Quality Advancement Framework for Teaching and Learning

The pursuit of quality is central to the University of Otago's position as a leading university – both within New Zealand and internationally. This focus on quality is directed by Senate and Council-approved principles, which require a commitment to the continuous monitoring and improvement of teaching, research and community service activities, as well as supporting methods of consultation.

The *Quality Advancement Framework for Teaching and Learning* outlines the University's commitment to quality with a focus on the key processes used for the advancement of teaching and learning within a cycle of planning, implementation, monitoring and enhancement.[1]

The Quality Advancement Committee, a committee of Senate chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) acts as a forum for the discussion and promotion of developments in quality assurance and enhancement. Its responsibilities include identifying key elements that form part of the Framework.

The *Quality Advancement Framework for Teaching and Learning* consists of the following linked elements:

A Planning Framework	That sets out strategic imperatives for the University and a planning approach that focuses on strategic leadership rather than highly detailed and prescriptive planning, thus giving different areas of the organisation considerable freedom in determining how to respond to the challenges posed by the imperatives.
A Resource Allocation System	That supports implementation of the University's strategic imperatives
A Policy Framework	That takes a University-wide approach to the development, approval, implementation and review of policies, procedures, guidelines and codes of practice
Pedagogical Research	That provides evidence-based rationales for teaching and learning including modes of delivery and assessment, and incorporates methods for disseminating and sharing research outcomes

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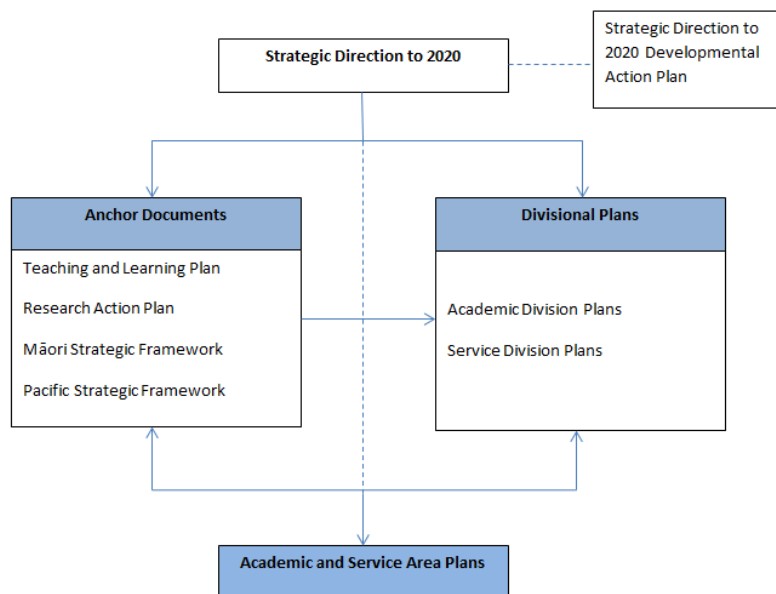[1] See Appendix A: Quality Advancement Cycle for Teaching and Learning

Staff, Student and Other Stakeholder Input Processes	That facilitate staff, student and stakeholder participation and input into teaching developments and programme delivery
Course Advising	That provides students with advice about programme options, entry requirements and career opportunities
Programme Development and Approval Processes	That support the University's teaching and learning priorities and meet the protocols set down by Universities New Zealand's Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP)
Infrastructure and Information Support Services	That support the delivery of teaching and learning and other core activities
Student Learning Support Services	That provide opportunities for students to access appropriate learning support including specialised support services for priority groups
Staff Performance Development and Review	That provide clear performance pathways and opportunities for academic and general staff to develop and extend their academic, administrative, technical and leadership capabilities
Student and Graduate Feedback Processes	That provide feedback on papers and individual teaching as well as on the overall quality of students' academic experience
Departmental, Administrative and Programme Reviews	That support the University's strategic direction and promote continuous improvement in teaching and learning and other core activities
Benchmarking	That leads to improved practices and performance
Accreditations	That provide quality assurance to professional bodies and other external agencies
Academic Audit	That ensures the University's overall quality assurance procedures are adequate and actually being carried out, in line with protocols set down by the Academic Quality Agency (AQA) for NZ Universities.

