



University Teaching Quality

- **How teaching quality is assured**
- **Developing teaching practice**
- **Recognising and rewarding teaching**

March 2018

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Introduction

This paper provides a summary of how teaching quality is assured in New Zealand universities, how staff develop their teaching practice and how good teaching is recognised and rewarded. The paper also explores the nature of teaching in a university setting and how teaching has changed in recent years.

Further information about individual university teaching profiles, policies and quality outcomes are available from the universities' websites.

[Refer to pages 24-26 for sources and links to further information]

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Key facts and stats

- 8 universities = one per 550,000 New Zealanders (in line with international norms)
- 173,900 students: 146,200 domestic and 27,700 international students
- 43,000+ graduates each year
- Home to 70% of New Zealand's researchers (including student researchers)
- University staff were awarded 66% of National Tertiary Teaching Excellence awards over the past five years; universities employ approximately 46% of all academic staff.
- New Zealand's universities contribute up to \$19.95 billion to the regions where they are located and drive between 1.6% and 6.5% of regional GDP.
- The stock of knowledge generated by NZ universities and adopted across the wider economy accounts for around 9% of GDP.

Further facts and stats about New Zealand's universities can be found on the University New Zealand – Te Pōkai Tara website.

Executive Summary

How do we define teaching quality?

Teaching quality is recognised as being multi-faceted. For the purposes of this paper, we define it in broad terms through three interlinked elements adapted from Bigg's 3P model of presage, process and product.¹ These are:

- (a) [presage] the curriculum, expert knowledge, teacher education, teaching skills and practices, and the associated learning environment that combine to...
- (b) [process] maximise student preparation, engagement and academic performance during their studies and lead ultimately to...
- (c) [product] improved life and career outcomes for students after graduation.

Thus, teaching quality deliberately addresses all aspects so that universities are consistently successfully producing graduates with qualifications and skills that are valued by the student and support them in their post-study aspirations.

It is important to note that this definition deliberately allows for different styles of teaching and for different learning models as appropriate to individual student learning styles, and to the learning outcomes sought, and to the needs of the profession or discipline to which the study relates.

Finally, though teaching quality is focussed on supporting individual students successfully through their studies and into successful future lives and careers, the outcomes are necessarily viewed in broader terms of the proportion of graduates that end up in degree-level employment and/or using the skills and knowledge relevant to their qualification.

In New Zealand, universities take an enhancement-led approach to teaching quality consistent with international standards expected of excellent universities. New Zealand universities pay detailed, comprehensive and professional attention to quality at all stages of student progression into, through and out of university, the teaching and support students receive, the learning they achieve, the quality of their programmes and the ongoing profession development of university teaching.

Why is ensuring high quality in teaching important to universities?

Despite high quality teaching being expensive, there are a range of internal and external factors that mean all New Zealand universities are very focused on maintaining and improving teaching quality.

One of the main internal factors driving quality is the commitment to quality teaching by academic staff and the satisfaction derived by teaching and their role in developing students.

¹ Biggs, J.B. "*From theory to practice: a cognitive systems approach*". Higher Education Research and Development 12(1), pp 73-85.

These intrinsic motivations, as well as the challenges of university teaching, have been identified repeatedly internationally in a range of surveys and studies.²

Economic pressures and the New Zealand tertiary education funding environment have also kept New Zealand universities very focussed on quality in teaching.

Over the past two decades, the NZ university business model has become heavily reliant upon increasing student numbers to remain financially viable as costs have risen 53% while per-student funding has only increased by 41%. This has led to significant competition for students. A total of 57% of all university funding comes from teaching; 29% comes directly in the form of tuition fees from domestic and international students and 28% in tuition subsidies for domestic students via the Government.

Universities compete for domestic students with other New Zealand universities. Around 45% of domestic students studying at a New Zealand university came to that university from a different region. For most prospective students, they have more than one choice of institution. Domestic students consistently cite factors such as reputation of the university, the quality of teaching, and quality of the campus environment and student experience as key factors in where they choose to study.

Universities compete for international students with other New Zealand universities and with universities in other countries. International students often consider international rankings when deciding where to study and teaching quality is one element included in those rankings.

Universities use the results of student experience surveys and statistics such as graduate employment rates actively in recruitment of students.

Academic staff are working in a global market place for jobs. They too consider where they want to work based on factors such as international rankings and the reputation of universities for both teaching and research.

Between funding for teaching and funding for research, the New Zealand Government directly provides universities with around half their funding. All of this funding is subject to expectations and reporting around quality of teaching (and research) and education providers being able to demonstrate satisfactory qualification completion rates and good employment outcomes for graduates.

Proxy measures for teaching quality

Because teaching quality can be assessed in a number of ways and has to address a wide mix of presage, process and product factors (see the section above on 'How do we define Teaching Quality'), it does not lend itself to reduction to one or two widely agreed measures.

² Summarised in studies such as [Massey University]: Houston, Don, Meyer, Luanna H., Paewai, Shelly, "Academic Staff Workloads and Job Satisfaction: Expectation and values in academe", Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management, Vol 28, No. 1, March 2006, pp. 17-30.

Instead there are a wide range of proxy measures that are used to infer where an institution probably has an effective quality system in place. These include the results of student satisfaction surveys and statistics around qualification completion and graduate outcomes.

