learning technologies.

R 11  The Panel recommends that Heads of Department recognise the time commitment required by staff undertaking professional development courses, the Certificate in University Learning and Teaching (CULT) in particular, when developing workload models and when assigning teaching and administrative responsibilities to their staff.

Evaluation of teaching

R 12  The Panel recommends that the University reviews the present implementation of and participation in evaluations of teaching throughout the University, as indicated in enhancement initiative 15, with the aim of developing consistent University-wide policies and systems to ensure more effective processes.

R 13  The Panel recommends that the University develops methods of teaching evaluation that take into account the diversity of the student profile of the University.

R 14  The Panel recommends that the University process of staff performance review include assessment of staff competence in the delivery of e-learning and, in particular, competence in the use of CECIL.

Programme delivery

Postgraduate teaching and supervision

R 15  The Panel recommends that the University monitors supervisory relationships and the provision of resources for postgraduate students in departments across the University and takes appropriate action where these are not meeting University expectations.

Support for students

C 6   The Panel commends the University for the development and implementation of the CECIL Learning Management System and for the strong support given to the increased use of CECIL to facilitate all-hours access to learning materials and to assist students engage in flexible and distance learning.

C 7   The Panel commends the University for the significant contribution CECIL makes by way of greater flexibility to improve learning outcomes and greater accessibility for students in equal opportunity target groups and to the significant numbers of students for whom English is not their first language.

C 8   The Panel commends the University for the high quality of the new Kate Edger Information Commons and student facilities on the City campus, the reported opening of an information commons on the Grafton campus, and the intention to establish information commons on other campuses.
C 9  The Panel commends the University for the Library’s response to the learning needs of students and for the integration of its services in support of student learning, and commends in particular the Library Electronic Academic Resources Network (LEARN).

Evaluation

R 16  The Panel recommends that the University meets the goals and timing set out in enhancement initiatives 8 and 9 (relating to a quality monitoring of programmes and reviews of the quality of established degree programmes) and that the University seeks input from both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

Benchmarking of academic standards

R 17  The Panel recommends that the University develops institutional procedures for the benchmarking of teaching and learning at faculty and departmental levels related to the maintenance of high international academic standards, and that processes designed to strengthen benchmarking activities include processes for making effective use of the results of benchmarking in enhancing teaching and learning.
1 General

1.1 Context

During the months either side of the Audit Visit, the University was undergoing a change of leadership. The Vice-Chancellor of the past six years was farewelled at the end of June 2004, and a new Vice-Chancellor was to take up his appointment in January 2005. At the time of the Audit Visit in August 2004, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) – with overall responsibility for the quality of academic programmes, teaching and learning – was Acting Vice-Chancellor, and a senior Dean was Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). As well, a number of senior academic and administrative managers were recent appointments.

During the period when the University was engaged in the self-review processes associated with this academic audit, staff and administration at the University were involved in the considerable demands of the nation-wide assessment of research quality associated with the nation-wide Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) exercise undertaken during the latter half of 2003. The publication of results from that exercise by the Tertiary Education Commission had placed the University as first in terms of the quality of research output. The Panel was conscious of the pressures placed on the University arising from changes in leadership and the PBRF, from other reporting requirements of external agencies, and from the work involved in the development of new-style charters and profiles required by the Tertiary Education Commission.

The Panel was made aware by many of those interviewed that the University is indebted to the vision given to the University by the departing Vice-Chancellor, Dr John Hood. It was clear to the Panel that the University is proud of its high reputation, and comments made by those interviewed suggested that the University enjoys a high degree of commitment by staff and loyalty from students. There is much happening at the University that is positive and innovative, and students are attracted to the University because of its high reputation. The University’s mission is to be:

a research-led, international university, recognised for excellence in teaching, learning, research, creative work, and administration, for the significance of its contributions to the advancement of knowledge and its commitment to serve its local, national and international communities.

The University has made strong appointments to the important positions of faculty Deans who, along with the Senate and its key committees, have major responsibilities for teaching quality and programmes delivery. The Library’s information commons strategy has been a successful innovation, with the impressive Kate Edger Information Commons – toured by the panel during the Audit Visit – providing a much-valued learning resource and contributing to the positive view the University has of itself and to the quality of student life.

The challenge facing such a large, diverse and complex institution is to ensure that the University meets its own high expectations and the expectations of those who come to learn. To this end, it is important that the University ensures that there is an effective structure and that there are support and monitoring systems for the effective implementation of its vision.
1.2 Planning and monitoring

The University’s commitments to teaching and learning are to be found in a variety of University documents, some of which contain detailed strategies and priorities, and refer to the policies and procedures that provide the framework for the conduct of activities. Planning documents containing sections of particular relevance to the theme of this academic audit were supplied to the Panel, including the Charter 2003, the Interim profile for 2004, 2005 and 2006, the Strategic plan 2002-2004, the Academic plan 2001-2003, and the Operational priorities 2004. The Panel was also shown a draft of the Academic plan 2005-7. The University’s self-review portfolio text abstracted objectives from these documents and set out appropriate objectives relating to teaching quality, programme delivery, and the achievement of learning outcomes. These objectives are restated at the head of the appropriate sections of this report.

1.2.1 Academic planning and management

The Panel saw many documents in which the University states its commitments to teaching and learning and to the learning environment. The Panel was also referred to examples of documents and plans where they exist in faculties and departments. During the Audit Visit, the Panel came to the view that there are high-level strategic statements and much low-level activity in the areas relevant to the focus of this audit, but it was difficult for the Panel to find evidence of either appropriate documents at all levels for all academic units, or effective communication between the various levels of management as is necessary in a devolved structure. Some staff spoke of their being gaps between the rhetoric surrounding committees, their operations and their outcomes. The Panel was left with the impression that there appeared to be a lack of clarity with respect to committee responsibilities and to individual accountabilities.

Within the areas covered by this audit, three Senate committees are of primary importance: the Education Committee; the Teaching and Learning Quality Committee (a sub-committee of the Education Committee); the Academic Programmes Committee. The University encourages the principle of parallelism whereby there are, where appropriate, committees at faculty level to deal with issues that the Senate committees deal with, faculty voices on Senate committees, and faculty members of Senate committees holding relevant faculty responsibilities. This appears to have encouraged the establishment of committees that comprise representatives drawn from all sectors rather than committees with members drawn solely from those who have the expertise for the responsibilities of each committee. No doubt many of the sectoral representatives will have appropriate expertise, but ensuring the provision of such expertise within a committee of workable size must be the prime consideration.

The Panel noted that there was a review, completed in July 2000, of central committee structures, processes, terms of reference, membership and functions. The Audit Visit interviews with members of committees led the Panel to question whether all committee members themselves understood the boundaries of their operations. There was an example of a committee with certain responsibilities referring the Panel to other committees and agencies for responsibility for performance in those same areas. There were differing views as to where the leadership and responsibility lies. No clear answer was forthcoming about whether initiatives in teaching and learning had come from Senate Committees (such as the Education Committee) arising from their responsibilities to give effect to realising the University’s objectives and strategic priorities, or whether the initiatives are undertaken within departments and faculties arising from their responsibilities to provide high quality teaching and learning experiences for their students. As well, where the latter happened, it was unclear whether personal interest or University goals and values was the driver.
Recommendation

R 1 The Panel recommends that the University reviews the roles and responsibilities of key committees, Deans and Heads of schools and departments with the aim of:

- confirming accountabilities,
- clarifying the understanding of roles and responsibilities, and
- strengthening the alignment of committee work at all levels with the University’s goals, objectives and strategic priorities.

The Panel agrees with the portfolio text that in a comprehensive and diverse University, learning and teaching environments and needs can vary considerably amongst faculties, and therefore the University’s goals, objectives and priorities require interpretation to ensure their effective implementation in the diverse contexts and cultures of faculties and departments. The Panel read of departmental and faculty initiatives in the self-review portfolio text – such as the Teaching and Learning Showcase - but Audit Visit interviews suggested that initiatives and innovations are not widespread.

With respect to planning at faculty level, the University self-review portfolio identified one enhancement initiative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE 10</th>
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<tr>
<td>• All faculties will develop a teaching and learning plan стратегический план за 2005 год.</td>
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It is important that there be a clear understanding of the role of faculty plans and statements within the University as a whole, and that there are system-wide processes to facilitate communication and innovation both vertically and horizontally.

The University’s self-review portfolio indicated that some faculty-level teaching and learning plans were already in place, and that remaining faculties would be developing and implementing plans by 2005. These plans complement the existing annual faculty planning exercise.

Recommendation

R 2 The Panel recommends that the development of teaching and learning plans and strategic statements at faculty level ensures:

- that they are well aligned with University plans and priorities,
- that they are well understood by the units that must operate within them,
- that the plans contain reporting processes that provide robust accounts and measures to ascertain progress towards objectives,
- that the reporting processes require the information gathered in reports from faculties and departments to be forwarded to central committees to allow the University to evaluate progress against University goals and objectives and to inform high-level future plans, and
- that the plans contain processes that will facilitate the dissemination, adaptation and implementation of new enhancement initiatives both within each faculty and across faculties where practicable.
1.2.2 Quality assurance framework

It was pleasing to hear from many of those interviewed that the self-review process associated with this academic audit in the areas of teaching quality, programme delivery and the achievement of learning outcomes had resulted in a stronger knowledge about the University, revision of processes and a commitment from many to maintain the momentum gained from the process of critical self-review.

