



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Te Rautaki Mātauranga / Academic Plan 2022-2026

He Timatanga / Introduction

In recognising the importance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi and embracing our motto Ko Te Tangata / For the People, diversity, equity and inclusion figure prominently in this Academic Plan. Teaching for diversity means acknowledging and working with all students' lived experiences. Equitable teaching and learning is available to all, is fair and just. Inclusive teaching and learning happen in environments where everyone feels a sense of belonging, that are equally accessible for all, and are welcoming for all.' In addition, the Plan acknowledges the important role that Māori, and also Pacific learners, teachers or educators, families and communities play in enhancing the mana of the University of Waikato. Pacific peoples have a rich history and tradition of knowledge and learning which the University is keen to harness in order to ensure our Pacific students flourish and excel.

The University of Waikato Academic Plan recognises the value and importance "in strengthening the place of Te Tiriti o Waitangi / The Treaty of Waitangi within a university that sits on Waikato-Tainui lands and is surrounded by the presence and mana of the Kīngitanga" (University of Waikato, Report of the Taskforce, p. 1). It also recognises the important relationship with Tauranga Moana and Bay of Plenty iwi – our connection with Ngāi Tamarāwaho and Hūria Marae as a Poukai marae. It is within this context that the Academic Plan aims to foster a culture of academic excellence which enables Māori, and also *all* learners (e.g. Pacific, international, first-in-family, disabled) and staff, to thrive. Alongside this we acknowledge a responsibility to inspire and support learners to be leaders in helping create a sustainable future, adopting measures to reduce climate change and in advancing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

He Whakamārama / Background

Prior to drafting the Academic Plan, the impacts of Covid-19 have meant that the tertiary education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally has changed dramatically. Learning, teaching and assessment shifted as we moved increasingly online. The pandemic prompted much trial and error for teachers and learners moving educational institutions in new directions sooner than would otherwise have been the case. While at times this was extremely challenging for teachers and learners, often highlighting inequities, it has provided a rich opportunity for us all to think deeply about how to improve teaching and learning in the future. The University is well positioned to do this including being able to call on the expertise of colleagues in Te Kura Toi Tangata / Division of Education. Our diverse student and staff population provides an opportunity to engage a wide range of views to help create innovative, research-informed and learner-responsive teaching and learning. This Academic Plan reflects that thinking.

It also needs to be noted that in suggesting the six objectives set out in this Academic Plan, resource requirements were considered. The objectives are aspirational and transformational but the reality the

University faces, and will continue to face for several years, is that we are in a resource-constrained environment. Therefore, the decisions we make must acknowledge this current financial situation while also positioning us for a prosperous future. This means being deliberate in our investment - choosing to focus on initiatives that will attract new students, and retain enrolled students for as long as is useful for them. All the while, we need to place people at the heart of all of our decisions. Importantly, this will enable students to complete their studies with a sense of fulfilment and pride in being a graduate of the University of Waikato. It will also help ensure that the University remains financially viable in the long term so we can continue to serve future generations of learners.

The aspirations expressed in the Academic Plan are consistent with the Tertiary Education Strategy 2020 that sets out the Government's priorities for education. The University supports putting learners at the centre of education, reducing barriers to education for all, and providing quality teaching, and learning that is relevant to the lives of New Zealanders today. The Plan is also consistent with the Academic Quality Agency's Cycle 6 Audit Enhancement Theme - "Access, outcomes and opportunity for Māori students and for Pasifika students". The goal of improving rates of participation, retention and completion as detailed in the University of Waikato Investment Plan is evidence of our commitment to helping learners attain their educational potential, preparing them for future work opportunities and for participating productively in community life, and for enabling them to appreciate and enact the Principles of Te Tiriti of Waitangi, diversity, equity and inclusion.

Te Kaupapa / Rationale

The following six overarching objectives are designed to build on the progress made in achieving the objectives of the previous Academic Plan 2017-2021 and to guide and give effect to our aspirations for teaching and learning over the upcoming five years. They are designed to sit alongside and to help operationalise objectives set out in other University Plans including the University Strategic Plan, Te Rautaki Māori - the Māori Advancement Plan, the Pacific Strategic Plan, the Sustainability Plan and the International Plan. In addition, they align with the indicative work programme laid out in the University of Waikato Report of the Taskforce. The Academic Plan should also be read in conjunction with Te Rautaki Rangahau - the Research Plan which is committed to growing the next generation of researchers and to fostering work that has impact and relevance including to Māori and Pacific peoples.