In New Zealand:

- All NZ universities survey students to ascertain satisfaction with their courses, as well as with the wider academic and extra-curricular environment. Results are reported in annual reports and show average satisfaction rates at over 80% (about the same as the average for Australian universities). Note that satisfaction rates have increased at all universities over the past fifteen years.
- All NZ universities survey their international students using the International Student Barometer survey. On average 87% are satisfied with their overall learning experience (in-line with the global average) and 94% are satisfied with the subject area expertise of their teachers.
- All NZ universities report on course and qualification completion rates and New Zealand universities have some of the best qualification completion rates in the world. Average course completion rates are 86% and average cohort-based qualification completion rates are 80% - in line with international norms.
- Only 14% of full-time domestic students who start a qualification at a university in New Zealand do not have a qualification within eight years.³ By comparison, non-completion rates at polytechnics/institutes of technology are 33%.⁴ International comparisons are problematic as different countries track completion rates over different time periods, but reported non-completion rates are 18%⁵ in the UK, 27%⁶ in Australia, 41%⁷ in the US, and around 50–55% in South America and Asia.
- The New Zealand universities have some of the best graduate outcomes in the world. Three years after graduating, 97–98% of university graduates are in employment⁸. For graduates aged 29–38 at the time of the 2013 Census, 88% were in jobs that either needed a specific degree (doctor, teacher, etc) or for which a degree was highly useful (general manager, consultant, policy advisor, etc)⁹. This compares with, for example, the United States, where 33% of graduates are still under-employed ten years after graduation.

³ Education Counts - https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary-education/retention_and_achievement Com.34 cell N20

⁴ Education Counts - https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary-education/retention_and_achievement Com.34 cell N47

⁵ <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/how-student-completion-rates-vary-across-europe>

⁶ Completion Rates of Domestic Bachelor Students – a Cohort Analysis, 2005-2013, Australian Government, Department of Education, Page 4.

⁷ National Centre for Education Statistics, US Department of Education, 2015.

<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=40> Note: Four-year degree completion rates after six years.

⁸ What Young Graduates Earn when they Leave Study, NZ Ministry of Education, May 2013.

⁹ Universities NZ, Graduate Return on Investment Study – unpublished, February 2016.

What are the key factors enabling teaching quality within each of NZ's eight universities?

Though the detail varies as to how each of New Zealand's universities ensure students receive a quality education, there are some common factors across all of them. There is more detail on each of them in the body of this paper;

- All NZ universities have academic quality units and Learning and Teaching committees. These inform development and adoption of everything from online learning platforms through to teacher-training for new academics.
- All NZ universities have expectations in employment contracts or position descriptions for academics concerning teaching competence.
- All NZ universities provide training for academics who are new to teaching. It is mandatory at two universities and strongly encouraged at the other six universities by linking teaching performance to pay increases and promotion. All universities also provide refresher courses.
- All NZ universities formally assess competence in teaching, assessment and curriculum development through regular (typically annual) performance review processes. The assessment of competence relies upon objective (independent) evidence including the results of student evaluations and teaching evaluations.
- Where an academic has teaching responsibilities, and most do, NZ universities require them to demonstrate their competence in teaching, assessment and curriculum development as a condition for promotion.

Nationally, the university system tracks and supports teaching quality through;

- The Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) which ensures that all qualifications have a graduate profile that is likely to lead to good employment and other outcomes, a curriculum that is likely to develop students in line with the graduate profile, and teachers with the skills and qualifications necessary to deliver the curriculum. CUAP requires that graduates and employers are surveyed a year or two after the first cohort of student complete studies in any given qualification to verify that universities have produced graduates with the skills and knowledge specified in the graduate profile.
- The Academic Quality Agency of New Zealand Universities (AQA) which carries out an independent academic audit of each university. The most recent round of audits carried out between 2013 and 2016 included six expectations regarding teaching quality and found that all universities had strong policies, practices and systems to ensure, support and reward high-quality teaching.

What do we mean by “teaching” in a university?

Teaching in a university is a multifaceted, challenging and highly skilled role. Programme and course creation, material development, assessment design, moderation, one-on-one supervision of postgraduate students, laboratory and fieldwork time, for example, are all components of teaching. Within the modern teaching and learning environment, “teaching” can occur in person, online and through other interactions including course and assessment development, large class lecturing, small class tutoring, webinars, podcasts, laboratory supervision, field work, postgraduate research supervision, through email exchanges, online discussion forums, Skype meetings, formal and informal feedback to students.

Research-led teaching

A common characteristic of established quality universities is a strong dual commitment to research *and* teaching. These two activities become connected through the work of academic staff who are both active researchers and skilled at teaching.

In New Zealand, this occurrence is codified under the Education Act 1989 which characterises universities as being institutions in which “their research and teaching are closely interdependent and most of their teaching is done by people who are active in advancing knowledge” (Section 162(4)(a)). Under Section 253B (3) reinforces this requirement, specifying that a bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral degree (or other post-graduate qualification) cannot be awarded unless “taught mainly by people engaged in research”. This section applies to all New Zealand tertiary education organisations.

All eight New Zealand universities have an ongoing commitment to research-led teaching, both in compliance with the Education Act and in accordance with the dominant model and standard expected of good universities around the world. The active commitment of university academic staff to research of national and international standard is assessed through the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF), last completed in 2013 with the next assessment results to be reported in 2018. The PBRF is a contestable fund across the entire tertiary education sector and New Zealand’s eight universities receive approximately 97% of total PBRF funding.

While continuing to improve research performance, the universities have maintained a strong emphasis on quality teaching. But what does teaching in a research-intensive environment look like and what does it mean for students?

