



REVIEW OF POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES IN SCIENCES

20-22 OCTOBER 2026

Written submissions to be received by: Tuesday 6 October 2026

As part of the University's quality assurance programme a Panel has been convened to review, evaluate and report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) on matters pertaining to Postgraduate Programmes in Sciences.

Convenor: Professor Shelley Griffiths, Faculty of Law
University of Otago | Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka

Panel Members:

International / Graduate: Tuamelie Laimani, Queen Solate College, Tonga
Internal: Professor Neil Carr, Department of Tourism
External: Dr Brett Smith, University of Waikato | Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato
External: Tira Phillipson-Puna, AUT | Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau
Secretary: [Dr Meg Gollop](#), Quality Advancement Unit

Scroll down for the Reviews Framework and Terms of Reference below.

Written submissions

Interested parties are invited to make submissions relevant to the Terms of Reference to the Review Panel. The University wants its reviews to be based on all relevant information and accordingly assures you that submissions are treated in the strictest confidence.

Such submissions should be sent to the Review Secretary, [Dr Meg Gollop](#), by **Tuesday 6 October**. Emails (PDF format preferred) should be marked "Confidential: Submission for the Review of Postgraduate Programmes in Sciences."

Oral submissions

Interested parties are invited to make oral submissions relevant to the Terms of Reference to the Review Panel. Please contact the [Review Secretary](#).

Framework

A review is an opportunity to critically analyse the goals and objectives of a Programme and to receive affirmation that current plans and priorities will have long term benefits for students and staff, and to ensure that Programme's strategy is aligned with University strategy. It is designed to help the area being reviewed plan its future direction, set strategic goals and identify the challenges it will face.

The key part of the review is the Self Review, in which the Programme is expected to address the following questions in the context of the Terms of Reference:

Current State

- What is the current situation of the Programme?
- What does the Programme do well?
- How does the Programme contribute to the wider goals of the Division(s) (and School when applicable) of which it is a part?
- How do the activities of the Programme support the University in the delivery of its strategic goals, as outlined in *Vision 2040*, *Pae Tata*, and in the University's *Māori Strategic Framework*, *Pacific Strategic Framework*, and *Sustainability Strategic Framework*?

Future State

- Where does the Programme want to be in five to ten years time?
- What does the Programme need to do to get there?
- What challenges face the future development of the Programme?
- What changes might be required to strengthen the Programme's contribution to University and Divisional goals and priorities?
- What can the University and Division(s) do to support the Programme to achieve its goals?

Alignment with the University's Strategic Imperatives

The core activities of university programmes are grouped under four broad headings: (1) Programme objectives, (2) Curriculum design, teaching quality and student support, (3) External Engagement and (4) Organisational Resources, which in turn are aligned to the University's Strategic Imperatives from *Vision 2040*.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this review is to undertake a critical, forward-looking evaluation of all Postgraduate offerings in the Division of Sciences, with particular emphasis on our Master of Science (Coursework) (MSc(Coursework)) and Master of Science (Applied) (MSc(Applied))*.

The review will assess program structure, core papers, governance arrangements, sustainability, and strategic alignment of these degrees with the Division of Sciences and the University of Otago strategic plans, namely Vision 2040 and Pae Tata, to inform future planning, innovation, and investment.

The review is intended to affirm what is working well, and identify areas for improvement, for the successful delivery of the Master of Science (Coursework) and Master of Science (Applied) programmes.

2. Scope

The primary focus of this review will cover all Master of Science(Applied) and Master of Science(Coursework) degrees in the Division of Sciences. However, these should be considered in the wider context of postgraduate offerings within the Division of Sciences i.e. Masters of Science(Thesis)*, Postgraduate Diploma in Science, Postgraduate Certificate in Science and Bachelor of Science(Honours). The Division of Science also offers named masters and postgraduate diplomas although, these are subject to accreditation standards, they must still comply with the University requirements.

The scope covers programme design, core paper curriculum and assessment, pedagogy, staffing, student support, administration (including admissions), marketing, external engagement, and future development.

3. Review Objectives

The review will provide a strategic, evidence-informed assessment of the MSc(Coursework) and MSc(Applied) degrees, in order to support clear decision making, prioritisation, and future investment over the next five to ten years. Specifically, the review is designed to:

- Review current curriculum design, teaching, learning, and assessment to evaluate alignment with high quality, coherent, and engaging learning journeys for Master of Science(Coursework) and Master of Science(Applied) students, to ensure pedagogical excellence, innovation, work integrated learning and the use of digital technologies;
- Evaluate programme alignment with the University of Otago's strategic priorities, including Pae Tata, Vision 2040, and associated Māori, Pacific, and Tī Kōuka: The Sustainability strategic frameworks, and identify where programmes can more strongly contribute to these priorities; including the extent to which these priorities are embedded within core papers, and graduate profiles;
- Assess the attractiveness for students, and employers, but also the viability, and long-term sustainability of the Master of Science(Coursework) and Master of Science(Applied) degrees, including governance and staffing models, resourcing, enrolment patterns, and anticipated future demand;

- Evaluate how effectively programmes respond to the needs and expectations of current and future students, including domestic, international, Māori, Pacific, and diverse learner cohorts, and to the expectations of employers, industries, and wider communities;
- Identify opportunities for innovation, work integrated learning, and student support, informed by national and international trends and comparable practice in postgraduate education, including how the Master of Science(Coursework) and Master of Science(Applied) offerings align with, or differentiate themselves from, these trends, and opportunities.

4. Key Review Questions

1. Purpose, Quality, and Distinctiveness

Do the Master of Science(Coursework) and Master of Science(Applied) provide innovative, viable and attractive programmes which meet their respective graduate attributes, and honour Te Tiriti?

2. Strategic Alignment and Contribution

How well do programmes align with and contribute to the University of Otago's strategic priorities (including Pae Tata, Vision 2040, and Māori, Pacific, and Tī Kōuka: The Sustainability frameworks)? Is this alignment reflected in core papers, and graduate outcomes? and where are there opportunities to strengthen this through the Master of Science(Coursework) and Master of Science(Applied) degrees?

3. Demand, Viability, and Sustainability

How attractive and sustainable are the Master of Science(Coursework) and Master of Science(Applied) for the next 5-10 years? What dependencies and vulnerabilities exist with the programme structures, core papers, space, staff workload, succession planning, resources and admissions processes?

4. Future Direction

How effectively do Master of Science(Coursework) and Master of Science(Applied) degrees meet the needs of students, employers, and communities over the next 5-10 years?, and what opportunities exist for innovation, enhancing work integrated learning, supporting tauira Māori and Pacific students, new major and/or core paper development in response to national and international trends?

*Master of Science(Applied) (MSc(Applied)) is currently named Masters of Applied Science (MAppSc)

*Master of Science (Thesis) (MSc(Thesis)) is currently named Master of Science (MSc)