The elements of the *Quality Advancement Framework for Teaching and Learning* are described in more detail below:

A Planning Framework

The University of Otago's planning framework comprises a cascading series of linked plans and documents in which its lead strategic document, *Strategic Direction to 2020* provides a focus and structure for other key University plans and documents. The planning framework consists of:

- The <u>lead strategic document</u>, *Strategic Direction to 2020,* which identifies seven strategic imperatives that each address a critical issue or area regarded as vital to the University's future. *Strategic Direction to 2020* is supported by a *Strategic Direction to 2020 Developmental Action Plan* (in development), which concentrates on new initiatives. High-level monitoring for *Strategic Direction to 2020* occurs via the *Statement of Objectives*, which outlines key points of focus for each of the seven strategic imperatives and confirms the key performance indicators against which progress in respect of these will be measured. Progress is reported in the *Statement of Service Performance* in the University's *Annual Report.* The University's commitment to and planning for teaching and learning is most directly informed by the 'Excellence in Teaching' strategic imperative
- <u>Anchor documents</u>, which are whole-of-University plans or frameworks, each of which focuses on a critical area of strategic importance (for example, the *Teaching and Learning Plan*). These documents provide guidance to the academic and service divisions in the development of their own plans
- <u>Divisional Plans</u>, which are framed by *Strategic Direction to 2020* and informed by the anchor documents, and that outline and focus attention on divisional goals and priorities
- <u>Academic and Service Area Plans</u>, which are framed by divisional plans (where appropriate), informed by *Strategic Direction to 2020* and the anchor documents, and focus on key activities and priorities within schools, faculties, departments and administrative areas.

The Planning and Funding Office facilitates planning within the University and meets the University's key obligations in reporting information to government agencies for planning, funding and statistical purposes.

A Resource Allocation System

The University's resource allocation system supports implementation of the University's strategic imperatives by ensuring close alignment between the provision of resources and the University's strategic priorities, providing capacity for strategic investment, and allocating funds in the form of budgets for all operating and capital expenditure to every Cost Centre. The Financial Services Division manages the associated processes.

A Policy Framework

The aim of the Policy Framework is to ensure that the University has a comprehensive set of policies, procedures, guidelines and codes of practice which:

- meet the University's administrative and compliance needs
- are consistent and integrated with each other
- are practical and easy to implement
- are appropriately approved and reviewed.

The Policy Framework sets out a procedure for policy development, approval, review and amendment. It is complemented by an overarching Policy Library on the University website, which contains the official version of all statutes, regulations, policies, procedures, guidelines and codes of conduct applicable to the University as well as the Council Delegations Schedule and other resources for staff responsible for drafting and reviewing policy documentation. Dissemination and communication of information about University policies and procedures is supported by the Academic Leadership Development Programme, which includes amongst its offering the Key Policy Series that provides information about 'need to know' topics on policy, guidelines and organisational structure. The Registrar and Secretary to Council, supported by a Policy Management Group, is responsible for oversight of the Policy Framework.

Pedagogical Research

The University is committed to ensuring teaching developments and programme delivery is informed by current research into teaching and learning.[2] It recognises the importance of sustaining a strong research-teaching link informed by both discipline-based scholarship and by contemporary research into teaching and learning. The Higher Development Centre's (HEDC) service commitment includes leadership in research, academic development and teaching in the field of higher education and it has a key role to play in supporting the integration of evidence-based research into teaching and learning practice through its professional development programme, contributions to the Academic Leadership Development Programme, HEDC seminars, Quality Forums and other relevant interactions. HEDC also offers several degree pathways that explore the theory and practice of tertiary teaching and learning and require participants to inquire into and reflect on their own teaching practice. The University Teaching Development (UTD) Grants, CALT Awards for Enhancing Teaching and Learning with Technology, and Quality Improvement Grants are internal funding sources that are available to facilitate relevant research-informed innovation. The University has also recently launched Poutama Ara Rau as an Otago Research Theme. Poutama Ara Rau will develop and encourage translational Māori-related ako (Māori learning and teaching)

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[2] See *Strategic Direction to 2020*, 'Excellence in Teaching' imperative p.6.

research grounded in mātauranga (Māori knowledge) and Māori pedagogies with the overarching goal of improving Māori learner success in tertiary studies.