Ngā Whāinga / Objectives

The six objectives for the Academic Plan 2022-2026 are:

- OBJECTIVE 1:** Embed mātauranga Māori into teaching and learning
 - OBJECTIVE 2:** Make the University a more inclusive teaching and learning environment for all
 - OBJECTIVE 3:** Evaluate the University's current efforts to offer students greater flexibility in where and how teaching and learning take place
 - OBJECTIVE 4:** Develop future focused high-quality academic programmes that attract students
 - OBJECTIVE 5:** Continue to grow work-integrated learning opportunities that both engage students and prepare them for successful lives and careers
 - OBJECTIVE 6:** Develop, maintain and rebuild pathways and offshore programmes for international students
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OBJECTIVE 1 – EMBED MĀTAURANGA MĀORI INTO TEACHING AND LEARNING

The University of Waikato, in committing to implementing recommendations in the Report of the Taskforce to become an institution that genuinely honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi, is not systematically or casually racist and that values mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge and Māori ways of knowing), has an opportunity to lead the way in this. Truly transforming our teaching, learning and curriculum in this manner will benefit tangata whenua as well as all students and staff, making the University of Waikato a welcoming, inclusive, forward-thinking, place to study and work. Tangata whenua as kaitiaki and as key educators are helping bring about greater cultural and environmental awareness. Some of our papers and programmes at Waikato already fully embed within them notions of kaitiaki and mātauranga. We all, however, need to commit to inspiring and supporting students to be guardians of our precious resources which will also help us advance the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

One of the principal outcomes recommended by the Report of the Taskforce is: "All staff and students enjoy enhanced academic experiences and results from the embedding of mātauranga Māori through existing teaching and research approaches". Over the past few years, there has emerged within Aotearoa New Zealand's universities and other research organisations a wider appreciation and integration of the important role mātauranga Māori plays in regards to understanding the world around us. This ought, where possible, to extend to teaching, learning - what we teach and how we teach it. This includes assessment because as the Report of the Taskforce (p. 29) notes, it is important to: "Establish alternative forms of assessment in addition to, alongside, or in place of written forms of assessment where suitable and effective (e.g. oral, creative practice)".

What will the University do to achieve this objective?

- Develop and begin to implement professional development for all staff on Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Begin work on establishing exactly what a mātauranga Māori approach to teaching, learning and curriculum might look like in different disciplines. In some subjects this work is well established, in others it is underway, in still others it is yet to begin. In reality, it is likely that mātauranga Māori will be more challenging to implement in some subjects than in others but conversations need to begin and steps taken towards this enhanced academic experience
- Develop and begin to implement professional development for colleagues on the principles and practices of mātauranga Māori in relation to teaching and learning
- Review 'Cultural Perspectives' papers to ensure the criteria and learning outcomes remain relevant and are achievable and to consider the relationship between existing Cultural Perspectives papers and future papers that will adopt or engage with a mātauranga Māori approach
- Alongside embedding mātauranga Māori into teaching and learning consider how the University can enable Pacific knowledge to be reflected and to flourish. As is noted in the Pacific Strategic Plan 2021-2025 "Māori and Pacific people share a common heritage in voyaging, wayfinding, knowledge and learning" (p. 1).
- Increase efforts around Māori academic staff recruitment and retention with a view to fostering an academic workforce that comprises Māori academics broadly in keeping with the proportion of Māori in the University's student body.
- In embedding mātauranga Māori into the curriculum it is vital that additional demands are not placed on current Māori staff members thereby disadvantaging exactly the same group the University needs to be supporting.
- Ensure the ongoing development of campus spaces to address the needs of tangata whenua (Report of the Taskforce, p. 25)
- Work to increase the number of graduates who can demonstrate knowledge of kaitiaki and/or a specialisation in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

OBJECTIVE 2 – MAKE THE UNIVERSITY A MORE INCLUSIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL

Inclusive teaching and learning enables equal access to all aspects of university learning through designing inclusive physical, academic and social environments where teaching and learning take place. Responsiveness to a broad range of lived experiences needs to be evident in teaching and learning design and delivery. We must consider carefully over the next five years how we transform the physical, academic and social learning environments to ensure they are accessible to all. This work around creating inclusive learning environments aligns with recommendations in the Report of the Taskforce; the Report states: “In addressing racism, we need to also address the intersectionality of racism, sexism, ableism and other forms of discrimination” (p. 3). This means *all* students, regardless of ethnicity, culture, gender sex and sexuality (LGBTQI+), religion and abilities must be offered access to learning in ways that are effective for them - learning environments over the next five years must continue to become more inclusive. Every student learns differently, and therefore as individual educators and as a university, we must be flexible in our approach. A one-size-fits all model of thinking, as though there is an ‘average’ student, results in many being prevented from realising their full potential.

