

## ACADEMIC BOARD TE TAUMATA

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### Minutes of the meeting of the Academic Board held on Tuesday, 15 July 2025 at 1.00pm in the Hunter Council Chamber

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The meeting was held face-to-face in the Kelburn 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**

##### **25.34 Apologies, acknowledgements and welcomes**

A welcome was given to newly elected board members:

- *Wellington School of Business and Government:*  
Luke Chu, Barbara Allen, Noelle Donnelly and Amanda Wolf.
- *Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences:*  
Xavier Marquez and Jenny Wollerman.
- *Faculty of Science and Engineering:*  
John Haywood, Monica Handler, Andrew Munkacsi and Yvette Perrott.
- *Professional staff members:*  
Beth Smith and Heather Day.

Apologies were taken as read (see Appendix 1).

It was noted that meetings will alternate between campuses going forward, with the next meeting scheduled for Tuesday 19 August in RH1T1 at the Pipitea Campus.

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

##### **25.36 Vice-Chancellor Oral Report**

The oral report of the Vice-Chancellor was received.

Ngā Mokopuna, Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington, has gained significant recognition in 2025 for its innovative and sustainable design. The project continues to progress through the Living Building Challenge accreditation, with credit due to the dedicated team behind its conception and ongoing development.

People are encouraged to attend the two-day *Growing our Future* project which aims at restoring native forests around the Wellington region.

The Open Day on Friday 22 August is a significant event for the University and registrations are currently tracking well ahead of last year's numbers.

Work has progressed within the Te Hiwa/Te Ama university management space. Over the past year, efforts have focused on defining our values, vision, and priorities. We are now transitioning into the implementation phase, with a focus on delivering against key performance indicators (KPIs). This work is being shared across various university forums, and all-staff meetings.

Positive news received on funding due to over-enrolment beyond the 102% cap. This resulted in an additional \$2.6 million for 2025 which must be spent this year. The funding outcome was about two-thirds of the maximum hoped-for amount. There is no guarantee this funding will continue in 2026, with indications from TEC that funding may not be available next year. Moving forward focus areas are positioning ourselves for additional revenue, identifying cost-saving opportunities, and reducing administrative burden on staff. While 2026 will be challenging, we are better prepared than in previous years.

International students continue to be a strategic focus, with exciting developments in recent weeks. Recently the Vice Chancellor joined the Prime Minister Rt Hon Christopher Luxon on a visit to China, where they engaged with key partners in the education sector. The visit highlighted strong enthusiasm from Chinese institutions and students for collaborative opportunities and joint initiatives. A landmark agreement with Fudan University was signed, significantly enhancing our reputation within the Chinese university sector.

Amid current restrictions on international students in the USA, New Zealand's position as an open, democratic, and welcoming country was emphasised. We remain committed to embracing diverse global talent, including students from China and beyond. These developments mark a promising step forward in our international strategy and reinforce our commitment to global engagement.

The Vice Chancellor expressed concern over recent developments involving executive overreach and the contradictory nature of efforts to regulate diversity viewpoint while simultaneously undermining Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives in the U.S. These actions were described as difficult to rationalise, yet significant in their implications.

NZ universities have been asked to respond to proposed changes in the Education and Training Act, specifically regarding the requirement for a formal policy on freedom of expression and academic freedom. Our institution has a comprehensive policy in place that aligns closely with the proposed requirements. The key difference is the inclusion of students—the proposal suggests that universities must host speakers invited by either staff or students, whereas our current policy only covers staff invitations. We have explored practical ways to address this change. One concern raised is the potential cost implications when hosting speakers, particularly around health, safety, and security measures. We remain committed to upholding freedom of expression while ensuring the safety and operational integrity of the campus community.

The Vice Chancellor has been actively leading a university group across New Zealand, focused on responding to proposed changes in the Education and Training Act. This group has been

submitting responses to the Select Committee and coordinating sector-wide efforts to meet new requirements (including surveying university communities on academic freedom and freedom of expression). A draft set of survey questions is near completion and are proposed to be used across all universities. While each institution will maintain its own policy, the goal is to ask the same questions, follow a shared cadence, to align with staff surveys to improve participation rates.