Staff, Student and Other Stakeholder Input Processes
Staff participate and provide input into teaching and learning planning and policy formation through representation on key academic committees such as Senate, Board of Undergraduate Studies (BUGS), Board of Graduate Studies (BoGS), the Committee for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching (CALT), academic divisional boards and through membership of specially constituted working parties or groups established to consider a particular aspect of teaching and learning. Staff representatives on these committees facilitate consultation on teaching and learning initiatives and the dissemination of new or revised policies and procedures at their local level. In addition, the opportunity for staff to provide input is built into other internal quality processes such as those for programme development and approval, and academic, administrative and programme review. The Academic Committees Office ensures appointments of both staff and students to Senate and its committees.

Students, similarly, have the opportunity to provide input into teaching and learning planning and policy formation through their representation on the aforementioned key academic committees. Students also have the opportunity to participate in and/or provide feedback on their teaching and learning experiences through the Class Representative System co-ordinated by OUSA, as well as through the various monitoring and feedback processes the University has in place at both the institutional and local level (for example, the Student Opinion Survey). In addition, a Memorandum of Understanding between the University and OUSA establishes formal avenues through which students can provide comment to the Vice-Chancellor and the senior executive on teaching and learning issues.

Opportunities for other stakeholders (e.g., employers, industry and professional groups) to provide input into teaching and learning related matters is built into a range of internal quality processes such as departmental, administrative and programme reviews and school/departmental-level and programme-level advisory boards, as well as through externally led processes such as accreditations, Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) approval processes and Academic Audit.

Course Advising
The University offers a range of course advice services designed to provide students with information and guidance about programme options, entry requirements and career opportunities. These services are outlined on the Course Advice at Otago website and delivered by the University Course Advice Service, Divisional and Departmental Course Advisers, and the Schools' Liaison Team (for high school students). The University Course Advice Service, part of the Admissions, Enrolment and University Information Centre section within Academic Services, operates as a first point of contact regarding course advice at Otago and as a link to expert staff in academic departments and divisions. Information about specific jobs and employers and careers advice and counselling is provided through the Careers Development Centre.

Programme Development and Approval Processes
A robust process (and suite of resources) for the development and approval of new academic programmes, major subjects and endorsements, minor subjects and all the underpinning papers, supports the University's teaching and learning priorities and complies with the requirements of the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP). It encompasses:

- *Concept development* – the academic staff member or team initiating a new proposal, prepares an Indicative Proposal, which outlines the initial design and consultation processes, taking into account sustainability and resourcing issues. Appropriate departmental and divisional committee approvals are obtained and the University's Planning and Funding Office completes a strategic assessment, which considers alignment with the strategic direction of the University, the Government's strategic priorities for tertiary education and the likelihood of the programme attracting funding. The Deputy Vice-Chancellors' and Pro-Vice-Chancellors' Advisory Group and other key University boards consider the Indicative Proposal (and accompanying strategic assessment) and if accepted by these groups the proposal may proceed to full development.
- *Programme development and approval* – A fully developed proposal is considered by the relevant academic divisional board and university boards. Only after the necessary internal University approvals are obtained is the proposal submitted to CUAP. All new proposals are expected to demonstrate that a range of items have been taken into account including: purpose, strategic relevance, evidence of demand, acceptability to stakeholders, programme goals and aims, anticipated attributes and skills of graduates, teaching and delivery methods, student workload and assessment, resources and monitoring of quality. Following recommendations by CUAP, Universities New Zealand gives conditional qualification approval, and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) gives funding approval.
- *Programme monitoring and confirmation of approval* – CUAP requires a formal follow-up review of all successful proposals, normally within three years of the graduation of the first cohort. This process, known as Graduating Year Review (GYR), is intended to assure CUAP that a new programme is meeting its original aims and objectives and an acceptable standard of delivery. GYR is the final stage in confirming approval of a new programme. The University, has established an internal process to support GYR requirements as follows:
  - Once a new programme is conditionally approved by CUAP, Departments are required to provide an Annual Programme Report for each year up until and including the GYR year. The Annual Programme Report is used to track and monitor implementation of the new programme and to gather evidence for the GYR. The Annual Programme Report is considered by the relevant academic divisional board and then by either the Board of Undergraduate Studies (BUGS) or the Board of Graduate Studies (BoGs).
  - At the appropriate time, a panel is established and a formal GYR is undertaken for each new programme, the outcome of which is the production of a GYR report. Each GYR report is scrutinised internally by the relevant academic divisional board and central boards (BUGS or BoGS and Senate) before submission to CUAP. Once the GYR report has been accepted by CUAP, and if the programme is continuing, the academic division/department's usual monitoring processes, in conjunction with the University's cycle of departmental and programme reviews are used to ensure the content, structure and delivery of the programme remains relevant and viable.