It appeared to the Panel that outside of the preparation of the self-review portfolio, the University relies heavily on monitoring and reporting at faculty and departmental level. Faculties and departments are responsible for acting on student evaluations and staff self-assessment where enhancement is required, and the self-review portfolio text contained examples of faculty and departmental enhancement initiatives. The Panel heard of other initiatives during the Audit Visit interviews.

There is no apparent University mechanism for monitoring and reporting and for ensuring effective use of information gathered and experience gained in the enhancement of teaching and learning. The Panel was told of gaps in monitoring and sets of data, and of inadequate communication with central committees.

The Panel was concerned by the uneven reporting against objectives and/or outcomes at the highest level, as was seen in the University’s A year in review: annual report 2003. For example, in the ‘Teaching and learning’ section, the goal is:

To provide quality undergraduate and postgraduate programmes benchmarked to high international standards in an intellectually rich and diverse learning environment.

The goal is supported by six objectives. The ‘Performance indicators’ in the annual report detail the numbers of qualifications, departmental reviews, conjoint degrees enrolments, Equivalent Full Time Students (EFTS), and postgraduate EFTS as a percentage of total EFTS. While these indicators meet the requirements of the Tertiary Advisory Monitoring Unit of the Ministry of Education and the Tertiary Education Commission, none of them are the subject of any of the objectives. The greater part of ‘Achievements and highlights’ reports on activities only, and those activities reported relate to only some aspects of some of the objectives. Not only is the annual report a statutory document, but it is also the University’s public assessment of its activities and an important mechanism for monitoring the University’s progress towards achieving its stated aims and objectives.

This approach taken by the University’s highest level public annual report and the use of sample activities rather than a systematic reporting of progress was reflected in responses by many groups when questioned during the Audit Visit about their contributions to the achievement of the University’s objectives for teaching and learning. The Panel was impressed by a range of initiatives and good practice models reported in the University’s self-review portfolio text. However, it was not clear to the Panel what use was made of annual reports from academic departments and faculties in identifying good practice initiatives and in making these more widely known. Further, the processes used to facilitate dissemination and adaptation and implementation of good practice were not clear to the Panel.

As a consequence, the Panel was unable to gauge if the University has an adequate understanding of the extent to which the institution is actually succeeding in fulfilling its own institutional vision. The Panel is of the view that a stronger quality assurance framework is
required. An integral part of such a framework is to promote good practices and then to follow
them up to see if the good practices are widely adopted.

RECOMMENDATION

R 3 The Panel recommends that the University develops quality assurance processes for
teaching and learning that are more coherent and effective, and that provide a
systematic University-wide framework for monitoring and reporting against
University, faculty and departmental goals and objectives.

One of the strongest elements in the institutional monitoring of teaching quality and programme
delivery would appear to be the departmental review process. The process is thorough, and
departmental reviews cover all aspects of departmental operations, including benchmarking
activities. During the Audit Visit, the Panel asked questions of a wide range of people about a
range of quality assurance issues, and in many instances the Panel was referred to departmental
reviews as the key quality assurance tool. The self review portfolio mentioned other quality
assurance mechanisms that existed at Faculty and Departmental level including monitoring by
Deans and Heads of Departments and annual performance reviews of staff. Those interviewed
by the Panel were either not aware of these mechanisms or chose not to mention them, always
citing departmental reviews as the quality assurance mechanism.

The importance of departmental reviews for identifying good practices and innovations is
supported by an enhancement initiative arising from the University’s self review.

ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE 18

- Compile and make available, through the Quality Office and Centre for Professional
  Development, good practices and innovations identified through processes such as
departmental reviews.

The Panel understands that a department may wait between five and ten years between reviews,
although it was made clear to the Panel that departmental initiatives and improvements can – and
do - occur at any time independent of departmental reviews. While noting the University’s
efforts to identify, promulgate and implement good practice, the Panel has a concern about the
reliance by many sectors within the University, including Heads of Department and Deans, on
departmental reviews, especially given the changing environment in higher education
internationally and in the tertiary sector in New Zealand, and given the relatively long periods
between successive departmental reviews.

RECOMMENDATION

R 4 The Panel recommends that the University develops mechanisms to facilitate a more
effective promulgation and implementation of good practice.
1.3 Programme development, amendment and approval

1.3.1 Curriculum Commission

In 2002, the University established a Curriculum Commission, chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) to consider the University’s academic programmes, its teaching and learning structures and practices in relation to the graduate profile, and the composition of the student body. At the end of that year, the Report of the Curriculum Commission was released. The report is a large and comprehensive document with 32 recommendations, including recommendations relating to the introduction of a General Education requirement of four courses in every undergraduate programme, restructuring degrees into 120-credits per annum, encouraging a culture of research in the undergraduate community, adopting and promoting amended graduate profiles, standardising student workload, making greater use of existing support and incentive mechanisms for gifted students, and revising conjoint degree and postgraduate provisions. The Report will be the subject of consideration for some time, and the Panel noted that considerable progress has been made on a number of the recommendations – such as the restructuring of degrees, the inclusion of General Education in undergraduate programmes, and the revision of postgraduate programmes into one-year bachelor honours or postgraduate diploma qualifications followed by one-year masters programmes with both research and taught pathways. All these changes come into effect in 2006.

Commendation

C 1 The Panel commends the University for the thoroughness of the work of the Curriculum Commission and the progress made already in addressing and implementing the recommendations contained in the Commission’s report.

1.3.2 International and intercultural dimension

One of the high-level objectives of the University is to:

develop integrated perspectives, policies and programmes that embed an international/intercultural dimension into the research, teaching, learning, services and institutional culture of the University.

Written material supplied by the University reported that internationalisation focuses on both formal curriculum and the total student experience. Provided as examples were international university alliances, international teaching and research collaborations, student international exchanges and study abroad, international students on campus, a cosmopolitan student body, and the use of diversity as a learning resource.

The written material was less helpful with respect to the intercultural dimension other than the needs arising from the diversity of the student profile. During the Audit Visit, the Panel put questions to a range of people about their understanding of their responsibilities to the University’s commitment to embedding an international and intercultural dimension into its activities. This series of questions brought forward a significant differing range of understandings and examples of actions and activities, leaving the Panel with the view that there is a lack of conceptual clarity and lack of consensus across the University as to what might be understood by international and intercultural dimensions. Given the University’s high-level objective, it was surprising to learn that the Academic Programme Committee’s template for the development and assessment of new programmes and courses included only an opportunity for proposals to discuss relationships to strategic planning and goals. It would seem more appropriate to require comment on each of the high level goals.
The Panel understands that the University intends to convene a series of ‘international symposia’, beginning in October 2004, at which Deans will present their plans for advancing internationalisation within their respective faculties. The first of these sessions will address international student experience. Panel regards this not just as an opportunity to check on progress, but also as an opportunity to clarify the University’s understanding of the international dimension in teaching and learning.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**R 5** The Panel recommends that the University formulates a clear definition of the international and intercultural dimension in teaching and learning, communicates that definition both internally and to its stakeholders, and builds consensus as to the implications for teaching, learning and the development of new programmes and courses.

**1.4 EFFECTIVE INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS, STAFF AND OTHER COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST**

**1.4.1 STUDENT REPRESENTATION**

The University of Auckland is the only university in New Zealand at which students have chosen to have voluntary membership of their University Students’ Association. It is acknowledged by the University that this requires it to seek ways of involving students effectively, and the Panel learned during the Audit Visit that there are a number of ways by which students can have their views listened to and considered. The Staff Student Consultative Committees and the Class Representative systems are particular examples of formal and effective means of communication and feedback. Most of the student representatives on University committees who were interviewed by the Panel believe that their voices are heard, that the University seeks and receives their views, and that action has resulted from the students’ contributions and suggestions.

**1.4.2 STUDENT LIFE COMMISSION**

In 2002 the University established a Student Life Commission, chaired by the Dean of Law, to define what being a student-centred university means for the University of Auckland and to improve both the undergraduate and postgraduate student environment and experience, and links with prospective students and graduates. At the end of that year the *Report of the Student Life Commission* was released. This is also a large and comprehensive document with 77 recommendations including recommendations relating to prospective students (including the promotion of a Schools Partnership Office), students on campus (including the setting up of a mentoring system, the class representative system, academic and social campus facilities, learning facilities, food and retail outlets) and alumni. The implementation of the recommendations contained in the report is overseen by the Student Life Board, and the impact arising from this work – such as the rejuvenation of the Staff-Student Consultative Committees, student mentoring and improved student facilities – was evident to the Panel.
COMMENDATION

C 2 The Panel commends the University for the thoroughness of the work of the Student Life Commission and the progress made already in addressing the recommendations contained in the Commission’s report.

1.4.3 Schools Partnership Office

One of the initiatives to come out of the report of the Student Life Commission was the Schools Partnership Office. The Office aims to provide a high profile, central point of contact for all relationships between the University and New Zealand schools, and it includes the Student Recruitment and Course Advice team as well as the Mentoring and Tutoring Education Scheme (MATES) project team. As its name suggests, the Office places a priority on the development of significant relationships with schools, placing an emphasis on partnerships which extend beyond student recruitment to academic and research support and policy partnerships. The work of the Office was commended to the Panel during the Audit Visit - by school Principals as well as by representatives of various sections within the University that interact with schools, and from those involved in the mentoring scheme.