What will the University do to achieve this objective?

- Provide more for-credit and not for-credit learning development opportunities for colleagues, in range of formats, and encourage and enable them to take up these opportunities, so they are better able to support students through understanding their individual learning styles and challenges
- Progress Phase Two of the Ōritetanga Learner Success Project including enhancing the Learner Success Dashboard functionality beyond a prototype and strengthening the Study Advising Programme
- Continue to grow culturally specific learner development programmes (e.g. Māori, Pacific and International) to help students better understand what they need to do in order to thrive at university
- Continue to promote the work of Accessibility Services who collaborate with students to empower individuals with impairments to reach their goals and achieve their full academic potential
- Develop strategies to create accessible physical and online learning environments focusing on issues such as communication with students, physical spaces of learning, course materials, the culture of the teaching space and practical components of papers.
- Keep improving pathways to tertiary study by collaborating with schools, kura, whānau, and communities to plan for successful student transitions (e.g. developing and coordinating further pre-enrolment activities and induction programmes such as Jumpstart, UniStart, Waikato for Schools, Certificate of University Preparation and Orientation)
- Actively pursue internal and external funding opportunities for research projects that are committed to furthering diversity, equity and inclusion in teaching and learning (e.g. Ako Aotearoa project ‘Data-informed initiatives to enhance Māori and Pacific student achievement’)
- Increase efforts around Pacific academic staff recruitment and retention with a view to fostering an academic workforce that comprises Pacific academics broadly in keeping with the proportion of Pacific peoples in the University’s student body
- Ensure that our diverse communities of international students are not only well-informed, safe and properly cared for but also provided with generous academic and learning support

OBJECTIVE 3 – EVALUATE THE UNIVERSITY’S CURRENT EFFORTS TO OFFER STUDENTS GREATER FLEXIBILITY IN WHERE AND HOW TEACHING AND LEARNING TAKE PLACE

As Aotearoa continues to become more diverse, its universities must meet a wider range of learning needs and preferences. For example, an increasing proportion of students combine work and study and when our borders fully re-open we will continue to have students from many countries around the world studying with us. Additionally, technology has greatly changed student expectations around how and where they learn. Both international research and a 2020 survey of University of Waikato students tell us that many value on-campus learning while equal numbers value online learning. Still others prefer a blend of the two, campus-based supported by online.

Over the past few years, but especially since COVID-19 the University has been working hard to offer students flexibility in where and how they learn so as to accommodate a wide range of learners. This includes the way students access material, engage with it and demonstrate what they have learned. It also includes the tools and resources (digital and non-digital) students call upon, methods used to share their ideas and understanding, subject content, order of learning tasks, timing of assessments, who they might seek assistance from and who they might work and collaborate with. It also includes offering some papers in what we have called FLEXI mode.

It is timely therefore for us to evaluate our efforts, especially in relation to FLEXI papers. We need to consider carefully the implications for learners and for staff in order to ascertain what works and what doesn't. Examples of questions that could be included as part of the evaluation are: What are the implications of FLEXI papers for professional programmes of study? What are the effects of FLEXI papers on the culture of the University? What subject areas lend themselves to FLEXI mode, and which do not? Do we have consistency of delivery across campus and if not, does this matter? What is realistic in terms of workload and resourcing for offering FLEXI papers but also for adopting a flexible approach more generally to teaching and learning.

We need to consider how best to balance what is affordable (each delivery mode requires its own quality assurance, resourcing and infrastructure), what is rewarding, productive and fair for staff (keeping in mind that most staff are contracted not only to teach but to carry out research), and what delivers the most value for students and employers. It is recognised that there are potential workload implications for staff in moving to more flexible approaches and so the University needs to honour its commitment to ensuring all research active staff have at least one fully non-teaching semester (A, B or C) for research. Models of flexible teaching need to be sustainable. It is within these constraints that the University will offer students as much flexibility as possible in where and how teaching and learning takes place.

