

ACADEMIC BOARD TE TAUMATA

Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Tuesday, 9 June 2026 at 1.00pm in the Hunter Council Chamber

The meeting was held face-to-face in the Hunter Council Chamber and was convened by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Nic Smith. The meeting was opened with a karakia and everyone was welcomed to the meeting.

PART A

26.22 Apologies, acknowledgements and welcomes

Apologies were taken as read (see Appendix 1).

Farewells to:

- Vice-Chancellor Nic Smith (Item 10)
- Outgoing Head of School for the School of Languages and Cultures, Assoc. Professor Nicola Gilmour.

26.23 Part B of the agenda – items brought forward

No items were brought forward from Part B to Part A.

26.24 Vice-Chancellor oral report

The Vice-Chancellor's oral report was received.

University Funding

- The latest Government budget confirmed that the Fees-Free tertiary education policy will not continue after 2026. The change has been characterised as funding for growth – funding per student is remaining static.
- The Government budget has also enabled tertiary providers to increase fees for domestic students by a maximum of 6%.
- There is a funding review of the sector (including TEC) on the horizon – it is unclear yet what will be covered in this review.
- We have new details about the design of the new Tertiary Research Excellence Fund (TREF), with its components and their proposed weightings revealed:
 - 1. Research Degree Completions: 30%

○ 2. External Research Income:	25%
○ 3. Field-Weighted Citation Measure:	30%
○ 4. Commercialisation:	7.5%
○ 5. Policy Impact:	5%
○ 6. Research Capacity (for tertiary institutions other than universities)	2.5%

- Relatedly, the 2026 Government budget proposes that 2027 funding for international PhD students at all NZ universities be capped at 2024 levels.
 - International PhD students have been treated as domestic students, paying domestic fees, since 2017.
 - The Government is concerned that international students are displacing domestic students at PhD level. The cap is intended to allow the Government to gather and review data to inform a new funding model.
 - Indications from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) are that universities MAY have to inform international PhD students that they may have to pay international fees. Universities NZ is worried that this would be catastrophic for NZ's international student population, and processes are in train for highlighting those concerns with the Minister of Education.

Collaborations

- Progress on the formal collaboration between NZ's eight Universities and its Public Research Organisations (formerly Crown Research Institutes) is developing slowly.
- UNZ is continuing to transition from a full organisation with resources for lobbying etc to a secretariat model.
 - The Chief Executive role is being replaced with a Secretary General, currently under recruitment.
 - The Minister is generally supportive of a move away from CUAP to self-accreditation, and has directed universities to lead the transition as the institutions are best placed to know what is needed.

The floor was opened for comment:

Responding to a question on whether the decision to cap international PhD funding was data informed, the VC replied that it is the Minister's hypothesis that international students are displacing domestic PhD students. This hypothesis is not the view of Education officials. UNZ is looking to clarify. In terms of staging, the bigger risk from this move is to existing and future students. The Government cap on international PhD students, while not ideal, is currently in budget, – the cap itself is not as risky as destabilising an entire cohort of students at all NZ universities.

Provost Bryony James added that this is a topic that is being strenuously lobbied by Neil Quigley at UNZ, and also that Nic's staging is correct: budget forecasts are tracking as we expect them to for 2026, but this move will cause issues in coming years.

26.25 Written Report of DVCs

AB26-31

The March 2026 DVC report was received from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Māori and Kaitiakitanga), Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students).

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Report

Professor Robyn Longhurst spoke to the DVC (A) report which was taken as read.

The Curriculum Enhancement Project

Focus groups will soon be formed to review assessment practices -the next phase of workstream 1. Details about the focus groups are forthcoming.

- A tentative assessment framework will be provided to focus groups as a starting point for discussion.

The Nuku (Canvas) outage

CAD is working with Digital Solutions on a business continuity planning in the event of future disruptions.

- Staff are asked not to create shadow systems – this worsens system security.

Examinations

The mid-year examination period is currently underway, and the Course Administration and Timetabling team have been busy with accommodations following last week's evacuations due to ocean swells on the South coast.

Library

Archives NZ has completed an external audit of VUW records, and Craigie Sinclair and her Information and Records Management Team did very well, with the auditors noting increased "maturity" since the last audit five years ago. Thank you to Craigie and her team.