The Academic Committees Office manages the approval process and supporting suite of resources for academic proposals and the Quality Advancement Unit provides administrative support to the internal GYR panels.

Infrastructure and Information Support

The University is committed to ensuring that the University's information resources and teaching and learning spaces and facilities are appropriate for teaching and learning

needs. The University's library network consists of nine service points which support teaching and learning activities by acquiring and providing access to high quality information resources that are aligned to the University's academic programmes. Information Technology Services (ITS) is the central IT Division of the University and its role encompasses the provision of efficient and effective information communication and technology services that support the delivery of teaching and learning. Within ITS, Teaching and Learning Facilities provide facilities and equipment services and support for the University's teaching spaces (such as the pool lecture theatres) and specific systems and services (such as Blackboard, and audio and video conferencing). Space provision is managed through Property Services with much of the day-to-day management of teaching and learning spaces co-ordinated by the relevant division in conjunction with Property Services.

Student Learning Support Services

The University offers an extensive range of learning support services to enhance the learning, research, scholarship and creative work of its students, and to develop the skills required for academic success at the University. Students have access to enquiry and consultation services, generic workshops and targeted and embedded learning opportunities some of which are specifically tailored to support the University's strategic goal of increasing proportions of particular types of students (notably high-calibre research degree postgraduates, Māori and Pacific peoples and international students)[3]. This support includes those services available to all students through the University Library Network, HEDC's Student Learning Centre and ITS as well as the specialised services offered through the Māori Centre – Te Huka Mātauraka, the Pacific Islands Centre, the International Office, Disability Information and Support, and the Graduate Research School. The academic divisions also provide discipline-specific learning support to particular groups of students as appropriate (for example, the Māori Health Workforce Development Unit supports the achievement of Māori students through several tailored programmes).

Staff Performance Development and Review

The University expects all academic staff members (including teaching fellows and professional practice fellows) with agreements lasting for one year or longer to have their performance reviewed regularly, with appropriate staff development initiatives put in place. The progression and promotion processes applied are dependent on position. For academic staff the processes include confirmation, academic promotion and annual or biennial reviews of staff performance that may result in salary movement and serve a scholarship development purpose. All general staff engage in an annual performance and development review (PDR) process whereby job performance is reviewed and goals are set for future training and development. The Human Resources (HR) Division manages these processes.

The induction of new staff is facilitated through RedCarpet, the University's Onboarding system managed by HR, which helps a new employee to integrate quickly into the University environment. The scholarly and professional development of staff is supported through leadership, professional and academic skills development programmes, workshops and forums. HEDC is the primary provider of professional and academic skills development services. These include specially tailored programmes for particular groups such as new academics, supervisors, and tutors and demonstrators. HEDC services include a suite of questionnaires that staff can use to gather feedback from students or colleagues about aspects of their teaching and papers and to provide

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[3] See *Strategic Direction to 2020*, 'Excellence in Teaching' imperative, p.6.

an evidence-based account of their development and achievement as a teacher. The Academic Leadership Development Programme (ALDP) based within HR focuses on fostering excellence in academic and administrative leadership with a particular emphasis being placed on supporting new Heads of Department as they take up the role. The University's Teaching Excellence Awards co-ordinated by HEDC recognise and celebrate excellence in teaching.