- increased student satisfaction - creating a sense of belonging to an institutional and/or disciplinary research culture and developing intellectual curiosity as well as research and communication skills;
- increased student engagement - treating students as co-researchers supports student engagement within and beyond the formal curriculum, furthering knowledge and understanding, and in some cases contributing to the broader discipline;
- supports student employability - with the rise of work-based learning giving students the opportunity to participate and contribute through experiential learning, working as researchers on real world projects;
- builds a community of scholarship, breaking down barriers between students and teaching staff;

- enhanced learning outcomes;
- the opportunity to undertake undergraduate research.

As per the Education Act 1989, the principal aim of universities is to “develop intellectual independence” (Section 162(4)(a)(i)). Fundamentally, it is awareness of, openness to, and increasing capacity for, intellectual curiosity, critical thinking and forms of enquiry that distinguishes what happens within a university teaching and learning environment from other forms of further education.

Research-led teaching is an important component to facilitate these graduate outcomes, demanding well-honed skills and expertise from university academic staff.

The role of an academic

New Zealand’s eight universities collectively employ over 24,000 staff. Approximately 10,000 of these are academic staff and likely to have teaching responsibilities of some form, with the balance in research-only or research support positions or administrative, management or support roles.

A PhD is normally the required entry qualification to employment as an academic and an ongoing commitment to research and service is expected alongside teaching duties.

Academics might be involved in some, or all, of the following:

- design and develop courses and programmes;
- teach courses;
- assess student work and provide feedback;
- meet with students and answer emails, discussion forum questions etc.;
- attend fieldtrips;
- supervise postgraduate research students;
- provide pastoral care for students;
- conduct research;
- engage with industry and employers;
- work with schools;
- attend “Open Days”, orientation activities and other university events;
- sit on academic and administrative committees;
- contribute to industry and government working parties and initiatives;
- write, review and/or edit books, journal articles and conference presentations;
- organise and attend conferences and other professional development;
- apply for and manage research grants;
- mentor other staff;
- provide administrative and academic leadership for a department or school.

As a guide, most academic staff have a 40:40:20 workload split (i.e. 40% teaching, 40% research, 20% administration/service/other). However, this can vary dependent on experience, individual strengths and the needs of the department or school in which they are based.

For example, a new academic staff member might spend more of their time advancing their teaching skills in their first few years while a more experienced colleague might accept a Head of Department leadership role and be relieved of some teaching duties during their appointment, providing mentoring and support to their junior colleagues instead.

In total, there were 10,053 academic staff employed in New Zealand universities in 2015. This equates to 7,171 full-time equivalent staff undertaking teaching responsibilities.

Staff Type Description	Number of staff	Full-time Equivalent
Lecturers	1,410	1,239
Senior lecturers	2,758	2,527
Readers/Associate Professors	1,069	982
Professors	1,196	1,056
Other teaching or combined teaching/research staff	3,620	1,366
Total academic (exc. research-only)	10,053	7,171

Lecturers and senior lecturers make up the biggest grouping, followed by “other teaching or combined teaching/research staff”. This might include tutors, senior tutors, research staff who undertake some teaching duties, and masters and PhD students employed on a proportional basis to undertake some tutoring and demonstrating responsibilities. Around 11% of all academic staff (excluding research-only) are Associate Professors and 11% are Professors.

Most students will be taught by a combination of staff across all levels of this staffing profile. The academic rank of staff assigned to each course or programme will differ depending on the staffing available to the department or school, and the needs of the programme and students.

The changing nature of teaching

Universities, and their academics, have experienced a great deal of change over the past decade. If we reflect on the last 5 – 10 years, examples of significant change that have occurred with implications for individual academic staff with teaching responsibilities include:

- Changes to National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) and University Entrance standards;
- Changes in government funding and fee-setting rules, including recent shifts to prioritise funding for increased numbers of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) students;
- Changes to the diversity of the student body, with differing expectations with respect to teaching and feedback;
- New technologies and software developments reflected in changes in teaching and assessment methods, as well as new challenges to academic integrity;
- New qualifications, courses and programmes;
- Changes in professional body requirements;
- Implementation and upgrades of learning management systems;
- Further development of modern learning environments and teaching spaces;
- Increase in distance, on-line and block-taught delivery;
- Increase in teaching across new campuses, including (in some instances) off-shore;
- Earthquakes (2010 and 2011, in particular);
- Changes to university councils/governance;
- Academic audit, accreditation and programme review report recommendations;

- Internal reviews leading to changes in staffing positions, workloads and expectations;
- Changes to student eligibility for loans and allowances, including the removal of allowances for postgraduate students;
- Increases in pastoral care requirements, including noted increases in need for counselling and mental health services.

Assuring quality

The quality assurance system for New Zealand universities consists of four major components:

1. universities' internal quality assurance processes (including student evaluation processes)
2. programme approval and accreditation processes
3. professional and international body accreditations
4. cyclical quality assurance through academic audit and other reviews.

These four interconnecting elements work within a legislative environment including the Education Act 1989, the Public Finance Act 1989, the Crown Entities Act 2004 and a variety of funding, performance and quality assurance conditions and rules set by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

Programme approval and accreditation

This process begins at the time of the programme approval process. Every time a university proposes to add or significantly amend a qualification it is subject to quality assurance through the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP). As part of this process, universities must provide evidence and confirm that they have the necessary resources to undertake the proposed programme, including the capability and capacity to support sustained delivery of the programme through appropriate academic staffing, teaching facilities, educational and physical resources, and support services.

The CUAP programme approval process is a substantial peer review process in which the interests of students, employers and the ongoing assured quality of the university system are at the heart of deliberations.

