

chapter one
the Master Plan context



1.1 The University of Otago

The University of Otago is New Zealand's first University, having been established in 1869 by Dunedin's early Scottish settlers, who held a strong belief in the value of education. Today the University has established facilities in five of New Zealand's major cities – the main campus in Dunedin, the University of Otago Christchurch, the University of Otago Wellington, the College of Education campus in Invercargill and the Auckland Centre. In addition it has an extensive network of facilities across the country, in local hospitals, research stations and the like, and of students and staff on placements and assignments throughout the country.

Otago has approximately 22,000 students and the equivalent of 4,000 full time staff. In Dunedin, the University population comprises about 20% of the population of the city. Students are drawn to Dunedin to study from all over New Zealand and from abroad - more than 80 per cent of students at the Dunedin campus come from outside the city.

The University offers approximately 190 programmes across its four Divisions – Commerce, Health Sciences, Humanities, and Sciences. It is one of only two universities in New Zealand with a Faculty of Medicine and a number of its courses, such as Dentistry, are unique. The University also offers a Foundation Year programme for students preparing for entry to the University.

The University is proud of its reputation as “New Zealand's most research-intensive University,¹” and its position as the top-ranked University in New Zealand for research quality ². Otago has been ranked first in more subjects than any other New Zealand institution, including Biomedical, Clinical Medicine, Earth Sciences, Economics, Education, English Language and Literature, History and Classics, Law, Philosophy, Psychology, Public Health, Religious Studies and Theology, and Sport and Exercise Science.

The University offers more than 120 postgraduate programmes across all its disciplines, from one-year postgraduate diplomas to extended research degrees. In 2009 more than 4,000 of its 22,000 students were studying at postgraduate level. With more than 1,100 PhD students enrolled, the University has the highest proportion of postgraduate research students of any New Zealand University.

¹ Ministry of Research, Science and Technology. Research and Development in New Zealand. (Wellington, 2006)

² Tertiary Education Commission. PBRF Quality Evaluation 2006. (Wellington, 2007)

1.2 Strategic Imperatives

A University Master Plan should be more than a “road map” to inform the location and nature of new buildings. It should provide guidance on how the campus and the built environment can be developed to support the attainment of the University’s strategic objectives.

For the University of Otago, these objectives are expressed in its Strategic Direction to 2012 manifesto in the form of six Strategic Imperatives. The Strategic Master Plan Brief, which in turn identifies the objectives for the Master Plan, has been based on these six Imperatives. While a detailed summary of the Master Plan Brief is provided as an appendix to this report, the following is a summary of key “success factors” in that Brief that the Master Plan seeks to support.

Achieving Research Excellence

- The ability of the University to attract and retain world-class researchers
- The quality and availability of accommodation, both professional and personal
- The attractiveness of Dunedin as a destination for staff and students
- A culture of collegiality, support and collaboration

Achieving Excellence in Research-Informed Teaching

- A learning environment focused on debate, discussion and interaction of teachers and students
- Visibility of research in the undergraduate teaching environment
- Support, encouragement and promotion of innovation in teaching with appropriate infrastructure and training
- Integration of “e-learning” with mainstream teaching
- The ‘Postgraduate Experience’ to attract and retain the next generation of teachers from the ranks of undergraduates – facilities, accommodation, integration, support, collegiality, opportunity, visibility

Ensuring Outstanding Campus Environments and Student Experience

- Achievement of a cohesive urban, architectural and landscape language of built and open space for the campus that reflects the history and culture of the University and expresses its mission, diverse vitality and collegiality.
- The “Otago experience” for students and staff as both positive and desirable
- An attractive campus environment, noted for its

beauty and popular appeal

- On-campus activity and vitality over extended hours (nights and on week-ends)
- Support for group / peer based learning
- Socialisation of the campus through the nature, location, quality and accessibility of facilities and services, including child care.
- Recognition of the value of open space and its interconnection to enhance the uniqueness of the campus
- Reconciliation of the cultural and physical landscapes to reinforce authenticity

Contributing to the National Good and International Progress

- A national exemplar in corporate, social and environmental sustainability
- A national exemplar in tertiary education
- Integration and celebration of Māori and Pacific communities
- An international profile as a destination of choice for high-calibre students and staff
- Linkages with developing countries
- Strengthening External Engagement
- Integration of campus planning and management with that of the city
- Support for the University’s role in sponsoring, promoting, and generating innovation and entrepreneurial activity in the city

Contribution to the vitality of the city through:

- on campus activities and events
- use of University facilities
- use of city facilities and resources by the University

Building and Sustaining Capability

- A cohesive, engaged, committed and loyal University community
- A culture of enquiry, constructive debate and innovation
- Inter-disciplinary collaboration and interaction
- Integrated people, process and place strategies
- Efficiency in the utilisation of space, equipment and resources
- Assurance of the integrity of the Master Plan over time in terms of both relevance and application

1.3 The drivers of change

There are a number of issues that will have significant impact on the evolution of universities over the next 25 years. Some are general in nature; others are specific to the Australian / New Zealand context.