Low participation in similar surveys has led to polarised interpretations, highlighting the importance of thoughtful design and timing. Additionally, the sector is working toward a common framework for recording complaints, focusing on the number of complaints and those upheld, with further details still under discussion.

Under the auspices of Universities New Zealand (UNZ), the Vice Chancellor is also leading efforts to strengthen the sector's narrative—emphasizing the relevance and importance of universities to maintain and enhance public trust and social license. Significant progress has been made across New Zealand universities, with a strong proposal now agreed on by the group. This initiative will move forward with shared resourcing and coordination, and our university will be updated on its role in the coming weeks. It was emphasised that social licence should not be taken for granted—either at the institutional level or across the sector—especially in light of the current political climate.

Discussion included:

- It was questioned whether the projected dip in school leaver numbers should prompt forward planning for the period 2027–2029. It was advised that while this dip could present a challenge, if current momentum continues or accelerates, its impact will likely be minimal. Key focus areas identified include maintaining momentum in growth and recovery, regaining domestic market share, particularly beyond Wellington, and maximising international student opportunities.
- It was suggested that with the institution receiving extra funding from TEC, and with an interest in using it to reduce staff workload, one potential area of investment is artificial intelligence (AI). This could support research, teaching, and administration, noting students and employers are already engaging with AI. A group is being formed to explore AI use across three key areas: Operational Efficiency, Teaching and Learning, and Academic Integrity. There's also a broader concern about AI replacing jobs, which needs proactive attention. The group aims to map current AI initiatives within the institution and develop a cohesive strategy.
- The topic of academic freedom and institutional neutrality was revisited. The Vice Chancellor advised that by clarifying that neutrality means not speaking on behalf of staff but rather creating an environment where staff feel supported to express their expertise and opinions publicly. The aim is to ensure the university backs its staff without imposing a singular institutional stance.
- A question was raised in relation to whether the extra funding could be allocated to areas experiencing significant growth, as some departments are currently stretched under the existing budget model. The concern was acknowledged but it was emphasised that the funding is short-term (only available until December). Therefore, it must be used strategically to support long-term sustainability, especially with anticipated pressures in 2026.

- It was acknowledged that some of our current systems and structures require overdue improvements.

## **25.37 Written Report**

AB25/44

The February 2025 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 her report which was taken as read.

The *He Kokonga Whare e Kitea* programme aimed at accelerating student success is progressing well. A survey link has been emailed to all staff, with around 500 people starting but only 276 completing the survey. Participants are encouraged to finish the survey as these responses help establish baseline data. The University of Canterbury, a partner in the project, has received just over 400 responses, and the goal is to match or exceed that number. A total of 110 people have signed up for workshops via the survey link, which is comparable to Canterbury's turnout. Appreciation was given to Karen Smith who is leading the project.

Good progress is being made with work integrated learning and software being put into place. A small number of courses are set to go live in Term 2. Additionally, a new physical hub has opened on Level 4 of Rutherford House.

Mata has officially launched, marking a significant milestone after years of development. While it's not yet perfected and will continue to evolve, its launch is a major achievement. The repository is now seen as a vital centralised source for the curriculum, enabling many other initiatives.

It was acknowledged that the lack of integration between Mata and Banner—another key central repository—is disappointing. While the historical reasons for this disconnect are understood, it remains a missed opportunity. However, it is recognised as an area for ongoing development.

### **Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Report**

The Adam Art Gallery received an architecture award in Wellington, and our Mock Printer project is advancing to the National Architecture Awards. Ti Awa, as part of our broader campus, was highlighted through the Rody app win at the Wellington Gold Awards, reflecting positively on our community. The app looks smart and is recommended for holiday planning, offering useful travel tips. Additionally, the "New Thinking Award" was sponsored and presented to Bret McKenzie, who is known for being part of the comedy duo *Flight of the Conchords*.