COMMENDATION

C 3 The Panel commends the University for the Schools Partnership Office and the initiatives it has taken as a proactive interface between schools and the University.

1.4.4 Community Advisory Group

The Panel met with a small sample of stakeholders who spoke of the co-operative relationship between the University and its stakeholders. Several of the stakeholders were members of the Community Advisory Group. Members of the Group were unsure of their terms of reference, but thought the Group had been established to improve University-community linkages and communication and to provide advice on many issues including teaching and learning matters. The Panel met with a small sample of its members who were enthusiastic and supportive of the University’s vision and aspirations while recognising the difficulties facing the University in realising them. The Group appreciated being kept informed of developments but it was clear to the Panel that the Group would welcome more opportunities for involvement including provision of feedback and advice to the University. It was suggested that a wider representation on the Group might give it a wider pool of expertise which would be at the service of the University and better able to contribute effectively to developments relating to teaching and learning. A Group such as this, with representatives from schools and the business community, provides the University with the opportunity to gain knowledge of the needs of people from pre-entry on the one hand, to graduates in employment on the other.

1.5 Equal opportunities

The University has a commitment to providing equal opportunities for all who have the potential to succeed in a University of high international standing. This commitment is backed up by a comprehensive Equal opportunities action plan 2003 and strategic priorities 2003-2005. The University has identified the groups in the community currently under-represented in the student body as being M_ori and Pacific Island students, women in science and engineering, students from low income backgrounds and students with disabilities.
The Equal Opportunities activities are led by a proactive Pro Vice-Chancellor (Equal Opportunities) and the work of the Office impacts on the work of key committees concerned with curriculum development and approval, teaching and the learning environment. Appointments have been made by the University to progress a range of initiatives which are designed to implement a plan which sets out measurable objectives with clearly stated accountabilities and outcomes. Initiatives include ‘Starpath’, a collaborative venture between the University, Manukau Institute of Technology and the Auckland College of Education, in collaboration with others including schools, which aims to transform educational outcomes for students under-achieving by targeting successive development points along a student’s educational journey. Equity Advisors for Mōri and Pacific Island students assist students with enrolment advice and with course planning, and provide information on scholarships and grants. Annual monitoring and reporting, at faculty and University level, provides measures of the University-wide success in achieving the Equal Opportunities Office strategic objectives.

During the Audit Visit, the Panel asked a range of staff and students about equal opportunities and was satisfied that the University’s commitment in this area is well on the way to being matched by a range of activities providing effective assistance to targeted groups in support of teaching and learning through to departmental level, and encouraging students from backgrounds where they might not have believed a university education was within reach.

The Panel applauds the services for students with disabilities described in the self-review portfolio text, the accompanying materials and students interviewed. However the Panel came away with a gap in its knowledge in relation to the mentoring of students with disabilities.

**Commendation**

**C 4 The Panel commends the University for the Equal Opportunities initiatives and mentoring schemes for targeted groups of students, and for the monitoring of these activities.**

**1.6 Māori and Pacific Island staff and students**

The University’s Charter gives an acknowledgement of the University’s statutory obligations to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. As well, the University acknowledges a role for itself in a city with a large Polynesian population and its obligations with respect to Pacific Island students.

In areas related to teaching and learning, the University has committed itself to increasing the number of academic and non-academic Mōri and Pacific Island staff; increasing, retaining and supporting the access to and successful participation of Mōri and Pacific Island students in all academic programmes; improving the qualifications of Mōri and Pacific Island academic and general staff; identifying and supporting innovative and excellent Mōri and Pacific Island academic initiatives; and developing quality academic structures and innovative programmes which support Mōri language, knowledge and culture. The Panel noted that some of the Equal Opportunities initiatives are directed to these aims and objectives, and that the frontline work of the Mōri and Pacific Equity Co-ordinators is having a positive impact.

The Tuakana Mentoring Programme brings together older, more experienced tutors/mentors with first-year students. Begun as a Faculty of Business and Economics initiative, the model has been adopted in faculties across the University, and aims to raise achievement and retention rates among targeted under-represented groups. Mentors are given training by the Centre for Professional Development. The Panel regards this as an excellent development and was interested in the positive experience of those involved in the scheme. Students interviewed
identified significant factors influencing their decisions on courses - such as identity of M_oori amongst teaching staff, whether there were other M_oori students enrolled in the course, and, in particular, relatives enrolled in the course. The choice of subject and course was of lesser importance than whanaungatanga.

**Commendation**

**C 5 The Panel commends the University for its commitment to improving the learning outcomes of M_oori and Pacific Island students and the employment opportunities for M_oori and Pacific Island staff.**

The Panel heard from students a wish for stronger support mechanisms for M_oori and Pacific Island students, especially at faculty level, and was made aware of the cultural and community responsibilities of M_oori and Pacific Island staff over and above their responsibilities to teaching and research that warrant better recognition.

**Recommendation**

**R 6 The Panel recommends that the University ensures:**

- that the mechanisms for support of M_oori and Pacific Island students and staff are robust and effective in meeting their needs, and
- that there is appropriate recognition in the promotion and reward system of the pressures on M_oori and Pacific Island staff arising from their additional responsibilities to their communities inside and outside of the University.

Overall, the Panel appreciated the widespread commitment by the University to improvements in M_oori achievement outcomes. This commitment, along with greater access to the University as a place of learning and employment for other equal opportunities target groups, has become part of the culture of the University.
2 Teaching quality

2.1 Objectives

The University has set itself the following objectives regarding teaching quality:

Student focus and student learning

- Provide a student-focussed teaching and learning environment which encourages academic excellence, enjoyment of learning, critical reasoning and inquiry.
- Recruit increased numbers of postgraduate research students and postdoctoral researchers and provide them with research supervision, infrastructure and support of the highest possible quality.
- Engage students as active participants in the learning process and develop their skills to become independent learners.

Research-based teaching

- Retain a core commitment to research-based teaching and enhancing scholarship by linking research, professional practice, creative work and teaching. At appropriate stages in the curriculum, disciplinary-based research should inform teaching.

Staff recruitment

- Recruit, nationally and internationally, staff who are excellent teachers and leading scholars and researchers in their field and provide them with the opportunities to achieve this potential.

Professional development

- Provide high quality professional development and support to assist all staff to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and the links between teaching and research.

Evaluation

- Evaluate, in appropriate and dependable ways, the quality of teaching, supervision and assessment of student work, in order to monitor, report on and improve student learning.

Rewards and recognition

- Place a high priority on excellence on teaching in the recognition and rewards system of the University.

M_ori

- Ensure that the teaching and learning needs of under-represented groups of staff and students are identified and met in ways that uphold the Treaty of Waitangi and equity obligations of the University.
2.2 APPOINTMENT AND INDUCTION OF NEW STAFF

The diversity of staff experience as is found in the University is to be valued by an institution that wishes to be recognised as an ‘international’ university. The Panel was reminded on several occasions of the international origins of many of the academic staff, as well as the international interactions experienced by staff once appointed to the University - through research and/or teaching collaborations, conference and study leave. The Panel noted that the reports on the 2003 first-year and final-year undergraduate student surveys observed that there were comments from students about the poor quality of spoken English and verbal communication skills of some staff, and the difficult-to-understand accents of some lecturers and tutors.

The University seeks to recruit and appoint staff who are ‘excellent teachers and leading scholars’. The 2003 final-year undergraduate surveys included, among many laudatory comments, some comments on the poor quality of teaching and the lack of skills to teach effectively by some staff. Suggestions were made that teaching ability be a consideration for employment and that efforts could be made to improve the teaching ability of existing lecturers. The self-review portfolio reported that recruitment is a joint responsibility of the relevant faculty and department and Human Resources, that applicants for teaching positions are requested to provide summary reports on teaching evaluations and such like, but that it is not mandatory for applicants to present short teaching sessions for observation by recruitment panel members. The portfolio identified one enhancement initiative relating to the appointment of staff.

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<th>ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE 11</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Ensure that all members of interview panels are trained in the area of semi-structured interviewing, and develop a set of generic interview questions that focus on teaching quality issues.</td>
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The Panel is of the view that interviews should be supplemented by the observation of teaching practice.

RECOMMENDATION

R 7 The Panel recommends that the University ensures that there are assessments of teaching competence of applicants who are to be offered teaching appointments and that appropriate and timely professional development be undertaken by new staff with the design of this support taking into account the teaching experience of each new staff member and any special requirements of that member’s academic discipline.

Once appointed, a new staff member requires orientation. For graduates of the University, appointment to the staff begins a new relationship with an institution they have known as students; for new staff members not familiar with the University, appointment to the staff brings them into a new culture which has to be understood. The portfolio text noted that attendance at institutional-level induction is not obligatory, assurance that key messages are received and understood is not universal, and co-ordination of activity is not optimum. New staff interviewed by the Panel reported different experiences, and it became evident that some new staff are not receiving appropriate and timely advice. One practice which was appreciated by new staff was the mentoring of new staff by more experienced staff. The portfolio identified one enhancement initiative relating to the induction of staff which arises from a review by the Staff Professional Development Committee.
Audit Visit interviews suggested that there is a variability in the impact of the present induction processes at University, faculty and departmental levels. The success of induction for individual staff members seems to be related to the support at departmental level in particular, and the extent to which new staff were made aware of the range of staff support agencies.