The floor was opened for comment:

In response to a question, Professor Stephen Marshall, CAD Director, and Leanne Gibson, Chief Information Officer, spoke to the business continuity planning underway in response to the Canvas/Nuku outage. The review encompasses the entire University framework extending to Microsoft Suite and other systems and is not restricted to just Canvas. The network is a series of systems working in concert, and the University is working on a number of capabilities and fallbacks in response to threats to various components.

- The CAD team and Digital Solutions strategy is to identify which parts of the network need to be replicated and stand up under attack, and to shore up those key components, rather than trying to operate a completely parallel Learning Management System.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Māori and Kaitiakitanga Report

Professor Rawinia Higgins spoke to the DVC (Māori and Kaitiakitanga) report, which was taken as read.

- Rawinia noted the recent passing of two professors, both instrumental in the fight for the establishment of Te Herenga Waka marae and mātauranga Māori scholarship in the University:
 - Professor Sir Hirini Moko Mead, the first professor of Māori Studies at Te Herenga Waka
 - Emeritus Professor Whatarangi Winiata, one of the first Māori professors in Aotearoaas well as the passing of Sir Kenneth Keith in May 2026
A minute of silence was held in acknowledgement of these losses.
- Rawinia also acknowledged all those whose efforts and contributions led to making graduation such a success in the first week of June.

The floor was opened, with no comment.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Students Report

Dr Logan Bannister spoke to the DVC (S) report, which was taken as read.

Mauri Ora – Student Health and Counselling

- Mauri Ora have been approved to take International Medical Graduate (IMG) placements as part of a government initiative to expand NZ's pool of General Practitioners.

The floor was opened with no comment.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Report

The DVC (R) report was taken as read with Professor Sally McArthur's apologies – she is currently on a delegation in France, representing VUW for Horizon EU funding – one of the ways the University is diversifying research funding given the uncertainty around government funding.

The floor was opened for comment:

In response to a question about whether the University would supply an official response to MBIE's announcement of the creation of a Transition Research Fund (TRF) in 2027 to replace both the Marsden and Endeavour Funds, given that this is a significant dismantling of investigator-led research in a number of disciplines:

- Nic responded that a critique of the government alone would not be as useful as something that combined that critique with a demonstration of the value of our institution and its research in service of New Zealand and society more broadly. There

is a wider story to be told in the sector to counter the current government's focus on individual, financial and short-term success at the expense of larger aims.

- VUW is prepared to support those staff members who do want to speak out in critique, even in the absence of a formal institution-wide statement.

In response to a question about progress on a policy for teaching buyout, Nic responded that Sally and Rachel Bruce are working through how teaching buyout can be implemented consistently. He noted that current practices vary considerably and do not adequately recognise or incentivise researchers' contributions to teaching and learning. A consultation paper is tentatively expected to be released around August/September 2026.

26.26 Programme amendment requiring CUAP approval

AB26-32

The following programme amendment was **endorsed** by the Academic Board for submission to CUAP:

Faculty	Proposal Title
FHSS	Amend the name of the postgraduate subject 'English' (ENGH) to English Literature (ENGL) and Literary Translation Studies (LITR) to Translation Studies (TNSL)

26.27 Proposals to deliver qualifications with significant contributions from overseas and/or delivered offshore requiring CUAP approval

The following two proposals to deliver qualifications with significant overseas/offshore elements were **endorsed** by the Academic Board for submission to CUAP:

Faculty	Proposal Title	Reference
FHSS	Proposal for offshore delivery agreements with two institutions in Vietnam: HNUE, UFLS- VUW MTESOL	AB26-33

Dr Angela Joe (Associate Dean International FHSS) spoke to this proposal. The delivery agreements under discussion propose to deliver MTESOL as a VUW degree entirely offshore in Vietnam.

- One third of the degree will be taught by VUW directly
- Two thirds will be taught by partners contracted to VUW in Vietnam.
- Moderation and QA will be held by VUW because the MTESOL is a VUW degree.