All universities are required to participate in the CUAP Graduating Year Review process a year or two after the first graduates have successfully completed the programme and entered the workforce. This involves undertaking a self-review and interviewing graduates and their employers to test that they gained the skills and capabilities detailed in the graduate profile for the qualification. The interviews are carried out by someone not involved in delivery of the qualification.

Results of the graduating year review are reported back to CUAP who can remove approval for universities to offer under-performing qualifications or require them to undergo further reviews in future years where concerns are identified.

CUAP itself is subject to regular review, most recently in 2017.

Further information:

Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP)
Universities New Zealand
www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/aboutus/sc/cuap

Internal university policies, processes and systems

Universities' quality frameworks are built around ensuring quality at all stages of student progression into, through and out of university, the teaching and support students receive, the learning they achieve, and the quality of their programmes. Both internal and external parties are involved to ensure multiple checks on the nature and outcomes of activities and to ensure a university's required commitment to high standards is being maintained.

The design of these frameworks relies on academic staff input and they are typically approved through academic decision-making processes, such as faculty boards, teaching and learning committees, examinations boards, education committees and Academic Board (the key university Committee on matters relating to courses of study, awards, and other academic matters). These individuals and committees are subject to peer review and critique and, at times, robust debate.

Of particular relevance to teaching quality are policies, systems and practices related to:

- Assessment and grading
- Student evaluations.

Assessment and grading

Assessment is critical to a student's learning experience – and to the teaching process – providing an opportunity for both learner and teacher to respond to the information it provides. It is a vital component of universities' assurance of teaching quality.

Universities have processes in place to ensure that assessment is appropriate, fair and equitable. These processes are typically part of a specific assessment strategy or framework, or part of a broader learning and teaching framework in universities.

Universities have regulations that set out principles for assessment, outline the expectations of students and the processes by which grades will be confirmed. In doing so, academics are expected to set assessment tasks that most effectively engage the students and assess the intended learning outcomes of the course.

As part of this, universities have published grading scales to ensure that 'A', 'B', 'C' grades are awarded consistently across different courses and subjects, and across different modes of delivery, teaching teams and campuses. Common marking guides between teaching teams and within departments help ensure consistency in grading.

Academics are responsible for implementing agreed assessment policies and practices of their university. This is overseen by course coordinators, heads of departments/schools and school or faculty boards. Academic committees within universities also discuss matters related to assessment.

Processes for setting and confirming final grades vary from university to university but all have three common elements:

1. Moderation processes (to ensure that all those engaged in marking share the same assumptions about what constitutes an A, B, or C, for example)
2. Board of examiners, or equivalent, for confirming final grades (independent of marking staff)
3. University-wide processes for special consideration, breaches and appeals.

Assessment itself is subject to peer-review in the form of internal pre-moderation of assessment and further scrutiny from examination committees or board.

Assessment and grading practices may also be subject to external review, particularly by professional accreditation bodies, and would be considered in regular, cyclical reviews of programmes or qualifications.

Student evaluation

Seeking feedback on teaching is a critical component of the quality processes of all eight New Zealand universities. All universities have regular formal teaching evaluation policies and processes – now mainly undertaken online – but it is important to remember that student feedback on individual teaching staff can take many forms:

- Feedback directly to teaching staff, course coordinators, heads of departments and Deans throughout the year (verbal, email or otherwise);
- Periodic formal teaching assessments (e.g. generally at mid and/or end points of a semester);
- Research student evaluations of the supervisory environment collected as part of 6-monthly or annual thesis progress reports;
- Ad hoc or regular surveys of teaching and/or broader student satisfaction undertaken by universities across groups of the study body;
- Feedback provided to review and audit panels throughout programme, departmental, accreditation and academic audits;
- Feedback from class representatives, student union representatives and student:staff consultative committees;
- Student membership of academic boards and other teaching and learning-related committees;
- General observations and findings of wrong-doings from grievance and student complaint processes.

Evaluation of teaching quality is also assessed through monitoring of student results during processes such as:

- Moderation;
- Team teaching and shared course facilitation;
- Examination and grading processes;
- Peer observation/review of teaching;
- Student grades and completion data (analysed and benchmarked).

Addressing concerns raised in student feedback is an important component of the quality assurance process and universities have increasingly recognised the need to provide students with an update on change that has occurred as a direct result of feedback provided by students.

Professional and international accreditation

All New Zealand universities participate in relevant national and international professional body accreditation processes, such as those in place for accounting, teaching, medicine, dentistry, social work and engineering.

Several of these are elective, with the universities choosing to bring a greater level of scrutiny to ensure international standards are in place. e.g. 5-yearly review for AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) international accreditation of all New Zealand university business schools.

Academic audit

As part of ensuring national and international standards, New Zealand universities participate in regular independent, quality audits undertaken by the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA). Teaching quality was specifically considered in the latest cycle of academic audits conducted by AQA (Cycle 5, 2013-2016) through the inclusion of six "guideline statements" related to teaching quality against which universities were assessed:

- **6.1 Staff recruitment and induction:** Universities' processes for recruitment and induction should ensure that all teaching staff are appropriately qualified, according to the level(s) at which they will be teaching and that all teaching staff receive assistance to become familiar with their universities' academic expectations.
- **6.2 Research-active staff:** Universities' workload management processes should ensure that degree-level students are taught mainly by staff who are research-active. (Note: this is also a requirement under Section 253B(3)(a) in the Education Act 1989).
- **6.3 Teaching quality:** Universities should use processes for assessing teaching quality and for monitoring and enhancing individual teaching capability of all teaching staff.
- **6.4 Teaching development:** Universities should provide opportunities for staff to develop their teaching practice, including application of contemporary pedagogical research, use of learning management systems and use of new technologies.
- **6.5 Teaching support on other campuses:** Universities should have formal mechanisms to ensure appropriate teaching support is provided for staff in programmes taught on other campuses and/ or with partner institutions, including those which are overseas.
- **6.6 Teaching recognition:** Universities' reward processes (promotion; special awards) should recognize teaching capability.