RECOMMENDATION

R 8 The Panel recommends that the University requires mandatory and timely participation by all new appointees to the academic staff of the University in induction and orientation programmes that are strongly linked with the academic duties and responsibilities to students, the University and the discipline.

The departmental responsibility for the induction of new staff rests with the Heads of Department who also require induction and support when they assume their leadership roles. The University has developed a ‘Headsup’ leadership programme for prospective and new Heads of Department and the Panel compliments the University for this initiative. Heads interviewed expressed appreciation for the programme which offers workshops including a leadership workshop, a Vice-Chancellor’s annual retreat, forums for Heads and a mentoring programme.

2.3 Assignment of Staff and Teaching Load

The self-review portfolio text reports the nominal division of time of academic staff as 40% teaching, 40% research and 20% service, with adjustments to suit personal situations and departmental circumstances, and that transparency has been facilitated by detailed faculty-level policies on workload allocation and norms. The self-review had shown that some departmental rationales for assigning staff could be further clarified. The Panel heard from Heads of Department about individual departmental processes for the workload of staff, involving their assignment to teaching and research supervision in ways that took account of their various contributions to administration and service. The Panel also heard from new staff about the variability in the assignment of teaching loads in their first years.

The Panel considers it would be appropriate for a stronger University-wide monitoring of the extent to which departmental workload models and their implementation across the University take account of the variable needs of academic disciplines, new staff, those involved in university administration, and the extra responsibilities that may be taken on by M_ori and Pacific Island staff.

2.4 Casual and Part-time Staff

The University employs casual and part-time teaching staff to meet a variety of needs, such as specialist expertise, practical experience and replacement of permanent staff on leave. The induction and training of those teachers are faculty and departmental responsibilities. The self-review portfolio text reported on some commendable departmental initiatives and acknowledged the unevenness of induction and training. The portfolio identified one enhancement initiative in this area:
It would appear that the University values the contribution by casual and part-time staff to the University’s teaching programmes and learning environment; it is therefore incumbent on the University to ensure that casual and part-time staff have access to – and receive - adequate levels of professional care and development. It is important for the University to safeguard the high quality of teaching and learning. Ensuring the appropriate support of all staff, including casual and part-time staff, is an important aspect to securing those safeguards.

### 2.5 Tutors and Demonstrators

As with all New Zealand universities, the growth in student numbers at the University has resulted in growth in the size of classes especially at 100 level. The University is committed to providing a student-focussed teaching and learning environment, and therefore supports large class lectures with tutorials and demonstrations. The tutors and demonstrators are typically postgraduate students working on short-term contracts and the self-review portfolio tells of the provision of faculty tutoring manuals, departmental training sessions, and the Tutors and Demonstrators Training Certificate programme developed and implemented by the Centre for Professional Development.

The Panel talked with a sample of tutors and demonstrators during the Audit Visit who valued the training given. The working relationship between lecturing staff and tutors and demonstrators varies from department to department, and sometimes within a department: some tutors and demonstrators talk with and work with the lecturers, others do not; some departments pay tutors for attendance at lectures and preparation for tutorials, others do not; some departments inform and monitor marking, some departments do not. Even within the sample interviewed there appeared to be variations between departments in the provision of support and training of tutors and demonstrators. The Panel came to the conclusion that responsibility for the selection, induction, training, oversight and monitoring of tutors and demonstrators appears to rest with departments with little or no faculty overview.

The portfolio identified one enhancement initiative relating to the training of tutors and demonstrators:

### ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE 12

- All faculties/departments will develop guidelines for the selection, training and professional development of tutors and demonstrators.

While the development of guidelines is important, the Panel believes that there should be a greater assurance of standards of tutoring and demonstrating across the University.

### RECOMMENDATION

**R 9** The Panel recommends that the University develops an institution-wide framework for the development of faculty and departmental guidelines for the selection, training, professional development and monitoring of tutors and demonstrators.
2.6 Development of Teaching Competence

2.6.1 Centre for Professional Development

The main agency for staff development is the Centre for Professional Development whose mission is to assist all staff to achieve the highest possible standards in key aspects of their work. According to its 2003 annual report to Council, the Centre does this ‘by providing support and development programmes which cohere with the policies and priorities of the University, international research and the Treaty of Waitangi’. The Centre reports regularly to the Staff Professional Development Committee which has a responsibility to ensure University policy is implemented, and which helps the Centre find out issues that are important to the University and helps set the priorities for the Centre. The Centre provides programmes in professional and personal development; it administers an academic programme which provides a range of professional development workshops, seminars and consultancy services to academic staff, tutors and demonstrators; it provides a supervision training programme (in collaboration with the Graduate Centre) and an Information Technology Literacy training programme. The Centre also contributes to the training of mentors in the Tuakana Mentoring Programme and was involved in 2003 in evaluations of the teaching innovations encompassing education technology, teaching programmes, the Leadership and Management Development Programme and the Women in Leadership Programme. In November 2003, the Centre organised the annual teaching showcase as a conference entitled ‘Talking Teaching/Thinking Learning’, with sub-themes on student diversity, teaching large classes, e-learning, and research-led teaching.

The effectiveness of courses offered by the Centre was attested to by a range of people with the Centre’s programmes and professional development opportunities being highly evaluated by participants. However, people from the Centre made the Panel aware that the Centre does not have the resources itself to measure the impact of its work across the University, that it needs to be more closely aligned with the strategic goals of the University, and that there is a need to make its programmes more student-focused to deal with the diversity of student cultures and backgrounds.

Recommendation

R 10 The Panel recommends that the University:

- ensures professional development courses are designed to support the strategic priorities of the University, and
- increases the staff professional development focus in the areas of international/intercultural dimensions, and competence in the use of new learning technologies.

2.6.2 Certificate in University Learning and Teaching (CULT)

The Centre for Professional Development is also responsible for the administration of the Certificate in University Learning and Teaching programme. Designed to assist new-to-teaching academic staff and inexperienced teachers develop their teaching skills, the programme is a mix of core and elective workshops, group meetings, written assignments and input from an experienced colleague acting as a Teaching Associate. Areas covered include the scholarship of teaching, principles and practice of university learning and teaching, research supervision, flexible learning, diversity in the classroom, and equal opportunities. Each participant has a ‘teaching associate’ or mentor for the duration of the programme.
The Panel interviewed current participants of the programme who talked about the way the programme had made them think more about the teaching process, had made them consider and implement more innovative ways of engaging a greater diversity of students than might otherwise have been the case, and had involved them in discussions with colleagues about teaching. Clearly there had been benefits – both for the participants personally and for the students arising from the participants’ approach to teaching and learning – but the programme required a very high time commitment. This time commitment had been recognised by the designers and deliverers of the programme who are addressing the issue. The Panel believes that the long-term value of the Certificate will be significant and that new staff in particular should be encouraged to complete the programme. To make this and other Centre for Professional Development courses attractive to new staff and to staff who wish to upskill or whose teaching practice is not strong, consideration should be given by Heads of Department to ways of recognising the commitment of such staff to their professional development.

RECOMMENDATION

R 11 The Panel recommends that Heads of Department recognise the time commitment required by staff undertaking professional development courses, the Certificate in University Learning and Teaching (CULT) in particular, when developing workload models and when assigning teaching and administrative responsibilities to their staff.

2.6.3 Teaching portfolios

The University encourages staff to maintain teaching portfolios as a means of reflecting on their teaching and the impact of their teaching on student learning. The Centre for Professional Development supports and advises staff on the development and use of teaching portfolios. The Panel was not in a position to gauge the uptake of teaching portfolios, but the Panel noted both the support and enthusiasm of those interviewed who were maintaining portfolios and the University’s intention to raise the profile of teaching portfolios and encourage their development. Teaching portfolios are appreciated as useful tools for reviewing teaching performance and for identifying gaps.

ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE 14

• Develop, for implementation in 2005, means of raising the profile and use of Teaching Portfolios by a larger number of academic staff.

2.6.4 CECIL Learning Management System

During the Audit Visit, the Panel heard praise of the use and potential of CECIL (Computer-Supported Learning) Learning Management System from a range staff and students. CECIL was first developed by University staff and students in the Faculty of Business and Economics and provides electronic course-centred information and communication support for students and academic staff. It allows students to access tools for learning (such as on-line tests and quizzes, both formative and summative), to communicate with fellow students concerning learning issues, to access lecture notes, sound files, handouts, assignment due dates and computer laboratory bookings. It allows staff to support key elements of the teaching process such as course administration and reporting, course material, testing, grade recording and communication with students. It provides a multi-dimensional means of supporting quality in a large classes, multi-campus, multi-streamed course environment.
Te Wahanga Tatari

The University is aware that not all staff use CECIL, even though there is a growing student expectation that they will, and student groups interviewed by the Panel confirmed this to be the case.

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<th>ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE 5</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Course-based demonstration projects will be initiated in 2005 in faculties with low usage of the CECIL (Computer-Supported Learning) Learning Management System, to provide in-context examples to staff of the effectiveness of the system, as a means of further broadening interest and application.</td>
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The Panel was made aware that the range of staff use varies according to discipline area and the confidence of staff in using the technology. The impressive record of logins reported in the self-review portfolio and the unanimous approval of CECIL by students is putting pressure on non-users among staff, and the University recognises the need to assist staff in this.