A new research hub is being developed as a centralised resource for researchers, focusing on training, skills, and support beyond their core disciplines. It consolidates various offerings related to research activities such as project management, managing externally funded grants, research communication, and grantsmanship, making it easier for researchers to access essential non-disciplinary skills in one place.

This initiative is especially timely as the research funding landscape is expected to undergo major changes. Traditional funding sources like Marsden and HRC may not be available in the coming years, requiring researchers to adapt to new funding models. The Research Hub will provide a framework for researcher development, helping our community navigate and thrive amid these changes.

An upcoming workshop on Online Disinformation and Researcher Safety session will focus on the growing threat of online disinformation and technology-facilitated harm, and how researchers can protect themselves. This workshop will be led by Nicole Skews-Poole, an external expert in organisational support in this area. The goal is to ensure researchers feel supported and empowered to continue their important work without fear of online threats or harassment.

### **Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Students Report**

The report was taken as read.

Our open day is 22 August, and people are encouraged to be part of the day and sign up. Registrations to-date are tracking well with 3,689 registrations, which is about a 1,000 up from last year, and people are encouraged to join briefings and participate. An upcoming communication in relation to the sessions will help people feel confident in their roles on the day.

In terms of recruitment, we have seen promising developments with our International Experience Grant. Last year we began offering it to Year 13 students, allowing them to study at one of over 140 universities offshore while covering their tuition fees for the trimester abroad. Despite being advertising late, we saw a strong uptake, and this year we are promoting it earlier to encourage even greater participation, with all grant recipients enrolled in our leadership program, which will be formally established by 2026.

We are gaining recognition for our strong support of disability and inclusion students, leading to increased enrolment and improved course completion rates, thanks to staff engagement and resources like the enlightening disability confidence e-module which serves as an excellent recruitment tool.

The student information desk outside the library on the mezzanine floor of the hub is part of a broader vision to provide accessible, visible, and inclusive support for students through a one-stop-shop model that adapts to their journey, with a soft launch currently underway and plans to expand to other campuses in 2026.

At the staff forum, it was advised that Open Day marketing is aimed at attracting people from outside the region. Data on which regions sign-ups are coming from will be shared at the next Academic Board meeting.

The Uni 101 program was recognised for improvements made in response to feedback. Regarding the Victoria Plus and international programs, current students can complete their existing program, but no new enrolments are being accepted. A new replacement program will begin in 2026, with a teach-out process in place to support transitioning students.

## **Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Māori and Engagement Report**

The report taken as read.

### **25.38 Revised Emeritus Professor Policy**

Three emeritus professor nominations are being considered in Part C under the old policy. Robyn and Bryony conducted extensive university-wide consultation on the policy, as noted in the covering document.

The delegation of authority has shifted from the Council to the Vice Chancellor. Although the Academic Board isn't formally part of the approval process, their judgment and feedback are valuable. A discussion with the Academic Board was proposed to address implementation aspects and gather input for future emeritus professor proposals.

The motivation for reviewing the emeritus professor policy stems from a comparison with practices at other universities. Historically, the process at Te Herenga Waka has differed significantly from other institutions. In particular, the designation of emeritus professor had become informally associated with post-retirement benefits, such as library access, rather than being recognised as a prestigious academic honour. In contrast, at other universities, emeritus status is conferred selectively and is regarded as a significant recognition of academic distinction, awarded to only a small fraction of professors. The revised policy aims to restore and elevate the status of emeritus professor at Te Herenga Waka to align with this higher standard of academic honour.

A discussion with the Academic Board took place to explore implementation aspects of the revised policy and gather feedback for future refinement.

Discussion included:

- It was suggested that requesting a CV or career summary early in the process can feel like an application, which may be uncomfortable for senior academics. Reframing this step to emphasise honorific recognition was suggested.
- The nomination form's wording may imply formality. Adjustments were recommended to better reflect the nomination-based nature of the process.
- The phrase "university contribution over the whole of a career" may disadvantage those who started at lower academic levels or joined later. It was suggested to revise or remove the word "whole" for greater fairness.
- The use of "University" (capital U) may imply contribution solely to Te Herenga Waka. Using "university" (lowercase u) could better reflect broader academic contributions.
- It was recommended that creating a mechanism to recognise individuals who made significant contributions but did not reach professorship would allow the institution to honour a broader range of impactful staff.
- Previously, nominees were often unaware they were being nominated, which some preferred. The current process requires informing nominees early, which changes the dynamic and may feel less organic.