AQA academic audits are carried out by panels of trained auditors who are selected from universities' senior academic staff and other professionals with knowledge of academic auditing and evaluation. Each panel includes an overseas external auditor. An audit begins with a process of self-review leading to an audit portfolio that the university uses to report on its progress towards achieving the goals and objectives related to the focus of the audit.

The audit panel verifies the portfolio through analysis of supporting evidence, interviews and site visits.

Final audit reports are publicly available. Reports commend good practice and make recommendations intended to assist the university in its own programme of continuous improvement. Where relevant, recommendations are made about teaching quality policies, systems and processes and universities are required to respond to these recommendations. Progress on the recommendations is submitted to the AQA Board in a follow-up report 12 months later. A further report on progress in implementing the recommendations of the previous audit also forms part of the self-review process in the next audit round.

To further support the enhancement of quality across the sector, AQA holds regular meetings with university academic quality staff, an annual "Support for Quality" conference and publishes reports and thematic notes highlighting good practice, trends and areas for improvement across the New Zealand university sector.

In May 2017, AQA published a Thematic Note on "Teaching Quality" summarising findings from Cycle 5 audits, noting that "All New Zealand universities have processes in place for assessing teaching quality... (and) New Zealand universities all utilise evaluations of teaching for development and progression purposes, as well as monitoring and management of risk." Consistent with AQA's enhancement-led approach to quality assurance, areas for continuing discussion and improvement are noted.

Further information:

AQA Thematic Note: Teaching quality
www.aqa.ac.nz/node/261

AQA Cycle 5 academic audits (2013-2016) including teaching quality
www.aqa.ac.nz/cycle5

Supporting quality

Recruitment

A focus on teaching quality begins from the time of appointment of university staff. A commitment to excellence in teaching is included in the job descriptions for all academic positions expected to undertake teaching responsibilities.

All New Zealand universities recruit nationally and internationally, competing against other top universities around the world for the best staff. Being able to pay excellent staff internationally competitive salaries is a constant challenge for New Zealand universities.

It is estimated that over 50% of New Zealand academic staff were born overseas or have spent considerable time as an academic in overseas universities. This profile of recruitment benefits New Zealand universities and their students in many ways:

- Brings in staff with experience (work and/or study) of institutions with which New Zealand universities wish to benchmark their teaching and learning activities;
- Increases diversity in backgrounds, cultures, experiences and ideas;
- Creates connections between institutions around the world.

The majority of university academic staff hold a PhD which ensures a deep subject knowledge, a record of undertaking and being able to speak to original and sustained research, and evidence of personal success at university. Completion of a PhD requires considerable intellectual ability, academic rigour, self-discipline and dedication. Not all PhD graduates will seek a job within a university, but those that do will often have been involved in tutoring, demonstrating or otherwise assisting in teaching aspects within an academic department while undertaking their postgraduate research study.

Professional development

Academic staff have an obligation to maintain and enhance their competencies both in their teaching areas and as educators.

The desired quality and impact of teaching activities are outlined in the standards for each role. Teaching staff are expected to assume responsibility for the quality of their own outcomes, including selecting and applying teaching and/or learning strategies to promote effective learning consistent with individual student learning needs. This is monitored through moderation, course coordinators, heads of department/schools, student evaluations, student grade and completion data, and other forms of evaluation, including annual performance reviews.

All new staff at New Zealand universities are expected to attend university induction programmes which introduce them to that university's expectations, systems and support services. These general induction programmes are supplemented by orientation processes within the department or school in which they are to be based which might vary as relevant to the subject area and kind of teaching undertaken. For example, the skills required for clinical teaching in nursing or medicine differ from those required to lecture undergraduate accounting, which is different again from supervising a PhD student in history.

As previously discussed, most new academic staff in New Zealand universities hold a PhD, some with considerable tutoring or other teaching experience, obtained while working at

another institution or during their studies. In some instances, a Master's degree alongside prior tertiary teaching experience and/or relevant industry experience might be considered acceptable for entrance into the profession.

This standard entry qualification - the PhD - and a framework within each university of standards, procedures, support, professional development and performance management expectations creates an environment dedicated to continuous improvement with teaching strongly linked to content knowledge.

All New Zealand universities provide new academic staff and tutors with access to training and ongoing support. In addition to workshops, seminars and leadership and mentoring programmes, teaching staff may complete formal tertiary teaching qualifications offered by universities across the country. e.g. University of Auckland's Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice; Victoria University of Wellington's Postgraduate Higher Education Learning and Teaching.

For staff with less experience of teaching at tertiary level, universities generally mandate between 12 and 20 weeks of attendance at relevant professional development programmes within their first two years of employment.

New Zealand university academics are also eligible to attend professional development workshops and events offered by Ako Aotearoa (the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence).

Recognising quality

Promotions

All university staff are subject to annual performance review. For academic staff, the criteria for review can vary depending on the kind of role they are employed to fulfil, such as whether they have administrative or leadership responsibilities and whether they are employed on research-only contracts (e.g. as part of a research grant) and what stage they are at in their academic career. Lack of competency in teaching might become the subject of performance management and may lead to termination of employment.

The promotion of academic staff is designed to recognise and reward sustained performance. Within each university this process is underpinned by a promotions policy and access to professional development and support. Promotions are overseen by a Promotions Committee made up of academic staff from across the university whose job it is to review promotion applications and determine whether, on the weight of evidence provided, a promotion is merited.