2.7 Evaluation of Teaching

The University requires that teaching be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that excellence is achieved and maintained. This includes self-evaluation through maintaining teaching portfolios, as well as the annual performance review of academic staff (usually with their Heads of Department), the staff ‘continuation’ and promotion exercises, and the evaluations of teaching by students. The University recognises that while the review and evaluation of teaching is required, some of the methods used are either voluntary or administered in variable ways throughout the University.

This recognition by the University was upheld during interviews conducted by the Panel, during which some examples of good practice were reported. The University has set itself an objective which is difficult to measure - provide a student-focussed teaching and learning environment which encourages academic excellence, enjoyment of learning, critical reasoning and inquiry — and, as expected, the Panel heard about activities that might be taken as proxies for measures in some of these elements. The Panel believes that more thought should be given to ways teaching is evaluated and noted the self-review portfolio identified enhancement initiatives in this area.

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<th>ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVES 15 AND 16</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Initiate in 2005 a departmental pilot project to identify appropriate means of peer observation and feedback, with the objective of publicising and encouraging more effective peer inputs into the teaching improvement process institution-wide.</td>
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</table>

The Panel makes recommendations relating to institutional responsibilities, and does so in the knowledge of some very worthwhile initiatives to improve the quality of the evaluation of teaching which can be found throughout the University.

Recommendations

R 12 The Panel recommends that the University reviews the present implementation of and participation in evaluations of teaching throughout the University, as indicated in enhancement initiative 15, with the aim of developing consistent University-wide policies and systems to ensure more effective processes.
R 13 The Panel recommends that the University develops methods of teaching evaluation that take into account the diversity of the student profile of the University.

R 14 The Panel recommends that the University process of staff performance review include assessment of staff competence in the delivery of e-learning and, in particular, competence in the use of CECIL.

2.8 Feedback

Interviews with samples of students highlighted dissatisfaction of the student body with the level of feedback on student evaluations. The self review portfolio indicated that the University is aware of this dissatisfaction and put forward an enhancement initiative.

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<th>ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE 17</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Improve feedback to students on teaching and course evaluations, and to staff on the teaching-related aspects of promotion decisions.</td>
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The University acknowledges that there is a need for a consistent process of feedback to students University-wide in which students are made aware of actions taken in response to evaluations, both by students, and by peers and others. The University’s initiative in this area should be strengthened by identifying a timescale for their implementation.

It was reported that normally there was no feedback to students as to whether information obtained had been considered in the annual review of courses, that in general there was no apparent change to teaching performance when poor teaching performance was commented on in evaluations. There was common agreement among students interviewed that students feel helpless and unable to have an impact on improving teaching practices. Of course the Panel is not in a position to know if this is, in fact, the experience of students throughout the campus; nevertheless, there is a perception, based on personal experience by students interviewed, that student evaluation of teaching is ineffective in achieving improvements where they are considered to be necessary.

On the positive side, the Panel heard of an initiative in some departments in which rapid response surveys were administered at times throughout the teaching semester. These were followed up with feedback to the students as the course progressed. The Panel is supportive of such an initiative. The Panel was also aware of the process of performance review of academic staff which includes discussions between the teachers and the Heads of Department about teaching quality and effectiveness, requiring teachers to gather information about their teaching, which in some cases includes peer review. Deans have the opportunity to play an important role in supporting heads of department in addressing and remedying perceived weaknesses in the quality of teaching of individual staff members.
3 \n\nPROGRAMME DELIVERY

3.1 OBJECTIVES

The University has set itself the following objectives regarding programme delivery:

Curriculum
- Place a high priority on excellence in curriculum development and teaching in the professional development, recognition and rewards systems of the University.
- Promote strong disciplinary studies and encourage innovative inter-disciplinary programmes.
- Develop integrated perspectives, policies and programmes that embed an international/intercultural dimension into the research, teaching, learning, services and institutional culture of the University.
- Promote cross-cultural expertise among staff and students, encouraging the progressive internationalization of the curriculum, and meeting the needs of a culturally diverse learning community.

Research-based teaching
- Retain a core commitment to research-based teaching and enhancing scholarship through clearly linking research, professional practice, creative work and teaching.
- Provide high quality professional development and support to assist all staff to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and the links between teaching and research.

Review and evaluation
- Review regularly the academic curriculum, qualifications portfolio, modes of delivery and assessment practices to ensure that the University sustains an academic programme of high quality, benchmarked to international standards, taught by leading scholars, responsive to community and professional needs, and efficient in its use of resources.

Flexible learning
- Encourage and promote the development of flexible modes of teaching and learning, the use of new teaching technologies, and computer assisted learning management systems.

M_\text{ori}
- Provide opportunities, through such means as curriculum initiatives, to encourage M_\text{ori} and students from other under-represented groups to enter degree programmes.

3.2 DELIVERY

The self-review portfolio contained brief descriptions of examples of good practice. With respect to the delivery of academic programmes, there were reports of the successful implementation of innovative practices to address issues such as new staff orientation and induction, orientation, academic advice to students at faculty level, curriculum development, pedagogy, use of the web, research-based teaching, language support for students for whom English is not their first language, and student feedback. The Panel was interested in these
initiatives and encourages the University to develop ways of having such practices widely adopted across the University.

3.2.1 Multi-campus delivery

The self-review portfolio reports that the University delivers 129 undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, nine of them offered on an inter-faculty basis. Undergraduate students may also choose from a total of 32 conjoint degrees offered through inter-faculty collaboration, and the number of undergraduate majors/specialisations totals 90. In 2003, these programmes were delivered to 33,226 students (27,205 Equivalent Full Time Students [EFTS]) - 86.1% of EFTS on the City campus; 6.6% in Health Sciences on the Grafton campus, 5% on the Tamaki campus, 1.6% at the Manukau Institute of Technology and 0.7% at the North Shore campus in Takapuna.

In addition, the School of Theology was, until recently, a set of disparate and discrete institutions on different campuses. Their closer connection with the University of Auckland and the appointment of a Head of School were perceived to be a very positive move. While the integration of the School into the University is proceeding well, this does mean that yet other campuses are connected to the university, thus increasing between-campus travel and multi-campus activity.

About the time of the Audit Visit in August 2004, an announcement was made that the Auckland College of Education would merge with the University with effect 1 September 2004. The Panel understands that the new Faculty of Education will be based on the former College Epsom campus and that the University will continue to deliver courses and programmes on the former College campuses at Whangarei and Kaikohe.

The size of campuses and the extent of facilities on campuses influence the approach to the delivery of courses and have the potential to affect the quality of the learning environments. In the self-review portfolio, the University has summarised the challenge as being the ‘effective delivery of a comprehensive array of programmes across multiple campuses to an increasingly diverse group of students’. The University has been active in addressing these issues, especially with considerable investment in new technologies and the provision of information technology services to facilitate more flexible access to learning materials and resources across the University. The CECIL (Computer-Supported Learning) Learning Management System plays an important role in facilitating multi-campus teaching.

Nearly all of the Audit Visit interviews were held on the City campus and while there, the Panel inspected three recently-opened facilities – the Graduate Centre, the Kate Edger Information Commons, and the International Office. During the Planning Visit prior to the Audit Visit, the Chair of the Panel and Director of the Unit visited the Tamaki campus to learn about the planned development on and around that campus being done in conjunction with the Auckland City Council. During the Audit Visit, the whole Panel conducted a session of interviews on the Tamaki campus.

The University’s aim for the Tamaki campus is for it to be research-led, postgraduate-intensive, creative, interdisciplinary, and entrepreneurial, and to that end is developing facilities and programmes designed to contribute to New Zealand’s development as a knowledge society and economy. The relatively small scale of the campus (5% of University Equivalent Full Time Students, 4.6% of University course enrolments) makes it easier to engender a sense of community, while the careful selection of academic programmes there (many with a community focus) brings together discipline areas that foster interdisciplinary research and teaching. New
Library and Information Commons facilities are planned to match the growth in student numbers.

The Panel’s visit to Tamaki campus provided the opportunity to appreciate something of the different scale of operations and to learn of the way the development of the campus and surrounding business and research establishments were facilitating the development of distinctive programmes. The Panel interviewed staff associated with the Bachelor of Business and Information Management (BBIM) programme and the School of Population Health, and was impressed by the reports of innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning, especially in the BBIM programme, as well as the impact on research, teaching and learning arising from the interface with business partners. The Panel was told that some of the innovative practices developed at Tamaki in the BBIM programme were being applied to appropriate courses within the Faculty of Business and Economics on the City campus.

Staff at Tamaki see the advantages of the collaborative culture of the Tamaki campus outweighing the disadvantages of working within an evolving infrastructure, the physical separation from the City campus and central support services – such as the Centre for Professional Development – and the isolation from staff working in disciplines other than those represented on Tamaki campus.

The BBIM programme was designed from its outset to integrate English language support for its students. The support programme includes mentoring systems, teaching and learning strategies to improve linguistic proficiency and professional development for staff. The effectiveness of the scheme is being monitored. The Panel believes that this initiative could offer a blueprint for the University for language support alongside academic courses and compliments the BBIM staff for their efforts in this regard.

Tamaki has the beginnings of a Research Integration Campus enabling research institutions and businesses to co-locate with the University. The Panel interviewed representatives from a research institute and a business involved in this development and was told of the co-operative nature of research and research training involving postgraduate research students. Stakeholders have had input into the development of the campus. Such input should continue to be sought.