What will the University do to achieve this objective?

- Evaluate the success from a staff and student perspective of the delivery of papers in FLEXI mode in 2021 and implement any recommendations that result from this evaluation
- Evaluate the success of more flexible approaches to teaching and learning being adopted more generally (e.g. the way students access material, engage with it, demonstrate what they have learned, tools and resources they call upon, timing of assessments, seeking assistance, collaborations)
- Evaluate the University's use of C Trimester to see if more effective use can be made of it to offer students greater flexibility
- Continue to improve the ICT infrastructure, systems and processes in ways that support teaching, learning and student success for students studying both on campus and online
- Continue through a variety of means (as during Covid-19 Alert Level 4) to ensure equitable access to online resources, and hardware and software, necessary to participate in learning
- Continue to improve physical spaces on campus in ways that support teaching, learning and student success
- Provide more learning development opportunities for colleagues, and encourage and enable those who wish to, to take up these opportunities, on how to create flexible learning environments so that learners have access to what they need when they need it.

OBJECTIVE 4 – DEVELOP FUTURE FOCUSED HIGH-QUALITY ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES THAT ATTRACT STUDENTS

The University of Waikato aims to be the most agile and responsive of all the New Zealand universities with new, future focused, high-quality academic programmes. The choice of new programmes will be guided by individual schools' research strengths, new and emerging areas for teaching and research, the impetus to act as critic and conscience of society, and the needs of students, employers and relevant professions. The University also needs to be co-operative and agile in developing *interdisciplinary* programmes. Such programmes will combine expertise from a number of relevant areas in order to give students the opportunity to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to develop solutions that address some of the complex global challenges of our time.

What will the University do to achieve this objective?

- Develop processes that support a more entrepreneurial and dynamic approach to initiating academic developments. These new processes need to be easy as possible for those involved but also ensure that we maintain the highest standards of quality assurance of our academic programmes
- Support the Divisions, FMIS and the University of Waikato College to regularly look forward and scan for potential new programmes, paying particular attention to interdisciplinary initiatives
- Implement a process that quickly triages those ideas for new programmes and supports the most viable ones to fruition
- Regularly review to identify programmes that need be discontinued. Actioning the addition and discontinuation of programmes will enable Divisions and FMIS to have clear picture of a pipeline of potential changes 2-3 years out.
- Ensure that new programmes, except where required by professionally accredited, adhere to the agreed Curriculum Design Framework on the grounds that this encourages interdisciplinarity via cross-listing and co-teaching papers between programmes, Schools, Faculties and Divisions
- Draw on expertise in Te Puna Ako Centre for Tertiary Teaching and Learning as a resource to help develop and quality assure proposed new programmes and papers
- Use resources wisely by balancing the rapid development of future focused and high-quality programmes with the discontinuation of programmes that are no longer proving attractive to students thereby avoiding a proliferation of programmes
- Pursue ways of moving from academic developments processes from being paper-based to being online by utilising a software solution

OBJECTIVE 5 – CONTINUE TO GROW WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES THAT BOTH ENGAGE STUDENTS AND PREPARE THEM FOR SUCCESSFUL LIVES AND CAREERS

Work-integrated learning (WIL) has long been a feature of some of the University's subject areas but since implementing the Curriculum Design Framework in 2016 it has become a feature of all subject areas. This has provided Waikato with a point of difference that employers value. We are unique in Aotearoa in prioritising a WIL opportunity (15-point paper) for every undergraduate student, no matter their discipline. Students from across the University can utilise their newly developed skills and knowledge in authentic work-related contexts and receive credit for this valuable experience. This happens in a variety of ways which include placements in which students undertake tasks or a specified project onsite; classroom based projects where students work individually or in groups on a project or challenge specified by an external organisation which provides input throughout the project; and 'The Impact Lab', created by the University in 2020, in which students work in multi-disciplinary teams to find creative solutions to sustainability challenges posed by organisations or industry.

The benefits of WIL are well-documented. They include enabling students to build a network of contacts, to bring solutions to real-world problems, to broaden their perspectives, and to develop a sense of workplace culture. WIL enhances graduate employability and can enhance the value of more traditional papers and programmes by connecting research, theory and practice. WIL also offers benefits providers by offering them students who have some understanding of recent research and methods related to their work, providing an avenue for contact with University researchers through joint oversight of WIL placements and projects and the opportunity to work with potential graduate recruits to their organisation or business. It can also help students to feel more motivated and satisfied with their university experience. It is vital, therefore, that the University continues to grow the number, breadth and quality of WIL opportunities for students.