The floor was opened for comment:

- The Academic VP for VUWSA, followed up on a query raised at Academic Programmes Committee: what provision is being made for VUWSA advocacy for students who are being taught entirely offshore. Angela replied that she is still to follow up with the MTESOL Programme Director, who is currently out of office.
- This is the first time that VUW has proposed offering a fully offshore degree delivered by partner staff teaching on the University's behalf. While this does not arise from a formal Te Hiwa strategy for transnational education, it reflects broader developments across the sector. This proposal has been considered by Te Hiwa as a prudent opportunity to test this mode of delivery in this area before scaling up. Degrees using this delivery model are already being offered at other New Zealand universities.

Faculty	Proposal Title	Reference
FHSS	Proposal to jointly award a qualification with an overseas institution: CUZ-VUW Bachelor of Communication	AB26-34 (APC26-29)

Dr Angela Joe spoke to this proposal. VUW has been delivering the Bachelor of Communication in conjunction with CUZ in China since 2021, working on a 3+1 model wherein VUW and CUZ deliver the Bachelor of Communication together over four years, and those CUZ students who spent all four years in China received a CUZ degree, while the cohort that did a year's exchange in Wellington got a dual CUZ-VUW degree.

Under this new agreement, CUZ is adapting to new policy from the Ministry of Education in China, which requires a 4+0 model for new and renewing agreements of this type – i.e. students will receive the VUW degree and the partner institution degree after four years study in China, without the requirement to do any study in New Zealand. The Chinese cohort are all enrolled in the Asia BC minor, so no parallel minors will be affected.

Separately, VUW will be encouraging students to take an optional study abroad opportunity to come to New Zealand in their second year.

The floor was opened for comments:

In response to a question about ensuring that 4+0 CUZ students in China attained VUW's graduate attributes, Angela noted that as direct engagement with offshore students decreases, robust quality assurance processes become increasingly important. She advised that the Faculty of Architecture and Design Innovation already offers three degrees with a similar model (staff teaching at the Wellington Institute at ZZU are employed by VUW), each supported by established quality assurance processes.

In response to concerns about such a model given the importance placed on Te Herenga Waka as a place-based university, located in Wellington with a marae at its heart, Professor Marco Sonzogni noted that the experience of the degree and the curriculum is wider than the classroom and not limited by place in a strictly physical sense. It also encompasses our values and perspectives, which we bring to a range of locations.

Outside of this specific proposal, there is a larger strategic discussion to be had about the direction of travel in transnational education, and whether the financial benefits fully offset the increase in organisational complexity including the following issues:

- QA accountability (who does QA and who do they answer to?).
- Support for staff who are employed by partners rather than directly by the University.
- How to uphold Treaty of Waitangi obligations in international employment relations.
- How overseas teaching should be valued in applications for promotion.

26.28 Updates to micro-credential rules

AB26-35

The proposed updates to the micro-credential rules in Section 3.9 of the General Programmes of Study Regulations were **approved** by the Academic Board.

26.29 Work-Integrated Learning Hub project

AB26-36

Professor Robyn Longhurst introduced this discussion, noting that the discussion document had been considered by a number of committees, including the Academic Programmes Committee and the Learning and Teaching Committee, and feedback has been incorporated.

The proposed Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) Hub would be based at Pipitea, and comprise a small team of seven new positions working to leverage existing faculty relationships with industry contacts, and the unique opportunities that are only available here in Wellington. A business case is currently in preparation for the consideration of Te Hiwa.

One of the central questions in the formation of the Hub has been determining which responsibilities should sit centrally, and which should remain within faculties. The discussion paper proposes a flexible “hub and spoke” model – the Hub works alongside existing units and services instead of replacing them – and the type and level of support will vary according to services that are already in place, as needs vary widely between disciplines.