Student and Graduate Feedback Processes
The University is committed to ensuring the insights provided by our students and recent graduates inform teaching developments and programme delivery[4]. Students provide feedback on their learning and teaching experiences in a variety of ways. HEDC manages the University's Paper and Teacher Evaluation services, which provide feedback on different aspects of a student's teaching and learning experience in a paper or programme. The Quality Advancement Unit (QAU) conducts three core institutional surveys: the annual Student Opinion Survey (SOS), which obtains feedback from current students on the quality of students' overall academic experience; the annual Graduate Opinion Survey (GOS), which obtains feedback from recent graduates on the quality of their overall academic experience; and the annual College Residents Survey (CRS) which gathers feedback on the learning, social and physical environment experienced by College residents, usually in their first year of University study. The QAU also manages the internal departmental, programme and administrative review processes, which invite student feedback in the form of submissions and meetings with review panels. Specific feedback from Otago's international students is obtained through the biennial International Student Barometer (ISB), co-ordinated through the International Office, which tracks and compares the international student experience of Otago students with that of international students at participating universities worldwide. Departments, schools and service divisions also use the Class Representative System and other mechanisms such as customised surveys and focus groups to obtain student feedback on their academic or service experiences.

Departmental Administrative and Programme Reviews
The University's strategic and operational planning is supported by reviews of academic departments, programmes and administrative areas, which focus on the goals, objectives and activities of the area being reviewed in the context of departmental/area, divisional and strategic priorities. These formal reviews, which have an enhancement focus, seek to ensure that each aspect of the University's operations is evaluated at least once every ten years. The review process involves self-reflection, engagement with stakeholders and internal and external peer assessment. Each review leads to recommendations for improvement. The head of the department or area reviewed and the relevant divisional head are expected to consider and implement the recommendations, and provide a status report back to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) on progress towards implementation at one year and two years after the review report is released. At four years a 'Mid-Cycle Assessment' occurs to determine if an earlier review (than the maximum period of 10 years) is required. The QAU manages the University's departmental, administrative and programme review processes.

Benchmarking
Benchmarking as an explicit and structured process of searching for those practices which lead to excellent performance, the observation and exchange of information about those practices, and the adaptation or implementation of those practices, is an emerging

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[4] See *Strategic Direction to 2020*, 'Excellence in Teaching' imperative, p.6.

area of interest and discussion at the University. Existing indirect benchmarking activities include using external examiners or assessors/moderators for 400-level and postgraduate papers, having external members on departmental and programme review panels, and using survey data derived from the Student Opinion Survey and Graduate Opinion Survey instruments to highlight differences in the academic experience of our graduates and students across disciplines. Membership of the Matariki Network of Universities (MNU), which links the University of Otago with a small group of similar institutions offers the potential for deeper and more structured benchmarking engagement (for example library staff from across MNU member institutions are carrying out comparisons of selected services and activities to identify best practice and learn from each other). To develop and/or enhance collaborations the University offers the University of Otago Matariki Network of Universities (MNU) Travel Awards. The University's MNU relationship is managed through the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (External Engagement).

Accreditations
In addition to being evaluated as part of the University's ongoing cycle of reviews - and complying with CUAP accreditation requirements - many professional schools and programmes are subject to other external accreditation activities. Accreditation often enables graduates to enter a profession and, in many cases, allows graduates to gain professional recognition of their qualifications in other countries. This process provides these schools and programmes with an opportunity to re-confirm that their core activities are meeting the expectations of professional bodies and other stakeholders. Accreditation processes are managed at the local level by the relevant division, school or department.

Academic Audit
The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA) is responsible for carrying out audits of the processes in New Zealand universities, which underpin academic quality. AQA audits occur on a five-yearly cycle and each cycle has a different focus (for example Cycle 5 is framed around academic activities relating to teaching, learning and student support). Academic audit reports are public documents and the University is required to address audit recommendations and report on implementation. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) supported by the Quality Advancement Unit manages the relationship with the AQA and preparations for Academic Audit.

Approved by the Quality Advancement Committee
19 April 2016

Quality Advancement Cycle for Teaching and Learning

Planning

Implementation

Monitoring and Evaluation

Enhancement

Planning framework
Resource allocation system
Policy framework
Pedagogical research
Staff, student and other stakeholder input processes
Course advising
Programme development and approval processes

Monitoring and evaluation leads to enhancement of our teaching and learning processes and activities and informs future planning.

Infrastructure and information support services
Student learning support services

Staff performance development and review
Student feedback processes
Departmental, administrative and programme reviews
Benchmarking
Accreditations
Academic audit