### 3.2.2 Research-teaching nexus

The self-review portfolio reported on the detailed University-wide discussion on the research-teaching nexus that took place within the self-review associated with the Cycle 2 academic audit in 2000. Since that audit, the University has taken a number of initiatives to ensure the requirement for research-informed teaching is part of academic plans, to increase awareness by staff and students of the University’s philosophy, and to support initiatives in strengthening the nexus as had been the case, for example, as reported to the Panel from the Faculty of Engineering. A group of academic staff has given close attention to the nature of undergraduate students’ engagement with the research cultures of the University and the University intends to build on this work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the links between research and teaching by improving undergraduate student understanding of the impact of the nexus on the quality of learning experiences, and by further development of local course design strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the Audit Visit interviews, the Panel posed questions about the research-teaching nexus to a range of staff and students. The answers indicated that the importance of the nexus was well understood by academic staff and that there was support from the University for activities to enhance the links between teaching and research. Students also appreciated the contribution to teaching arising from research but believed that research was still considered to be more important than teaching quality in some discipline areas.

Discussions about research and teaching almost always raised the issue of the impact on both arising from the first round of the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) assessments. There was an acknowledgement by staff that, while further improvement to research scores was important for the University, the University was still committed to support the enhancement of teaching. It is important for the University to have procedures for ensuring that teaching performance assessment and reward receives equal prominence to research performance assessment and reward.

Students appreciated the PBRF confirmation of the research strength of the University but the quality of teaching and supervision was their primary interest. The University values student-focused teaching and learning and is aware of the potential for negative impact on the time commitment of staff to teaching arising from PBRF. The University wants to ensure that teaching effectiveness and the research–teaching nexus are maintained and enhanced, and that the University’s research achievement record is translated into a research-teaching nexus in all departments.

3.2.3 Postgraduate teaching and supervision

The University requires mandatory attendance at courses on research supervision by new staff before they can supervise postgraduate students. The University monitors supervisory performance through doctoral student annual reports, and if the reports show evidence of unsatisfactory levels of supervisory performance, then Heads of Department are required to take appropriate action to improve the situation.

The self-review portfolio text acknowledges that the supervisory relationships between staff and students vary considerably across the University. The Panel interviewed postgraduate students, the Postgraduate Students’ Association and staff from the Graduate Centre. Reference was made to the results of surveys of postgraduate students, which suggested that the variability extends beyond supervisory relationships into matters of availability of supervisors, succession of supervisors in times of leave or resignation. The results of the survey suggested that there was an inability in some discipline areas to comply with the University’s expectations regarding the minimum resource provision for doctoral students; and Panel interviews with postgraduate students brought forward examples of substantial variability among departments in the provision of resources and facilities. The Panel is not in a position to quantify the extent of these problems, but their existence suggests the need for the University – presumably through the office of the Dean of Postgraduate Students – to monitor these aspects of teaching and learning more closely.

Recommendation

R 15 The Panel recommends that the University monitors supervisory relationships and the provision of resources for postgraduate students in departments across the University and takes appropriate action where these are not meeting University expectations.
3.3 Support for students

3.3.1 CECIL Learning Management System

The enthusiastic affirmation of the CECIL (Computer-Supported Learning) Learning Management System has already been noted – see section 2.6.4. In providing electronic course-centred information and communication support for students and academic staff on a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week basis, CECIL provides a robust platform for flexible and distance learning as well as supplementary resources for students who attend campus classes.

The Panel was provided with the vision, strategy, policy and process guidelines for flexible and distance learning. The self-review portfolio reported on the establishment of the Centre for Flexible and Distance Learning in 2002 designed to provide a focal point for building institutional knowledge and capability in the design and development of e-learning solutions. Clearly CECIL plays a key role in this development, and an interface has been developed that integrates with flexible and distance learning projects.

Students interviewed appreciated the improved access to course materials and information, particularly in assisting overcoming some of the problems arising from courses with large classes, as well as the improved communication through devices such as chat rooms. Students also reported that they understood the University was aware that CECIL alone was not a substitute for good teaching and that CECIL was to be used as a further aid to learning. There was concern that some staff were reluctant or unable to use CECIL; this report (section 2.6.4.) has already noted that the University is aware of this and that the self-review portfolio contains an enhancement initiative directed at broadening staff interest in, and application of, CECIL.

Commendations

C 6 The Panel commends the University for the development and implementation of the CECIL Learning Management System and for the strong support given to the increased use of CECIL to facilitate all-hours access to learning materials and to assist students engage in flexible and distance learning.

C 7 The Panel commends the University for the significant contribution CECIL makes by way of greater flexibility to improve learning outcomes and greater accessibility for students in equal opportunity target groups and to the significant numbers of students for whom English is not their first language.

3.3.2 Information Commons and the Library

The self-review portfolio states that the University is and will remain primarily a campus-based provider. The University is also applying computer technologies to encourage and promote more flexible modes of teaching and learning, and to improve access to learning resources and teaching materials. In recent years, the University has greatly increased student access to computers – which, in turn, facilitates access to on-line materials – and in 2003 opened the Kate Edger Information Commons located on the City campus. The aim was to create a multi-purpose facility that provides study and computer work spaces for individual and group work, easy access to information resources and technologies, and support to students from the multi-skilled staff employed at the Commons; the Commons consolidates complementary learning support resources into a single location on the City campus. The Panel toured the impressive facilities and heard of the very high levels of use. Students reported their appreciation of the new facility although it was noted the facility’s use is up to capacity already.
COMMENDATION

C 8 The Panel commends the University for the high quality of the new Kate Edger Information Commons and student facilities on the City campus, the reported opening of an information commons on the Grafton campus, and the intention to establish information commons on other campuses.

The Kate Edger Information commons is associated with the University Library to which the University has made a substantial commitment. The Panel heard how in recent years the Library administration has been working to bring a stronger client focus to its operations, and the high student ratings it receives indicates the high regard in which it is held by students. The Library regards itself as a learning space as much as a depository of research and teaching materials, and the Library Electronic Academic Resources Network (LEARN) provides a gateway on the University website through which students may access a broad range of electronic learning support resources 24 hours seven days a week.

COMMENDATION

C 9 The Panel commends the University for the Library’s response to the learning needs of students and for the integration of its services in support of student learning, and commends in particular the Library Electronic Academic Resources Network (LEARN).

The University is at present considering an Information Technology and Information Literacy policy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVE 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• An Information Technology and Information Literacy policy (currently under consideration) will be completed by the end of 2004. This policy will elaborate principles to help ensure effective delivery of e-learning and student skills development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.3 STUDENT LEARNING SUPPORT

The Student Learning Centre is located in the Kate Edger Information Commons and concentrates on the development of effective academic learning and performance skills in students, and provides assistance to students encountering difficulties in their studies. The Panel interviewed representatives of staff in this and other student support agencies, as well as students who have used their services.

The staff of the student learning support services have the advantage of a diverse ethnic profile when providing support to a student body with a diverse ethnic profile. Staff are required to undergo training; satisfaction surveys are used to inform the agencies of areas that require improvement. Staff emphasised that a high level of communication is required in such a devolved University, and there is a need for appropriate resourcing and networking. Students who use the services of these agencies are self-selected, and staff at the Centre appreciated the way it was profiled well by lecturers and tutors. The Panel formed the view that the student support agencies are proving to be successful in providing appropriate support and skills to students in need, assisting them to improve chances of success.

The work of the agencies is supplemented by student mentoring which is undertaken at the University in various settings, such as the Tuakana Mentoring Programme (referred to in section 1.6 ‘M_ori and Pacific Island staff and students’ of this report) and the Uniguide scheme in which well-trained student peers convey their advice and experience to new students. The Panel
was impressed by the enthusiasm of the mentor interviewed and heard from students who had appreciated the peer support.

**Enhancement Initiative 7**

- Improve the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures for mentoring programmes by tracking student participation and performance.

The University’s intention to improve the effectiveness of quality assurance procedures for mentoring programmes is a timely initiative especially if the information obtained is used to emphasise in the training of mentors those aspects of their work that bring most benefit to students.

Students with disabilities are supported by a Disabilities Services Office whose services were appreciated by students. The view was expressed that there was a tendency for the University to regard students with disabilities as the responsibility of the Office, whereas there might be something to be gained from the University recognising disabilities as one aspect of the diversity of the student profile. Once again, the value of the CECIL (Computer-Supported Learning) Learning Management System was emphasised, especially for the way it facilitated access to information and resources.

The Panel was impressed by the provision of special mentoring for those students who enter the University under one of the equal opportunity targeted enrolment schemes.

The International Office offers international students support services including advice from the time of application, admission and orientation through to ongoing support after arrival at the University. The International Office surveys students, and the Panel heard from Office staff of improvements to services made in response to criticisms expressed in student survey responses. The Panel interviewed the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) and staff from the International Office and members of the Panel inspected the new help desk facility at the International Office. The Panel was told that the University acknowledges the need to ensure that it maximises the contribution international students can make to the academic life and student life of the University.

### 3.3.4 English Language Support

The 2002 Curriculum Commission identified English language proficiency as a major issue for the University, and the scale of the issue was identified in a 2003 University survey of first-year undergraduates in which 43.5% of the respondents did not consider English to be their first language. The University has acted to develop resources to address this issue.