The floor was opened for comment with the following points and questions raised:

- A small hub of seven cannot replace or reproduce the depth or quality of existing relationships (including alumni and philanthropy as well as research and industry ties) at School and Faculty level.
 - The aim of the Hub is to build on existing links and relations, aligning approaches throughout the University increasing transparency.
- Where do the resources go? How much to school level, how much to faculty and how much to the Central Hub?
 - It’s important to get the role descriptions for the new positions right, with appropriate student consultation

- How do we protect students from becoming a revolving door of free labour? From VUWSA: Unpaid placements are a huge concern for students, and student loans are not automatically extended to cover internships
 - The bulk of WIL is unpaid, but placements are required to involve valuable/meaningful work with specific learning outcomes, giving students work experience that they can leverage on curricula vitae.
 - VUW currently makes use of an agreement template that contains a learning framework classifying specific activities in a WIL context: an employment relationship between student and partner is governed by an employment contract.
 - A distinction should be drawn between professional practice and in-work learning.
- The current employment climate in Wellington is such that it is hard to place students – there is “placement poverty” in both Health and Education, disciplines with long established WIL elements.
- Like trans-national education agreements, WIL involves a cost in organisational complexity in terms of administration, support and QA.

26.30 An update/follow-up to the work done after Item 5 (AB25-82), concerning the *Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions Motion regarding Palestine* discussed at the Academic Board meetings of September and November 2025.

Professor Nic Smith introduced this item, which was spoken to by Assoc. Professor Eli Elinoff.

Eli has been leading a small working group, discussing ways to build and act on the intent of the Academic Board to “support Palestinian scholars at risk and contribute, where possible, to the recovery and rebuilding of Palestinian universities” expressed in Item 6 of the BDS Motion.

The wider context of this work to contribute to academic support in Gaza is that Gaza’s educational institutions and educational infrastructure has been destroyed, including 12 universities and 7 major libraries.

Given the limited existing relationships, complex political situation and the limits on resources despite VUW’s ethical and political commitment, the working group has committed to a “commoning” approach: sharing resources where possible across space and time. This does not rule out the possibilities of a humanitarian/mobilities based approach in the future.

The working group has made contacts with other academics and is cultivating a relationship with an existing organisation: Academic Solidarity with Palestine (ASWP), a registered non-profit based in France. ASWP is concerned with organising external responses to higher education needs in Gaza and curriculum and resource sharing, asynchronous teaching etc.

In July 2026, the working group are rolling out three potential workstreams to the VUW community:

1. Staff workshops to connect VUW academics, students and volunteers with ASWP.
2. Student peer-mentoring opportunities through VUWSA, PGSA and Student Justice in Palestine (SJP).
3. Fundraising (through ASWP) to provide eSIM Cards and Internet Hubs to enable continued access to remote learning in Palestine.

Eli posed three questions to the Board:

What continued commitment does the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Motion ask of the Academic Board?

What do we need institutionally to achieve this commitment?

Does Academic Board need a more sustained discussion/working group on Palestine, or on VUW's humanitarian engagements more generally?

The floor was opened for comment, with the following points raised:

- The Board notes that the need for humanitarian support goes far beyond Gaza – this presentation is about the specific work we can arrange for Palestinian scholars and students now.
- In response to a question from VUWSA about what does or does not constitute a breach of the BDS Motion and how that can be communicated to students, Nic indicated that the motion was intended to be clear, and formal breaches are somewhat outside its conception. Nevertheless, there is an open invitation to further discussion and clarification using existing mechanisms.
- Research and teaching materials can be made Open Access and thus available to people globally. Specifically, there is an open invitation for those who want to share material to contact Eli and the working group.
- Beyond Palestine, there is a coalescing of technological and economic forces being organised against academia. It is worth Academic Board thinking about how to maintain an academic community in the face of this. If specific work regarding academic aid to Palestine sustains the larger project, so much the better.

26.31 Farewell to the Vice-Chancellor

Professor Bryony James spoke to this item.

The following was **expressed** and **endorsed** by Academic Board:

- That there seems to be a boomerang effect between the University of Auckland and Victoria University of Wellington in regard to the employment of the outgoing Vice-Chancellor.
- That Nic

- started at VUW at a time when the University needed a leader to navigate falling enrolments and financial risk.
- changed the nature of the senior leadership at VUW, promoting transparency, delivery and teamwork.
- has always encouraged open and constructive debate at Academic Board.
- leaves VUW in a better place than when he arrived.
- Thank you to Nic, and best wishes.

26.32 Part C of the agenda

It was **resolved** that non-members be excluded from this meeting for consideration of agenda items 16 and 17 in accordance with s9(2)(a) LGOIMA s48(1)(a)(ii).

PART B OF THE AGENDA

The following items, not having been brought forward, were **confirmed**.