### 25.39 Proposals for New Programmes/Programme Amendments

The following new programme proposals were endorsed by the Academic Board for submission to CUAP Round 3:

Faculty	Faculty Ref Number	Proposal Title	Reference
FoSE	VUW/25–MSpaceSc/1, PGDipSpaceSc/1	New 180-point Master of Space Science and 120-point Postgraduate Diploma in Space Science (MSpaceSc, PGDipSpaceSc)	AB25-46 (APC25-33))
FEHP	VUW/25–MCP/1	New 240-point Master of Clinical Practice (Midwifery) (MClinPrac(Mid)) The proposed Master's in Clinical Practice (Midwifery) aims to support the midwifery workforce by offering a new entry pathway and building on institutional strengths, with course design and regulatory concerns to be addressed in future planning.	AB25-47 (APC25-34)
FEHP	FOH/25/1 VUW/25–BHIth/1	Amend the HINF major	AB25-48 (APC25-35)
FHSS	VUW/25–PGCertHELT/1	Amend the PGCert HELT, PGDipHELT The proposal aims to significantly revise an existing, previously unavailable qualification by lowering entry barriers and offering flexible, responsive professional development options to better serve the broader university community.	AB25-49 (APC25-36)

Student representatives advocated for integrating HELT 550 into the core curriculum in future years to honour the university's commitment to Mātauranga Māori. The Curriculum and Academic Development (CAD) team advised they ensure these elements are meaningfully integrated throughout programmes rather than treated as separate or optional. There are also capability and resource limitations. The goal is to launch the program quickly and offer multiple iterations of key courses, but this must be balanced with other university commitments.

## 25.40 Programme Amendments for Academic Board approval

The following programme amendment were approved by the Academic Board:

Faculty	Faculty Reference Number	Proposal Title	Reference
FOSE	FOSE25/2 VUW/20–MSc/2, MEnvSc/1, PGDipSc/1, PGCertSc/1	Add GEOG 415 as an approved course	AB25-50 (APC25-37)
WSBG	WSBG/3 VUW/25 MActSc/1, PGCert_DipActSc/1, MCom/2, BComHons/1	Increasing ACTS 501-503 from 15-20 pts. Reconfigure postgraduate actuarial science courses	AB25-51 (APC25-38)
WSBG	WSBG/1 VUW/24– BCom/1, BC/1	Amend MKCO major in Bachelor of Communication	AB25-52 (APC25-39)
FEHP	OH/24/9 VUW/24– PGDipHlthPsysc/1	Amend the MHIthPsysc and PGDipHlthPsysc Programmes	AB25-53 (APC25-40)
FHSS	FOH/24/9 VUW/24– PGDipHlthPsysc/1	Make COMS and MDIA special topics permanent and amend the Environmental Humanities major to include MDIA 315	AB25-54 (APC25-41)
FHSS	VUW/25–MMigS/1	Amend the regulations for the Master of Migration Studies	AB25-55 (APC25-42)
<i>FHSS</i>	<i>VUW/25-MPP</i>	Amend the requirements for the Master of Politics, Philosophy and Economics	<i>AB25-56 (APC25-43)</i>
It was noted that a repeated clause in the regulations after Part 2 needs to be deleted, and a small amendment under Section 4(b) is required to ensure at least 45 points at the 500-level are included in the Master's program to meet compliance, with verbal amendments approved.			
FOSE	OSE 25/1 VUW/25– MSc/1, PGDipSc/1	Amend ERES subject in the MSc and PGDipSc	AB25-57 (APC25-44)

## 25.41 Resolution concerning exclusion of non-members

### Part C of the agenda

The resolution concerning exclusion of non-members was not required for this meeting.



