



New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit Te Wāhanga Tātari

Cycle 4 academic audits of New Zealand universities 2008-2012

Academic audit evaluation questions as at September 2009

Cycle 4 indicative framework

In devising its *Academic audit manual*¹ for use during the administration of its Cycle 4 academic audits, the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit [the Unit] developed an indicative framework.² The purpose of the framework is to provide a structure both for the university as it undertakes its self-assessment associated with academic audit, and for the academic audit panel as it undertakes its evaluation and review of university processes and activities.

The first draft framework for academic audit was circulated to universities in July 2007. A further version of the draft indicative framework was discussed by the university sector representatives at the Quality Enhancement Meeting in September 2007. The final form of the indicative framework was included in the *Academic audit manual* published in December 2007.

The indicative framework contains eight topics; each topic has a number of activities to be tested by the audit process. The framework for the self-assessment process with respect to each of the topics is a set of eight questions.

Developments in the non-university tertiary sector

Parallel to the development of the Unit's *Academic audit manual* during 2007, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority was working on a commission from the Tertiary Education Commission to develop evaluation questions and evaluation indicators for use by the non-university tertiary sector in the new form of self assessment and external evaluation and review required by the Government's tertiary education reforms. Developmental work progressed through 2007, and the first published materials emerged from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority in the second quarter of 2008.

At the Quality Enhancement Meeting of university 'quality' personnel in September 2008, I spoke to a background paper which summarised the New Zealand Qualifications Authority materials, and I reported the establishment by this Unit of a small reference group drawn from the university sector to assist the Unit to develop academic audit evaluation questions better suited to the university sector. In principle, the process of asking evaluation questions is consistent with the approach to academic audit followed by the Unit in Cycle 3 academic audits administered between 2003 and 2006.

¹ *Academic audit manual for use in Cycle 4 academic audits by the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit-Te Wāhanga Tātari*, Wellington, the Unit, December 2007

² Ibid., p.18-20.

The first draft document of evaluation questions was considered and amended by the Board of the Unit in November 2008. A second draft was discussed at the academic auditors' meeting in February 2009 and further amendments made. A third draft was considered, amended and approved by the Board in March 2009. That document was then distributed to all universities in late March 2009, with a request for comment by 15 May 2009. Three universities responded. Amendments have been incorporated into this version of the questions which was placed before Board at its meeting in June 2009.

The table

The table on the following pages builds out from the topics and activities defined in the Cycle 4 indicative framework; the topics and activities are set out here in the **left-hand column**. One activity – no. 2.0 on research activity – has been added to the indicative framework in response to observations by more than one university that research activity is a major characteristic of a university.

The **centre column** poses 'high-level' questions that will be asked by academic audit panels.

The **right-hand column** sets out lower-level questions designed to facilitate 'conversations' by the universities during their self-assessments. It is intended that the questions be used to guide universities in the provision of evidence that is appropriate in support of demonstrating the universities' responses to the high-level questions.

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Academic audit evaluation questions relating to activities within Cycle 4 topics

<i>Activities defined in the Cycle 4 indicative framework</i>	<i>High level questions for external academic audit</i>	<i>Lower-level questions to assist the self-assessment</i>
1 Teaching and learning		
1.1.1 Academic programmes	<p><i>How does the university identify the needs of learners?</i></p> <p><i>How does the university know that programmes and courses match the needs of learners and stakeholders?</i></p>	<p>How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for meeting the needs of learners? * for meeting the needs of international scholarly good practice and/or benchmarks? * for the design, development and monitoring of the implementation of teaching and learning plans and policies that are embedded throughout the university? * for the involvement of students, staff and other communities of interest in the development, design and monitoring of academic programmes? * for ensuring that academic programmes are in line with the university's strategic goals, meet the needs of learners and stakeholders, and develop intellectual independence? * for the evaluation of the ongoing quality and continuing relevance of academic programmes and courses and the application of feedback into their enhancement?
1.1.2 Teaching	<p><i>How does the university know that teaching is effective?</i></p>	<p>How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * to ensure the teaching of courses incorporates up-to-date and innovative learning methodologies that are fit for purpose? * to communicate with learners to ensure they understand the requirements of courses and assessment tasks? * to monitor the manner in which students actively engage with learning? * to ensure the use of appropriate methods of assessment and the alignment of assessment with learning objectives? * to evaluate the quality of teaching and the application of feedback into the enhancement of teaching and learning?