26.33 Minutes of the last meeting

AB26-38

The minutes of the Academic Board meeting held on 14 April 2026 (numbers 26.14 to 26.19) were **confirmed**.

Note: Part C of meeting minutes are excluded

26.34 Programme amendment for Academic Board approval

AB26-39

The following programme amendment was **approved** by Academic Board:

Faculty	Proposal Title
FEHPS	Introduction of new courses, amendments to regulations for Bachelor of Education (Teaching) Early Childhood (BEd(Tchg)EC) and Graduate Diploma of Teaching (ECE) (GDipTchg(ECE))

26.35 Report of the Academic Programmes Committee

AB26-40

The Academic Programmes Committee report of 9 June 2026 was **noted**.

26.36 Centre for Academic Development Annual Report

AB26-41

The 2025 annual report for the Centre of Academic Development was **received**.

Appendix I

Academic Board attendance – 9 June 2026

Professor Richard Arnold	Professor Leon Gurevitch	Dr Andrew Munkacsi
George Baker	Assoc Prof Monica Handler	Professor Sally Jane Norman
Dr Logan Bannister	Professor Dave Harper	Dr Yvette Perrott
Professor Todd Bridgman	Dr John Haywood	Assoc Prof Revti Raman
Professor Daniel Brown	Professor Rawinia Higgins	Ethan Rogacion
Professor Jane Bryson	Professor Sally Hill	Assoc Prof Helen Rook
Professor Sasha Calhoun	Dr Linda Hogg	Dr Mike Ross
Prof Sue Cherrington (1.30pm)	Professor Anna Jackson	Assoc Prof Rhian Salmon
Professor Joanne Crawford	Professor Bryony James	Professor Karen Smith
Professor Kim Cunio	Assoc Prof Robert Keyzers	Professor Nic Smith
Assoc Prof Toby Daglish	Assoc Prof Maja Krtalić	Professor Marco Sonzogni
Heather Day	Professor Sarah Leggott	Prof Kathryn Sutherland
Professor Neil Dodgson	Professor Robyn Longhurst	Dr Okan Tan
Dr Emma Dunlop-Bennett	Assoc Prof Xavier Marquez	Prof Paul Teesdale-Spittle
Aidan Donoghue	Professor Stephen Marshall	Trish Wilson
Dr Eli Elinoff	Dr Stuart Marshall	Professor Marc Wilson
Professor Alejandro Frery	Shay McEwan	Professor Michael Winikoff
Dr Ally Gibson	Sen Lect Jacqueline McIntosh	Assoc Prof Amanda Wolf
Assoc Prof Nicola Gilmour	Prof Joanna Merwood-Salisbury	
Professor Anne Gold	Professor Nicole Moreham	

Non-members in attendance

Fiona Clarkson	Varsha Narasimhan
Leanne Gibson (until 2)	Linda Roberts
Dr Kathy Holloway (until 2)	Dr Angelina Sbroma
Dr Angela Joe	Derek White
Dr Liz McKibben	Andrew Wilks
Reece Moors	

Apologies

Professor Sian Hwee-Ang	Professor Chris Bumby	Professor Gina Grimshaw
Professor Graeme Austin	Professor Alberto Costi	Professor Kate Hunter
Professor Jonathan Barrett	Professor Arun Elias	Professor Paul Jose
Professor Pamela Bell	Professor Gary Evans	Professor Simon Keller
Prof Brigitte Bönish-Brednich	Professor Richard Furneaux	Professor Sara Kindon
Rachel Bruce	Professor Anne Golding	Professor Karin Lasthuizen
Professor Bev Lawton	Professor John Randal	Dr Michael Dudding
Professor Phil Lester	Beth Smith	Lynn Grindell
Professor Sally McArthur	Professor John Townend	Kirsty McClure
Professor Robert McKay	Tina Wakefield	Ash McPherson
Professor Ocean Mercier	Professor Tony Ward	Edward Schofield
Professor Wayne Patrick	Gail Ah Hi	Dr Robert Stratford
Professor Robyn Phipps	Dr Anita Brady	Andrew Tarr
Professor Rebecca Priestley	Michelle Clark	Dr Graeme Whimp