## PART B OF THE AGENDA

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

### **25.42 Confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2025**

The minutes of the Academic Board meeting (Part A and B) held on 15 April 2025 as set out in document AB25-59 (Numbers 25.15-25.31) were confirmed.

*Note: Part C of meetings are excluded for reasons of confidentiality where applicable.*

### **25.43 Report of the Academic Programmes Committee**

The Academic Programmes Committee report of 25 March 2025 was noted. AB25-60

### **25.44 Academic Programme Review Design Innovation – One year update** AB25-61

The one year updated of Implementation Plan for the Design Innovation Academic Programme Review was received.

### **25.45 Graduation Procedure Update and Policy Integration** AB25-62

The rescinding of the Graduation Procedure Update and Policy Integration was received.

### **25.46 Centre for Academic Development (CAD) Annual Report for 2024** AB25-63

The CAD Annual Report for 2024 was received.

### **25.47 Terms of Reference and Constitution for Te Poari o Te Wāhanga a Manaia—Faculty of Science and Engineering.**

The Terms of Reference and Constitution for Te Poari o Te Wāhanga a Manaia—Faculty of Science and Engineering was noted. AB25-64

## **The meeting concluded with a Karakia Whakamutunga**

Whakairia te tapu	Restrictions are moved aside
Kia wātea ai te ara	So the pathway is clear
Kia turuki whakataha ai	To return to everyday activities
Hui e! Tāiki ē!	Enriched, unified and blessed!

The meeting closed at 2.25 pm.

### *Attendance*

44 members attended; 13 non-members were in attendance; 19 apologies were received (refer to Appendix 1 for detailed record).

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nic Smith". The ink is grey and the signature is centered horizontally.

Signed: Professor Nic Smith  
Vice-Chancellor

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Appendix 1: Academic Board attendance 15 July 2025**

Dr Barbara Allen	Dr Linda Hogg	Professor Sally-Jane Norman
Professor Jane Bryson	Professor Margaret Hyland	Professor Robyn Phipps
Associate Professor Sasha Calhoun	Dr Nigel Isaacs	Professor Janet Pitman
Alberto Costi	Professor Bryony James	Professor John Randal
Professor Averill Coxhead	Professor Annemarie Jutel	Professor Jenny Ritchie
Professor Joanne Crawford	Associate Professor Maja Krtalic	Ethan Rogacion
Professor Neil Dodgson	Professor Simon Keller	Dr Helen Rook
Dr Eli Elinoff	Associate Professor Robert Keyzers	Professor Sarah Ross
Fabie Filo	Professor Dean Knight	Professor Paul Teesdale-Spittle
Professor Alejandro Frery	Professor Ivy (I-Ming) Liu	Trish Wilson
Dr Nicola Gilmour	Professor Hai Lin	Amanda Wolf
Professor Dave Harper	Professor Robyn Longhurst	Jenny Wollerman
Dr John Hayward	Professor Stephen Marshall	
Assoc Professor Meegan Hall	Associate Dean Xavier Marquez	
Professor Dave Harper	Christine McCarthy	
Professor Nikki Hessel	Professor Nicola Nelson	

#### **Non-members in attendance**

Dr Andrew Munkacsi  
Dr Monica Handler  
Dr Robert Stratford  
Dr Stuart Marshall  
Dr Tulasi Parashar  
Dr Yvette Perott  
Carol Morris  
Elena Louverdis  
Joseph Habgood  
Rayne Aldridge  
Reece Moors  
Varsha Narasimhan  
Yang Liu

#### **Apologies**

Antoinette Ahilakumaran  
Associate Professor Kathy Holloway  
Dr Luke Chu  
Professor Kim Cunio  
Professor Anne Goulding  
Professor Catherine Iorns Magallanes  
Professor Claire Freeman  
Professor Graeme Austin  
Professor John Townsend  
Professor Karen Smith  
Professor Kim Cunio  
Professor Michael Winikoff  
Professor Nicholas Gollege  
Professor Rawinia Higgins  
Professor Rebecca Priestley  
Professor Richard Arnold  
Professor Siah Hwee Ang  
Professor Susan Ballard