Academic staff may choose to seek promotion, moving in time along the scale from lecturer to senior lecturer, associate professor or professor (nomenclature might differ from institution to institution and across departments and schools/faculties).

Where staff with teaching responsibilities are seeking promotion, staff must be able to perform at an advanced level at their current grade and demonstrate achievement or ability of a kind appropriate to the grade to which they are seeking promotion. They must provide objective evidence to support their case, including teaching performance evaluations. These

will include student evaluations and data related to student achievement (course completions and grading profiles) and other evidence of commitment to teaching excellence, including the results of peer assessment of teaching competence and participation in relevant training and teaching qualifications. Many universities require that this information be presented in a teaching portfolio or profile maintained on an ongoing basis.

In all eight universities, staff with teaching responsibilities (which might include teaching, supervision, assessment and curriculum development, for example):

- Can expect to have their teaching competence formally and objectively evaluated in periodic (generally annual) performance appraisals, with opportunities for professional development to support continuation;
- Where seeking promotion, will be required to have their teaching competence formally and objectively evaluated e.g. drawing upon student evaluations, student grade and completion data, and other forms of teaching evaluations (e.g. peer-to-peer review). Note, evidence and competence level required may vary dependent on level of promotion sought and individual's workload/emphasis across academic activities, with opportunities for professional development to support continuation.

Information about promotions policies and criteria can generally be found in the Policies or Careers section of a university website.

Rewarding teaching excellence

All New Zealand universities have annual awards designed to recognise and reward teaching excellence. These span disciplines and can apply to teaching staff (or teams) just starting out in their teaching career to recognition of those who have a long, sustained commitment to excellent teaching over their career.

- **University of Auckland "Teaching Excellence Awards":**
<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/staff/learning-and-teaching/teaching-grants-and-awards/university-of-auckland-teaching-excellence-awards.html>
- **AUT "Vice-Chancellor's Awards for Teaching Excellence":**
www.news.aut.ac.nz/news/2016/october/aut-awards-top-accolade-to-global-sports-performance-expert
- **University of Waikato "Faculty Teaching Excellence Awards":**
www.waikato.ac.nz/tdu/programmes/ftea.shtml
- **Massey University "Vice-Chancellor's Teaching Excellence Awards":**
www.massey.ac.nz/massey/staffroom/teaching-and-learning/centres_tl/ctl/grants-awards--fellowships/teaching-awards/vice-chancellors-teaching-excellence-awards/vice-chancellors-teaching-excellence-awards_home.cfm
- **Victoria University of Wellington "Excellence in Teaching Awards":**
www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/initiatives/teaching-awards

- **University of Canterbury “UC Teaching Awards”:**
www.canterbury.ac.nz/academicservices/awards/awards.shtml
- **Lincoln University “Teaching Excellence Awards”:**
<https://tlc.lincoln.ac.nz/teaching-excellence-awards/>
- **University of Otago “Awards for Excellence in Teaching”:**
www.otago.ac.nz/hedc/staff/awards/index.html

National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards

Outstanding individuals from each university might be eligible to go forward to the national annual Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards administered by Ako Aotearoa (the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence). “These awards provide an opportunity for teachers to further their careers, celebrate success and share good practice in teaching.” In recent years, university staff have been awarded two-thirds of the national Tertiary Teaching Excellence awards, while employing approximately 46% of all academic staff and teaching around 41% of tertiary education students.

Further information: <https://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/awards>

What do we know about the quality of NZ university teaching?

Students can have confidence that New Zealand universities ensure their teaching staff have the appropriate expertise and necessary access to training, resources and support. The impact of these processes and systems are reflected in publicly available data that tell a consistent story:

- New Zealand universities’ students are generally highly satisfied with teaching quality. **How do we know?** All universities conduct regular course, teaching and overall evaluations of students’ views of teaching quality. Results included in recent annual reports tell a consistent message of the high levels of satisfaction (>80%) with the quality of teaching received.
- International students are highly satisfied with their New Zealand university learning experience and the expertise of teaching staff. **How do we know?** In addition to the above student evaluations, all universities participate in the International Student Barometer which found that 87% of international students at New Zealand universities were satisfied with their overall learning experience (in line with the global average) and 94% were satisfied with the subject area expertise of lecturers/supervisors.
- New Zealand universities continue to promote strong student achievement. **How do we know?** University student data is used to generate publicly available education performance indicators including course completions and qualification completions. At 86% and 80%, university course and qualification completion rates, respectively, are

above the sector averages for ITPs and Wānanga. Research postgraduate completion rates are continuing to rise.

- New Zealand university staff are award-winning. **How do we know?** Teaching excellence awards are offered within each university and at a national level. Universities continue to be disproportionately successful in the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards, receiving two-thirds of the awards over the past 5 years while employing less than half of academic staff.
- New Zealand universities utilise evaluations of teaching for development and progression purposes, as well as for the monitoring and management of risk. **How do we know?** All New Zealand universities are subject to regular academic audit by an independent body. The reports of AQA audits show universities have and rely on strong policies, practices and systems designed to ensure, support and reward high-quality teaching.
- New Zealand universities are adapting their teaching methods in response to changes in technology. **How do we know?** University programmes and delivery methods are constantly evolving encompassing digitally-mediated teaching, consistent with international practice and student expectations. Results from the International Student Barometer found that 93% of international students were satisfied with the virtual learning environment and online libraries of our universities. Several of our universities are now running internationally popular MOOCs, drawing in thousands of students from around the world.
- New Zealand university academic staff are internationally well-regarded. **How do we know?** New Zealand universities compete to recruit excellent staff from overseas universities, with a comparatively high proportion of international staff as result. Both these and domestic staff are highly sought after, with university academic pay rates reflective of the struggle to keep up with an international marketplace for staff. The regard in which our teaching staff are held is also reflected in the high “academic reputation” scores of New Zealand universities in international ranking.
- New Zealand universities are well-regarded internationally. **How do we know?** While current international ranking systems do not include a teaching quality measurement, the QS ranking methodology is heavily weighted toward academic reputation. New Zealand is the only country in the world to have all its universities in the top 500.