The English Language Self Access Centre (ELSAC), situated in the Kate Edger Information Commons, provides students with resources and space to work on their English language skills at their own time and pace. The Centre also runs discipline and faculty-specific courses.

The Panel was also provided with information on the development, usage and effectiveness of the Diagnostic English Language Needs Assessment (DELNA) tool. DELNA is an assessment/diagnostic procedure available to incoming undergraduate students designed to identify a student’s strengths and weaknesses in academic English. Those administering DELNA work closely with many faculties and departments to enable them to better judge an appropriate level of language support for their students.
The Student Learning Centre offers ‘English as an Additional Language’ service, and the Department of Applied Language Studies and Linguistics offers non-credit and credit courses in English as a Second Language.

During the Audit Visit, it was made clear to the Panel that English support is important to students in need, but it was noted that the uptake by these students of ELSAC and the application of DELNA and follow-up courses was variable across the University. Among the reasons for this variability is that English proficiency of incoming students varies by faculty.

The issue of English language proficiency is an important one for the University and an English Language Support Taskforce has been working through 2004. The Panel notes the University’s commitment to ensure that the findings of the Taskforce lead to action.

**Enhancement Initiative 6**

- Complete the work of the English Language Support Taskforce, consider its recommendations and develop an implementation plan to begin in 2005.

### 3.3.5 Academic Advice and Academic Honesty

The self-review portfolio considered the ways the University has assessed the effectiveness of the University’s advice to prospective students, its orientation programmes, prospectuses and handbooks, its call centres and help desks, the Graduate Centre and International Office, faculty advice centres and academic advisors. The self-review gave rise to an enhancement initiative aimed at increasing the effectiveness of student understanding of programme delivery and the intention of the University to improve communication in this area.

**Enhancement Initiative 2**

- Finalise an academic advice action plan, including resource implications, and implement in 2005. Evaluate the changes in 2006 to determine effectiveness.

Another area in which the University has been proactive is with respect to academic honesty. The portfolio reports that the University's existing guidelines on cheating were extensively revised and updated in 2003 and the Panel was provided with a copy of the resulting *Guidelines: conduct of coursework*. The University is committed to ensuring all students are aware of these guidelines.

**Enhancement Initiative 22**

- Produce and distribute to all students a pamphlet summarising the main features of the Guidelines: conduct of coursework for implementation in Semester 2, 2004.

### 3.4 Evaluation

The self-review portfolio acknowledges that a weakness in the University’s review process is the lack of consistency in the mechanisms used to assure the quality of programme delivery for established degrees.
ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVES 8 AND 9

- Ensure that all programmes have a quality monitoring/management structure in place by 2005, appropriate to the scale of the programme.
- By the start of the academic year in 2005, complete and implement a policy and procedures for reviewing the quality of established degree programmes.

Some faculties and programmes review and monitor their qualifications, but the University acknowledges that monitoring practices and benchmarking references vary considerably for existing programmes. The Panel notes the initiatives identified in the portfolio as a necessary first step to putting in place a robust quality assurance framework that not only assures the University of the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the delivery of programmes, but also provides students with an assurance that the delivery of programmes provides consistent high quality teaching and learning.

RECOMMENDATION

R 16 The Panel recommends that the University meets the goals and timing set out in enhancement initiatives 8 and 9 (relating to a quality monitoring of programmes and reviews of the quality of established degree programmes) and that the University seeks input from both undergraduate and postgraduate students.
4
THE ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

4.1 Objectives
The University has set itself the following objectives regarding the achievement of learning outcomes:

Learning outcomes
- Provide a student-focused teaching and learning environment which encourages academic excellence, enjoyment of learning, critical reasoning and inquiry.
- Engage students as active participants in the learning process and pursue learning outcomes that create independent and life-long learners.
- Provide students with opportunities to work towards acquiring or developing further the specialist knowledge, general intellectual skills and capacities, and personal qualities identified in the Graduate Profiles.

Assessment
- Ensure that assessment practices are fair, valid, reliable and effective, and that they measure student achievement and performance and enhance the quality of learning.
- Assessment strategies should explicitly recognize the longer term goals of University education as outlined in the Graduate Profiles emphasizing independent and critical thought, creativity and imagination, communication and research skills.
- All assessment procedures and practices should be reviewed regularly to ensure that teaching and learning is of a high quality, and comparable to benchmark international institutions.

M_ori
- Improve access, retention and success rates for M_ori students through diversifying the curriculum, inclusive methods of teaching, and innovative access and retention strategies.

Benchmarking
- Provide quality undergraduate and postgraduate programmes benchmarked to high international standards in an intellectually rich and diverse environment.

4.2 Graduate profiles and learning outcomes
The self-review portfolio documents contained a series of profiles approved by the Senate of the University in early 2003 – a Graduate profile, outlining the characteristics of a graduate who has completed an undergraduate degree, a Coursework postgraduate profile, outlining the characteristics of a graduate who has completed a postgraduate coursework qualification, a Research postgraduate profile, outlining the characteristics of a research masters graduate, and a Doctoral graduate outlining the characteristics of a doctoral graduate. These profiles are described in the portfolio text as aspirations as to the qualities that the University seeks to impart to, or foster in, its graduates. The Curriculum Commission recommended several measures to promote the awareness and application of graduate profiles.
The Panel asked a wide range of staff and students about the graduate profiles, their relevance and usefulness. Graduate profiles were known by most people interviewed, and were considered to reflect the graduates that academic staff, tutors and demonstrators strive to produce. Many consider the profiles to be ‘University’ statements as they are too generic and too aspirational, too long, too abstract and too distant from professional profiles. The University indicated in its self-review portfolio a number of steps that are designed to monitor the implementation and impact of Graduate Profiles. The Panel noted these steps and suggests the University undertakes to publish by the end of 2005 the results of this monitoring and any actions that will be undertaken as a result of the monitoring.

The Curriculum Commission recommended that the University promote its graduate profiles to all staff and students by: inclusion in prospective student information alongside discussion of their relationship to entry criteria and employment options; inclusion in all student handbooks, alongside discussion of their relationship to curricula, pedagogy, assessment and student learning; reference to the profiles in course outlines so that students can see the relationship between their studies and their profile outcomes; and monitoring achievement through Graduating Year Reviews, programme and departmental reviews. The self-review portfolio identified an enhancement initiative to follow this through.

**Enhancement Initiative 19**

- Devise an action plan to implement the Curriculum Commission’s recommendations concerning Graduate Profiles.

The Panel is of the view that the monitoring of achievement of the graduate profile [as recommended by the Curriculum Commission] provides the opportunity to test ways of reviewing and refining the profiles so that they can be more easily embedded throughout the University.

While graduate profiles outline characteristics of graduates who have completed qualifications, learning outcomes statements for courses within academic programmes outline expectations with respect to those who complete those courses. Learning outcome statements are not compulsory but their use is increasing, with more and more departments and faculties adopting them. The self-review portfolio identifies that there have been calls from staff for support and training to produce high quality learning outcome statements, and the portfolio text identifies the need.

**Enhancement Initiative 20**

- Improve training for teaching staff in the design and implementation of learning outcomes

**4.3 Assessment**

The self-review portfolio text summarised the findings arising from the University’s self-review of aspects of assessment – notification to students and feedback on course work, instructions to examiners and assessors, current assessment practices, student feedback on the quality of assessment. The review identified some shortcomings in performance – such as turnaround on written work, and less than clear rationales for the use of group work.

During 2003, the Teaching and Learning Quality Committee conducted a review that resulted in a report entitled Assessment of Student Learning. The new policy document brings together discussions on definitions of models of assessment, assessment methods, relative weighting of assessments, the processes of assessment, involving students in assessment, feedback to students, student workload, academic honesty, special arrangements for assessment, monitoring and moderation procedures, grievance and appeal procedures, and staff development processes.
Discussion of the document has begun, and the self-review portfolio identified as an enhancement initiative:

**Enhancement Initiative 21**

- Devise an implementation plan for the revised policy on Assessment of Student Learning. Launch the policy with a Vice-Chancellor’s Symposium (for both staff and students) addressing recent developments in assessment-related research and ‘good practices’ within the University.

The Panel urges the University to employ effective and wide-ranging dissemination strategies.

### 4.4 Benchmarking of academic standards

The self-review portfolio text discusses ways by which the University ensures that its academic programmes meet high national and international standards. *Universitas 21* – an international network of research-intensive universities in Australasia, Asia, North America and Europe – facilitates institutional-level comparisons of data and practices as well as academic collaborations, as does membership of the *Association of Pacific Rim Universities*. The portfolio reported on the international-wide staff recruitment, research and study leave, external examination and assessment, and topic-specific benchmarking studies that provide external benchmarks and comparisons. Accreditation of professional academic programmes by external professional bodies provides assurance that graduates in such programmes have appropriate education and training for their respective professions.

The self review portfolio acknowledges the need to strengthen benchmarking relationships.

**Enhancement Initiative 23**

- Strengthen institutional benchmarking relationships at the faculty and departmental levels, particularly in areas of course design and delivery methods.