What will the University do to achieve this objective?

- Carry out a review of WIL papers offered across the University with the aim of drawing together information and evidence which can be analysed to help improve aspects of WIL and the student experience
- Continue to build new and develop existing relationships with domestic partners
- Continue to build new and develop existing relationships with international partners so that when overseas travel becomes possible again our students are able to take up opportunities for WIL in a global context
- Grow the Impact Lab, providing a rich opportunity for students to engage in an authentic and meaningful challenge as part on an inter-disciplinary WIL team
- Increase student engagement with organisations positively contributing to sustainability through WIL
- Assist staff to foster curriculum initiatives and learning environments in which WIL can thrive
- Continue to grow research on WIL to ensure that the University of Waikato remains at the cutting edge of this field

OBJECTIVE 6 – DEVELOP, MAINTAIN AND REBUILD PATHWAYS AND OFFSHORE PROGRAMMES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Over the period of the Academic Plan the University needs to re-establish international student enrolments which have been severely curtailed by the Government's response to Covid-19. We recognise that re-establishing pathways for international students to study in Aotearoa will be dependent on international Covid-19 vaccination rates and global management of the virus which remain outside of our control. Therefore, our Plan needs to continue to focus on maintaining and building our offshore delivery programmes, new and existing (e.g. ZUCC, SISU and HEBUST) as well as developing innovative pathway solutions such as establishing in-country study centres and enabling students intending to commence their studies at Waikato in-person to enrol in NET or FLEXI papers with support through these study centres. These pathway arrangements will play an important role in maintaining our international student enrolments and ensuring we are able to quickly re-establish student flows to Aotearoa once we are able to do so. Furthermore, our success will be dependent on our ability to maintain positive relationships with our key stakeholders – students, parents, agents, scholarship agencies and institutional partners

What will the University do to achieve this objective?

- Confirm and commit to the delivery of a suite of qualifications, which are attractive to international students that can be started and completed online/offshore in recognition that the borders may not be fully open until 2023 or beyond.
 - Explore possibilities, with high quality partners, for establishing off-shore learning centres to compliment the online student experience and support retention.
 - Ensure international students who are offshore/online have a positive learning experience through the provision of high-quality online teaching and support structures.
 - Strengthen relationships with off-shore partners to keep the University of Waikato relevant and visible in international markets
 - Explore opportunities to expand existing academic partnerships (e.g. ZUCC, SISU and HEBUST)
 - Identify new and innovative partnerships for the development of pathway and offshore delivery programmes.
 - Be agile, quick to respond and engage positively with key external stake holders to ensure we maximise opportunities that maintain our brand profile and prepare us to welcome international students back to Aotearoa as quickly and efficiently as possible. This includes projects on returning international students to the country through managed MIQ, NZ Inc projects coordinated by Education New Zealand and advocating as a sector for the continuation of post study work visas for International students.
 - As Aotearoa re-opens its borders we need to remain committed to increase the proportion and diversity of international students studying at the University of Waikato
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Ngā Tohu Angitū / Indicators of success

While some information is provided in the Academic Plan on 'What we will do to achieve this objective', in order that the document not become long and unwieldy more specific measures of success will be detailed in the University's Investment Plan 2022-2024 Key Performance Indicators. Consideration is given in the Investment Plan to a range of indicators that the University chooses to include as constituting progress or success. Achievement against targets for these indicators is required to be reported through the University's Annual Report.

Additionally, as part of the University's Investment Plan 2022-2024 we are required to give detailed undertakings as to how we will give effect to the new Tertiary Education Strategy (TES). The objectives in the TES align closely with the objectives in this Academic Plan. Alongside the Investment Plan, the University is required to submit to the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), a Learner Success Plan. This Plan describes our approach to improving outcomes for all learners and evidence of how and when we know these outcomes have been achieved. In short, the Academic Plan 2022-2026 aims primarily to be inspirational whereas the other aforementioned plans contain more operational goals. These operational goals and KPIs will be brought together, as these other plans are developed further, to create an 'Ngā Tohu Angitū - Indicators of Success Appendix' to the Academic Plan 2022-2026. This Appendix will be produced within six months of the Plan being accepted and will be updated as required.