<i>Activities defined in the Cycle 4 indicative framework</i>	<i>High level questions for external academic audit</i>	<i>Lower-level questions to assist the self-assessment</i>
1.2 The learning environment and learning support for students, including learning support for students from targeted groups	<i>How does the university know that all learners – both internal and at a distance, within New Zealand and offshore – are studying within an environment that guides and support them?</i>	How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * to ensure that appropriate facilities and services are provided in support of learning, health and recreation for all students,? * to ensure that students have appropriate access to facilities and services? * to evaluate student satisfaction and opinion and for the application of feedback into curriculum and teaching and learning?
1.3 Student achievement and success		
1.3.1 Student achievement	<i>How does the university ensure there are effective processes for determining objectives and outcomes?</i> <i>How does the university know that learners achieve stated objectives and outcomes?</i>	How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for measuring student achievement against the university's goals and objectives for outcomes for learners, bearing in mind the diversity of student qualifications on entry and the diversity of student expectations associated with their learning?
1.3.2 Student success	<i>How does the university know that the outcomes have value for key stakeholders including learners?</i>	How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for measuring student success against the expectations of learners and against the university expectations of students? * for ensuring qualifications provide graduates the opportunities to work towards achieving the competencies of value to key stakeholders including the learners themselves?

2 Research environment

2.0 Research activity	<i>How does the university know that research performance and research policies are aligned with each other and with external contexts?</i> <i>How does the university know that its research activities are carried out with integrity?</i> <i>How does the university know that the research programmes, infrastructure and</i>	How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for developing and monitoring the implementation of research policies? * for the involvement of, and input from, students, staff and other communities of interest in the development, design and review of research policy? * for the enhancement and support of research activities in line with the university's strategic goals?
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<i>Activities defined in the Cycle 4 indicative framework</i>	<i>High level questions for external academic audit</i>	<i>Lower-level questions to assist the self-assessment</i>
2.1 Research students and research supervision	<p><i>performance match the needs of the university, its postgraduate students and its stakeholders?</i></p> <p><i>How does the university know that research students are guided and supported effectively?</i></p>	<p>How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for communicating between supervisors and research students at enrolment and during supervision to ensure each group understands the requirements of postgraduate research and their responsibilities? * for providing appropriate facilities, services and continuing support for research students so that research students have the best opportunities for successful completion? * for providing timely reports on progress and effective evaluations of the reports so that research students have the best opportunities for successful completion? * for providing support and encouragement to research students to present research findings at conferences and through publications?
2.2 Teaching and learning within a research environment,	<p><i>How does the university know that there is an effective interdependence between teaching and research?</i></p>	<p>How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for enhancing the links between teaching and research in the design and delivery of courses and in the design of research programmes and projects? * for ensuring staff are research-active? * for ensuring the Performance-Based Research Fund is used to support the interdependence of research and teaching? * for assisting learners to develop an appreciation of the research underpinning teaching? * for providing learners with opportunities to interact with research-qualified staff and research data, and to develop research skills?
2.3 The interdependence of research and teaching		
3 Te Tiriti o Waitangi		
3.1 The application of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi	<p><i>How does the university ensure an understanding of the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi?</i></p>	<p>How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for enunciating an understanding by the university community of the principles of Te

Activities defined in the Cycle 4 indicative framework	High level questions for external academic audit	Lower-level questions to assist the self-assessment
	<i>How does the university know that it is effectively applying the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and embedding their application throughout all of the university's activities?</i>	Tiriti o Waitangi so that they can be applied effectively to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ promote partnerships in decision making, ▪ acknowledge, promote and protect Māori cultural aspirations for teaching, research and decision making? ▪ monitor and improve admission, retention and progression rates and levels of achievement by Māori students?