The Panel asked a range of staff about benchmarking given the University’s commitment to providing:

*quality undergraduate and postgraduate programmes benchmarked to high international standards in an intellectually rich and diverse environment.*

Many of the groups interviewed referred the Panel to professional accreditation and departmental reviews. As noted above, professional accreditation has a particular professional purpose rather than an academic purpose, and as noted in section 1.2.2 ‘Quality assurance framework’ of this report, the Panel was concerned about the reliance on departmental reviews for academic quality purposes when reviews may be between five and ten years apart; benchmarking of academic standards in a departmental review is one element among with a number of research and resource issues.

The Panel was made aware that benchmarking of data relating to academic performance was undertaken through the Planning Office, although the Panel was also told that benchmarking of postgraduate grades was the responsibility of faculties and departments. The Panel was not able to determine who is responsible for making sure that effective use is made of results arising from benchmarking exercises. Staff questioned acknowledged that reports associated with benchmarking were circulated, but that they did not know the extent to which they were read, or the ways by which use was made of report findings.
Benchmarking activities do take place but the Panel was left with the conclusion that there is not a structured framework for benchmarking - such as the University’s commitment might suggest – and for ensuring that the results of benchmarking were used in effective ways to improve teaching and learning.

Recommendation

R 17 The Panel recommends that the University develops institutional procedures for the benchmarking of teaching and learning at faculty and departmental levels related to the maintenance of high international academic standards, and that processes designed to strengthen benchmarking activities include processes for making effective use of the results of benchmarking in enhancing teaching and learning.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Panel thanks Dr John Hood, former Vice-Chancellor of the University, and Professor Raewyn Dalziel, Acting Vice-Chancellor, for support of the audit process, and for the University's warm welcome to the audit Panel. The Panel also thanks Dr David Tippin, Quality Co-ordinator, and all those who contributed to the University's self-review, the compilation of the self-review portfolio, and the organisation associated with the Audit Visit, and all those who gave of their time to appear before the Panel.

AUDIT PANEL

Chair of the Panel
Emeritus Professor Don McGregor, formerly Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Sciences), University of Otago

New Zealand academic member of the Panel
Associate Professor Alex Sutherland, Dean of Engineering and Forestry, University of Canterbury

Non-academic New Zealand members of the Panel
Dr Anne Meade, Education Consultant, formerly Director, New Zealand Council for Educational Research
Carolynn Bull, Ngai Tahu, Lawyer, Families Commissioner, former Human Rights Commissioner

Overseas member of the Panel
Professor Penny Boumelha, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Adelaide, Australia

In attendance:
John M. Jennings, Director, New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit
APPENDIX 1

THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

The University of Auckland was founded in 1883 as the Auckland University College, a constituent College of the University of New Zealand. The College was restyled the University of Auckland in 1958 and became an autonomous university in 1962 with the disestablishment of the University of New Zealand.

In 1926, the College was structured into faculties - Arts, Science, Architecture, Law, Agriculture, Commerce, Engineering, Forestry and Education. In 1950, the College took over the Elam School of Fine Arts. The School of Medicine enrolled its first students in 1967, and theological teaching in association with a number of theological colleges began in the 1990s.

The current faculties are:

- Arts
- Business and Economics
- Creative Arts and Industries
- Engineering
- Law
- Medical and Health Sciences
- Science
- School of Theology

The major growth in student numbers took place in the second half of the twentieth century. By the late 1950s, student numbers were still under 4000, the majority studying part-time; within a decade, student numbers had doubled and the University had become a full-time university. During the next two decades, the University undertook a massive building programme and transformed the city campus.

The 1970s brought numerous social changes, including an increase in the proportion of Māori and Pacific Island students, and the numbers of women and mature students. Growth in student numbers accelerated during the 1990s; a total of 14,213 Equivalent Full Time Students in 1990 grew to 27,205 in 2003.

In 1991, the University acquired buildings used for the 1990 Commonwealth Games and developed a campus at Tamaki, initially offering teaching in Commerce. The Tamaki Campus is now being developed into a research-led, thematic innovation campus specialising in areas of health, environment, technology, materials and manufacturing, food and biotechnology, and information management. A large School of Population Health – part of the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences – opened in 2004.

From the mid 1990s, the University introduced a semester-based timetable, launched its first major fundraising appeal and inaugurated its Summer School. It joined Universitas 21 - an international network of research-intensive universities in Australasia, Asia, North America and Europe - and the Association of Pacific Rim Universities.

In the early 1990s, an alliance was formed with the Maukau Institute of Technology. Further partnerships have been established with the Auckland University of Technology and the Auckland College of Education. During the period of this audit, the latter partnership developed into the amalgamation of the College into the University to create a Faculty of Education located at the Epsom campus of the former College. A campus offering programmes in Business and Economics was established on the North Shore in 2001, making the University more accessible to students in this fast-growing region.

By 2002, the student rolls had reached 31,500 and total research revenue was $157 million. On-line enrolment was implemented in 2001. In 2002 the University was chosen to host four of the seven new Centres of Research Excellence funded by the Government.
# University of Auckland Profile

(2003 statistics)

## Students

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<tr>
<th>Domestic</th>
<th>28,466</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Equivalent Full Time Students (EFTS) 27,205

## Students by Programme (EFTS)

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<th>Non-degree programmes</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>4,742</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27,205</td>
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Percentage of postgraduate to total EFTS in degree programmes 17.5

Percentage of research postgraduate to total EFTS postgraduate 35.1

Source: University of Auckland, A year in review: annual report 2003

## Students by Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EFTS</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Course enrolments</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City campus</td>
<td>23,378</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>180,398</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grafton campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Shore (Takapuna)</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1,323</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>27,156</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>205,287</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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Source: text: University of Auckland, Academic audit portfolio: 5-6 (updated)  
statistics: University of Auckland, Planning and Quality Office
APPENDIX 2

NEW ZEALAND UNIVERSITIES ACADEMIC AUDIT UNIT

TERMS OF REFERENCE

• To consider and review the universities' mechanisms for monitoring and enhancing the academic quality and standards which are necessary for achieving their stated aims and objectives.

• To comment on the extent to which procedures in place in individual universities are applied effectively.

• To comment on the extent to which procedures in place in individual universities reflect good practice in maintaining quality.

• To identify and commend to universities good practice in regard to the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards at national level.

• To assist the university sector to improve its educational quality.

• To advise the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee on quality assurance matters.

• To interact with other national and international agencies and organisations in relation to matters of quality assurance in education.

• To carry out such contract work as is compatible with its audit role.

VISION

• To have contributed to the achievement of quality, quality enhancement and excellence in New Zealand universities as measured by the improved quality of their scholarly activities and outcomes – namely, research, teaching, learning and community service provided by their graduates and staff to the measurable benefit of people and societies both inside and outside of New Zealand.

OBJECTIVE WITH RESPECT TO ACADEMIC AUDITS CONDUCTED DURING THE PERIOD 2003-2006

• To have successfully administered audits of all New Zealand universities and to have produced audit reports which are acknowledged as being authoritative, rigorous, fair and perceptive and which are acknowledged by the universities as being of assistance to them in improving their own programmes of continuous improvement of quality and added value.
Appendix 3

Cycle 3 focus

General
With respect to teaching quality, programme delivery, and the achievement of learning outcomes, how does the institution ensure:

- the effective involvement of students, staff and other communities of interest in the review and improvement of plans, strategies, regulations, policies and guidelines?
- the effective implementation of institutional, college, division, faculty and school plans, strategies, regulations, policies and guidelines?
- the taking into account of the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi?
- appropriate lines of responsibility and allocation of resources to planning and monitoring?

Teaching quality

Assignment of staff
How does the institution ensure:

- the most appropriate and effective assignment of staff to teaching in programmes at various levels?
- the appropriate balance of staff time in teaching, research, administration, consulting and community activities?

Development of teaching competence
How does the institution ensure:

- effective development of individual teachers through activities that characterise, recognise, enhance and reward teaching quality?
- effective support for staff to review teaching practices and to develop appropriate skills and expertise and to explore and apply a range of flexible and innovative learning methodologies including e-learning?

Evaluation of teaching
How does the institution ensure:

- effective evaluation of the quality of teaching?
- the appropriate support and advice for those (both students and staff) involved in the evaluation of the quality of teaching?

Feedback
How does the institution ensure:

- effective feedback to teachers and students?
- effective application of feedback into the enhancement of teaching?
Programme delivery

Context
How does the institution ensure:

- effective understanding by staff of regulations, policies and guidelines related to teaching, assessment and workload?
- effective understanding by students of course and assessment requirements, learning opportunities, study skills support and access to facilities and resources?

Design
How does the institution ensure:

- effective design of the teaching of courses to use ways most appropriate for the discipline, levels of courses, learning outcomes, student preparation and student learning styles?
- effective use of an appropriate range of teaching methods that incorporate flexible and innovative learning methodologies including e-learning?
- effective realisation of links between research and teaching?
- effective provision and use of facilities and services in support of student learning?

Evaluation
How does the institution ensure:

- effective evaluation of the quality of the learning environment?
- the most appropriate support and advice for those involved in the evaluation of the quality of the learning environment?

Feedback
How does the institution ensure:

- effective feedback to teachers and students?
- effective application of feedback into the enhancement of the learning environment?

The achievement of learning outcomes
How does the institution ensure:

- the alignment of learning outcomes in programmes and courses with the institution's goals and objectives for teaching and learning?
- the application of appropriate and effective assessment practices in testing the achievement of learning outcomes?
- the excellence of scholarly standards of achievement?
- effective benchmarking of standards nationally and internationally?