How does New Zealand compare?

New Zealand universities' investment in an enhancement-led approach to teaching quality assurance is like that adopted by many other jurisdictions with whom our university system shares a common history. The employability of our staff and students and high reputation of our institutions attest to its success and a sustained commitment to the national and international standards expected of excellent universities.

The PhD remains the standard entry qualification for academia around the world (with some variation by programme and discipline). New Zealand universities' approach to professional development and credentialisation of tertiary teaching remains broadly consistent with most institutions and university system.

However, an enhancement-led approach means constantly seeking to improve and learning from others. New Zealand universities are not complacent about the need to continue to improve and are aware of changes sought in some countries, and introduced in others, as governments and other stakeholders seek to observe uniform approaches to ensuring teaching competence and desire objective measures of teaching quality.

All New Zealand universities have been reviewing and improving their recruitment processes, performance expectations, professional development provisions and promotions processes over time. Universities have strengthened their requirements of new staff with no prior teaching experience and two universities have been trialling involvement with the Professional Standards Framework administered by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in the United Kingdom. Such programmes remain optional for most individuals within most institutions, even within the UK, but can provide a perceived greater level of transparency of competency and portability of qualifications across the sector. Several Australian universities are also forming a relationship with HEA and exploring other ways of formalising tertiary training across the sector to sit alongside their newly introduced Higher Education Standards.

New Zealand universities are watching closely the results of the introduction of a "Teaching Excellence Framework" (TEF) in the United Kingdom, a new scheme designed to recognise excellent teaching in universities, colleges and other higher education providers. The stated aim is to provide information to help prospective students choose where to study. The TEF was introduced in a pilot form in 2016, with future rounds likely to be linked to institutions' ability to increase tuition fees.

The universities are aware of the current government's interest in developing and adopting frameworks of standards for tertiary teaching and will work with officials, the wider sector and Ako Aotearoa (the National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence) to explore concerns and to develop a proportionate response.

Queries or concerns about teaching quality

Occasional failures of systems and processes do happen and are important to acknowledge. Treating standards seriously means that universities must also acknowledge where processes can, and do, fail and establish how they can be redressed in the immediate term and strengthened in the future.

Information for students

On top of regularly scheduled student evaluation of teaching and courses, all eight universities have policies and procedures to deal with student academic grievances and complaints. These apply if a student believes they have not been well served by the normal academic quality assurance systems and processes, if they wish to appeal an assessment mark for example, or if they believe there is a problem with the quality of teaching.

Students should follow the academic grievances and complaints process of their university. Additional support is generally available for students through their local student associations and class representative positions. Student grievance and complaint policies and processes can be found on university websites:

- **University of Auckland**
Academic Disputes and Complaints
<https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/students/forms-policies-and-guidelines/student-policies-and-guidelines/academic-disputes-and-complaints.html>
- **AUT**
Complaints Process
www.aut.ac.nz/being-a-student/current-undergraduates/academic-information/academic-policies-and-regulations
- **University of Waikato**
Student Complaints Procedures
<https://calendar.waikato.ac.nz/procedures/studentcomplaints.html>
- **Massey University**
Student Complaints and Grievance Procedures
massey.ac.nz/massey/about-massey/calendar/studying-at-massey-university/student-grievance-procedures.cfm
- **Victoria University of Wellington**
Academic Grievance Policy
victoria.ac.nz/students/study/academic-policies
- **University of Canterbury**
How to Raise a Concern
www.canterbury.ac.nz/concerns/

- **Lincoln University**
Policy on Student Complaints, Grievances and Appeals
[https://dotnetrest.lincoln.ac.nz/AjaxSharePointList/cache/LPPdocuments/Student%20Complaints,%20Grievances%20and%20Appeals%20Policy%20\(SSGA\).pdf](https://dotnetrest.lincoln.ac.nz/AjaxSharePointList/cache/LPPdocuments/Student%20Complaints,%20Grievances%20and%20Appeals%20Policy%20(SSGA).pdf)
- **University of Otago**
Student grievances
otago.ac.nz/study/student-grievances.html

Information for staff

The design of university systems and processes for assessment, moderation, grading and other aspects of quality rely heavily on academic staff input. Every academic staff member is responsible for implementing agreed assessment policies and practices of the University.

Where concerns cannot be addressed through the process of applying applicable policies and practices, universities have robust systems and processes for addressing concerns, whether about assessment or other matters.

Universities are subject to the Protected Disclosures (aka “Whistleblowers”) Act and have internal processes to protect and support whistle blowers.

Processes for addressing concerns may vary between universities, including: appeals processes, academic misconduct processes, proctor, mediators and discipline processes. Persons with concerns may be supported by unions (typically TEU or NZUSA) or other supporters. The final point of appeal within universities is the governing body (Council) of the university.