4 Academic and general staff

4.1 The determination of an appropriate academic staff profile across the institution	<i>How does the university determine the appropriate staff profile to fulfil its core purposes and functions?</i>	How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes:
4.2 Recruitment, appointment, induction and retention	<i>How does the university know that the strategies around recruitment, appointment, induction, support, mentoring, retention, workload, professional development and appraisal of all staff – continuing and non-continuing, including research-only and teaching-only – are effective?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for developing and monitoring the implementation of staffing strategies that address issues of staff planning, retention and succession? * for determining the appropriate profile of academic and general staff to support research and teaching consistent with the university's goals and objectives? * for the recruitment, appointment, induction and retention of academic and support staff to ensure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - they are appropriately qualified and experienced in ways consistent with the requirements of their appointments, - they are familiar with the university's culture, policies, procedures and regulations, and - they are appropriately supported and rewarded during their professional career? * for ensuring appropriate and effective assignment of staff and the balance of staff time in teaching, research and administration? * for the professional development of research and teaching skills, expertise and application of flexible and innovative learning methodologies? * for the appraisal of performance in supporting the professional career of academic and support staff?
4.3 The implementation and monitoring of workload models		
4.4 Professional support, development and appraisal of academic staff		

Activities defined in the Cycle 4 indicative framework	High level questions for external academic audit	Lower-level questions to assist the self-assessment
5 Institutional quality assurance		
5.1 The internal planning – implementation – reporting – evaluation – enhancement cycle as applied to academic processes, academic programmes and courses	<i>How does the university know that its standards of research, teaching and student learning have been enhanced/improved as a result of institutional quality assurance?</i>	<p>How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for involving students, staff and other communities of interest in the review and continuous improvement of institutional and college/faculty/school/key committee plans, strategies, regulations, policies and guidelines? * for assigning responsibility and allocating resources to planning and monitoring? * for the formal and informal benchmarking of standards of attainment in research, teaching and learning? * for reviewing academic and organisational performance, * for monitoring the quality of research, teaching and community engagement?
6 Management and administrative support		
6.1 The development of a management and administrative infrastructure that provides effective support to research, research-informed teaching and learning	<i>How does the university know that its management and administrative support structures are fit for purpose?</i>	<p>How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for ensuring the effective management of strategic planning that involves the contributions of all levels of the university? * for the oversight and integration by management, and the ownership by the university community, of teaching and learning plans and policies, research policies and staffing strategies?
6.2 The determination of an appropriate management and administrative staff profile		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for ensuring that the structure, profile and activities of management and administrative staff are to support the research and teaching functions of the university?
6.3 Professional support, development and appraisal of management and administrative staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for the professional development of managers at all levels?

Activities defined in the Cycle 4 indicative framework	High level questions for external academic audit	Lower-level questions to assist the self-assessment
7 Community engagement		
7.1 The identification of stakeholders and communities of interest, the seeking of advice, and the application of information gained to research, curriculum and student learning	<i>How does the university know that research and teaching benefit from community engagement?</i>	<p>How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for identifying communities of interest, * for balancing the needs of communities with the needs of academic and research activities? * for seeking input from communities of interest with appropriate skills, knowledge and expertise, into the development and enhancement of research programmes? * for seeking and assessing input from communities of interest with appropriate skills, knowledge and expertise, into the development and enhancement of academic programmes?
7.2 The role of critic and conscience of society	<p><i>How does the university know that it is effectively fulfilling the role of critic and conscience of society?</i></p> <p><i>How does the university know it is effectively imparting knowledge to the community?</i></p>	<p>How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for ensuring the university culture, corporate spirit and policies create an environment that encourages creativity, radical ideas and informed critique of the status quo? * for supporting members of the university community to carry out the role of critic and conscience of society within a culture of academic freedom and attendant responsibility?
8 External academic collaborations and partnerships		
8.1 The development of external collaborative research and academic ventures and partnerships that impact on curriculum and student learning and achievement	<p><i>How does the university know that research performance, curriculum, standards and outcomes for learners are enhanced by external academic collaborations?</i></p> <p><i>How does the university measure the impact of its external academic collaborations?</i></p>	<p>How appropriate and effective are the mechanisms and processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * for the oversight and management of national and international collaborations throughout the university? * for ensuring national and international academic collaborations and partnerships and student exchanges impact positively on the curriculum and quality of student learning and student achievement?

2 September 2009