- Advances in information technology will greatly increase the ability of academics, researchers and students to source and analyse information rapidly, increasing the emphasis on interpretation and application of those data.
- Advances in communications technology will facilitate connectivity between remote locations, collaboration across national and international boundaries and interactive partnerships between geographically distinct institutions.
- Technology will also continue to affect the learning expectations and abilities of students, who have already become accustomed to ubiquitous and spontaneous communication and information flow, and the behavioural traits that this generates, which are distinct from those of previous generations.
- Similarly, a new generation of teachers will want greater choice in pedagogical practice to communicate better with this new student cohort, generating in turn a requirement for new types of teaching and learning environments.
- Course offerings and research themes will continue to become increasingly complex and sophisticated, with traditional disciplines being combined to create rich programmes that draw together expertise from a broad range of sources across and beyond the University community.
- The “globalisation” of the tertiary education and research sectors will increase competition for funding, staff and students but will at the same time open up new opportunities for collaboration.
- Technology will enable more streamlined administrative processes and services delivery.
- Governments will continue to pressure universities to seek more diverse sources of income that reduce the reliance on government funding and increase the commercialisation of the education sector. This will strengthen the need for universities to enter into commercial joint venture and partnership arrangements which in turn will impact on the nature

and location of research that universities undertake.

- Increasing concerns about environmental sustainability will add new pressures on how universities operate in terms of ecological footprint and resource consumption. This is likely to strengthen significantly the need for space utilisation efficiency, challenge traditional operational models and increase the demand for virtual presence as a key means of communication.

The key themes that emerge from these drivers for change are the need for universities to take a proactive approach to pedagogical innovation, to optimise operational flexibility and space utilisation, to adopt a strategic approach to decision-making, and to focus on collaboration and engagement, both internally and externally.

From these themes DEGW has generated a new approach to campus planning: the Learning Landscape. This approach sees the campus as an holistic and integrated environment for teaching, learning and research, connecting formal and informal space as a network, and focusing on discourse and collaboration as the fundamental foundation for the campus experience. While accepting the need for administrative structures, the Learning Landscape seeks to draw together the various disciplines and interests of the University community through the provision of shared or communal spaces, through the provision of a network of professional and social hubs and through an approach to campus planning and circulation that seeks to connect the many constituencies of the University community. Under such an approach, informal collaboration and social spaces hold equal importance with formal teaching and learning spaces, and the vitality and dynamism of the campus is a fundamental priority.

1.4 Planning for growth

A key consideration in structuring the Master Plan has been the quantum of growth that it should accommodate. However, predicting student and staff growth over a 20-year period is impossible to quantify accurately as there are many variables outside the University's control that could affect growth, including changes to Government policy, regional and national demographics, and local and global economic factors.

The Master Plan, however, requires a target for space demand in order to have validity. For the purposes of the Master Plan, the University Executive has agreed to an overall projection of an average 1.5% enrolment growth per annum over the next 25 years. Furthermore, it has been assumed that within this projection:

- Consistent with the University's strategic direction, growth in students will be split 50:50 in volume terms between undergraduate and postgraduate (i.e. postgraduate numbers will increase at a faster rate than undergraduate numbers);
- The ratio of staff to students will be maintained for academic and general staff in academic divisions;
- Research-only staff in academic divisions and staff in non-academic divisions will increase by one percent per annum; and
- Growth in the academic population will also generate growth in administrative and general services staff, albeit at a lower rate, nominally at one quarter of one percent per annum.

Based on these assumptions, the growth the Dunedin campus would be required to accommodate would be an additional 6,900 student EFTS and 500 staff FTE in the academic divisions. Similarly, the Wellington and Christchurch campuses would each be required to accommodate in the region of an additional 400 student EFTS and 40 staff FTE.

1.5 Potential Space Demand

Using the University's current space co-efficients, this increase in population would generate the following demand for additional academic, research and administrative space, assuming that the needs of the current population are fully satisfied:

	Assignable	Gross Floor Area
Dunedin Campus	66,872 sq.m	100,000 sq.m
Wellington Campus	6,081 sq.m	9,200 sq.m
Christchurch Campus	5,630 sq.m	8,500 sq.m

The growth in student numbers will also generate a requirement for additional space for library, informal study space, amenities and administration.

In addition, space will be required for initiatives proposed in this Master Plan such as new amenities, special purpose spaces (e.g. performing arts centre), retail, general administration, replacement of space lost through the demolition of buildings and new accommodation for departments being relocated from existing buildings which are proposed for reassignment to non-academic use.