Universities New Zealand complaints process

If a concern or complaint cannot be resolved by the university, persons with concerns or complaints can refer the issue to Universities New Zealand (under Section 253 of the Education Act). Universities New Zealand will investigate and act upon claims that relate to its statutory functions.

The following are examples of the sorts of issues that we can and will investigate:

- Fraudulent awarding of marks or grades to students or awarding of marks or grades that have not been fairly gained by students.
- Failure to follow policy and regulations in making decisions where the intent is to award marks that have not been fairly gained by students.
- A material and deliberate misrepresentation of the level of academic preparedness of students for the course to which they are admitted.
- Receiving money or other gifts in return for award of marks that have not been fairly gained.

However, Universities New Zealand will usually only investigate claims where the individual complaint and appeals processes of the relevant university have been fully exhausted. If your concern or complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved by Universities New Zealand, the matter can be referred to the Office of the Ombudsman.

Further information:

Universities New Zealand Policy on Dealing with Claims of Serious Wrong-Doing Under the Protected Disclosures Act 2000

www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/sites/default/files/uni-nz/UNZ-Policy-Dealing-with-Claims-of-Serious-WrongDoing-PDA-May2017_0.pdf

Universities New Zealand "Make a complaint"

www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/quality-assurance/issues-and-complaints

Complaints can be made by email, phone or by completing a confidential online form:

<https://app.whispli.com/ClaimsofAcademicWrongdoing>

List of acronyms

AQA	Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities
CUAP	Committee on University Academic Programmes
HEA	Higher Education Academy
NCEA	National Certificate of Educational Achievement
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZQF	New Zealand Qualifications Framework
NZUSA	New Zealand Union of Students' Associations
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
UNZ	Universities New Zealand

Sources and links to related information

Key facts and stats

- **2015 Human Resources (Statistics relating to staffing in tertiary education)**
Education Counts
www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary-education/resources
- **2015 Gaining Qualifications (By qualification level and sub-sector)**
Education Counts
www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/tertiary-education/retention_and_achievement

Research-led teaching

- **Performance-Based Research Fund**
Tertiary Education Commission
www.tec.govt.nz/funding/funding-and-performance/funding/fund-finder/performance-based-research-fund/

Assuring quality

- **Committee on University Academic Programmes Handbook**
Universities New Zealand – Te Pūkai Tara
www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/cuap-handbook
- **Report of the 2017 Review of the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP)**
Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities
www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/Review-of-CUAP-2017

Professional and international accreditation

- **IPENZ Engineers New Zealand – Accredited Qualifications**
<https://www.ipenz.nz/home/professional-standards/accredited-qualifications>
- **Education Council New Zealand – Initial Teacher Education Providers**
<https://educationcouncil.org.nz/content/initial-teacher-education-providers>
- **Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand – Recognised qualifications**
<https://www.charteredaccountantsanz.com/become-a-member/entry-requirements/chartered-accountant/recognised-qualifications>
- **Medical school accreditation program and status report**
www.amc.org.au/accreditation/primary-medical-education/schools/status
- **Dental Council - accreditation**
www.dcnz.org.nz/resources-and-publications/education/accreditation/
- **Social Workers Registration Board – New Zealand Recognised Social Work Qualifications**
<http://swrb.govt.nz/for-social-workers/new-registrations/nz-recognised-sw-qualifications/>
- **Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)**
www.aacsb.edu/

Academic audit

- **AQA Thematic Note: Teaching quality**
Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities
www.aqa.ac.nz/node/261
- **AQA Cycle 5 academic audits (2013-2016)** including teaching quality
Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities
www.aqa.ac.nz/cycle5

Rewarding teaching excellence

- **National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards**
Ako Aotearoa
<https://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/awards>

What do we know about the quality of NZ university teaching?

- **Evaluations of students' views of teacher quality**
Individual university annual reports, 2015 Statement of Service Performance data.
- **International student satisfaction**
International Student Barometer (ISB) Summary Report and Sector Presentation 2015 (Universities)
<https://enz.govt.nz/news-and-research/research/international-student-barometer-results-university-and-itep-sectors/>
- **Educational Performance of the Tertiary Education Sector 2015**
Tertiary Education Commission
www.tec.govt.nz/funding/funding-and-performance/performance/teo/
- **Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards**
Ako Aotearoa
<https://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/awards>
- **Cycle 5 academic audit reports**
Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities
www.aqa.ac.nz/cycle5
- **QS World University Rankings**
<https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings>

How does New Zealand compare?

- **Hon. Paul Goldsmith, Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment**
"Speech: Response to the Productivity Commission report on tertiary education" (26 July 2017)
<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/response-productivity-commission-report-tertiary-education>
- **Professional Standards Framework**
Higher Education Academy (UK)
<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/>
- **Higher Education Standards**
Australian Government Department of Education and Training

<https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-standards-panel-hesp-0>

- **Teaching Excellence Framework**
Higher Education Funding Council for England
<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lt/tef/>

Queries or concerns about teaching quality

- **Universities New Zealand**
Have an issue of complaint?
www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/quality-assurance/issues-and-complaints
- **Universities New Zealand**
Policy on Dealing with Claims of Serious Wrong-Doing Under the Protected Disclosures Act 2000
www.universitiesnz.ac.nz/UNZPolicyonDealingwithClaimsofSeriousWrongDoingUnderProtectedDisclosuresAct2000

About Universities New Zealand

Universities New Zealand – Te Pōkai Tara (UNZ) is the representative body for New Zealand’s university sector. Formally known under the Education Act 1989 as the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors’ Committee, UNZ is responsible for the external quality assurance of universities, administers a range of scholarships and represents the universities in the public interest, both nationally and internationally.

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