



**New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit
Te Wahanga Tatari Kaute Tohungatanga o nga Whare Wananga o Aotearoa**

PLANNING DOCUMENT 2002-2006

2003 EDITION

The New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit was established by the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee in 1993 and operates under Terms of Reference that can be summarised thus:

- to review and comment on the effectiveness of systems for monitoring and enhancing academic quality and standards in New Zealand universities to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving the universities' stated aims and objectives, and that they are applied effectively, and
- to identify, devise, disseminate and commend to universities good practice, assist universities improve educational quality, advise the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee on quality assurance matters, and interact with other national and international agencies and organisations engaged in quality assurance in education.

The Unit began operations in 1994 and completed two pilot audits and Cycle 1 institutional audits of all universities between 1995 and 1998. Cycle 2 audits - on the national theme of research policy, management and performance, support for postgraduate research students, and the research-teaching link, as well as institutional themes nominated by the universities and agreed to by the Unit - were conducted during 2000 and 2001. The Unit was itself reviewed by independent panels in 1997 (towards the end of Cycle 1) and again during 2001 (towards the end of Cycle 2).

Planning document 2002-2006 was adopted by the Board on 5 June 2002 after consideration of the recommendations of the 2001 independent review of the Unit and comments on a draft document by universities. The activities of the Unit during 2002 were reviewed against that document at every meeting of the Board, and the *Annual report* of the Unit for 2002 reported on the success of the Unit in undertaking the activities proposed in the document and the extent to which the Unit had progressed towards objectives.

This *2003 edition* of the document results from a review of the 2002 edition; it updates the activities and makes adjustments in light of progress made in 2002. The activities of the Unit during 2003 will be reviewed against this document and will be reported in the Unit's *Annual report* for 2003

John M. Jennings
Director
12 March 2003

VISION AND MISSION

The vision of the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit is to have contributed to the achievement of quality, quality enhancement and excellence in New Zealand universities as measured by the improved quality of their scholarly activities and outcomes – namely, research, teaching, learning and community service provided by their graduates and staff to the measurable benefit of people and societies both inside and outside of New Zealand.

In support of its vision, the Unit's **mission** is to be a successful catalyst, agent, advocate and mentor for the development of quality cultures and the enhancement and improvement of the quality of processes and outcomes in New Zealand universities.

- ***The Unit will promote*** an enabling quality environment by supporting the activities that enhance quality, and ***will strive to avoid*** those activities that are solely compliance driven and that promote a more restrictive quality environment.
- ***The Unit will contribute*** to the development and monitoring of quality systems and will promote and assure the value and opportunities to be gained from quality assurance.
- ***The Unit will realise its potential*** through these activities, to be a leading quality assurance agency in the tertiary sector in New Zealand and internationally as indicated by others benchmarking this Unit and by the measurable added value of New Zealand universities to our shared communities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Unit's activities associated with its mission will be founded on the following **guiding principles**:

- that the Unit respects the commitment to quality within the universities themselves,
- that the Unit accepts a primary responsibility to assist universities achieve an organisational culture that values quality and continuous enhancement,
- that the Unit accepts the responsibility to provide an independent evaluation and understanding of the quality culture and the resulting academic quality in universities, and to communicate its findings to its communities,
- that the Unit recognises that New Zealand practice must be at least as good as good international practice,
- that the Unit commits to providing leadership in fostering continuing improvement and innovation in the theory and practice of quality assurance, drawing on international research and experience,
- that the Unit accepts that its success and credibility must reflect in exemplary quality practice across its own operations,
- that the Unit is committed to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

OBJECTIVES 2002-2006

Objective 1 *Quality enhancement*

To have contributed to the measurable improvement, implementation and monitoring of quality programmes in all New Zealand universities as evidenced by purposeful visits to universities, the conduct of successful workshops and seminars, and the production of valid and useful monitoring reports.

Objective 2 *Quality audit*

To have successfully administered audits of all New Zealand universities and have produced audit reports which are acknowledged as being authoritative, rigorous, fair and perceptive and which are acknowledged by the universities as being of assistance to them in improving their own programmes of continuous improvement of quality and added value.

Objective 3 *International benchmarking of activities*

To have ensured involvement of qualified international personnel in appropriate activities of the Unit, and to have examined, adopted, promulgated and reported on international good practice that is used and useful.

Objective 4 *Communication*

To have produced publications, commentaries, media releases and other materials which communicate in a timely and effective manner to relevant New Zealand organisations and agencies and the Unit's communities of interest with respect to ensuring and demonstrating the academic quality of New Zealand universities.

Objective 5 *Quality policies and practices*

To have contributed to the development of policies and practices in quality assurance in education, nationally and internationally.

Objective 6 *Networking with New Zealand and international quality and educational agencies*

To have consolidated networking links with other tertiary-level quality, quality audit and educational agencies operating nationally and internationally, and thereby improved the quality of work undertaken by the Unit in support of New Zealand universities and tertiary education more generally in meeting valid and useful objectives.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR 2003 WITH INDICATORS

The current Terms of Reference, as recorded in the "AAU Plan 1998-2004", are identified as TR

Objective 1 *Quality enhancement*

To have contributed to the measurable improvement, implementation and monitoring of quality programmes in all New Zealand universities as evidenced by purposeful visits to universities, the conduct of successful workshops and seminars, and the production of valid and useful monitoring reports.

	Proposed activities for 2003	Indicators
1.1	Identify, devise, disseminate and commend to universities good practice in regard to the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards at national level. (TR 4)	<i>Occasional papers, Good practice digest,</i>
1.2	Assist the university sector to improve its educational quality. (TR 5)	
1.3	Develop appropriate and ongoing professional working relationships with universities to discuss ways the Unit can assist and identify, disseminate and commend good and successful practice in support of the enhancement of universities' own programmes of improvement.	<i>Requests from universities for visits to discuss quality improvement programmes. Positive feedback from the universities that visits/discussions add value.</i>
1.4	Undertake system reviews in which issues and topics of concern and/or importance to the Unit and/or the university system are examined by the Unit so as to better inform the Unit and universities with information and good practice models.	<i>Prepare and distribute to universities 'Occasional papers' prepared by the Unit upon the completion of two system reviews - on programmes and qualifications in New Zealand universities; and on the Treaty of Waitangi. Begin work on two more system reviews</i>
1.5	Conduct workshops and seminars where to do so will add value to the quality of the learning experience in universities and tertiary providers.	<i>Administer a workshop in Wellington in July for tertiary teachers with Professor Ron Barnett</i>

Objective 2 *Quality audit*

To have successfully administered audits of all New Zealand universities and have produced audit reports which are acknowledged as being authoritative, rigorous, fair and perceptive and which are acknowledged by the universities as being of assistance to them in improving their own programmes of continuous improvement of quality and added value.

	Proposed activities for 2003	Indicators
2.1	<p>Administer Cycle 3 audits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review institutional systems for monitoring and enhancing academic quality and standards to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving their statement aims and objective, (TR 1) - Comment on the extent to which procedures in place in individual institutions are applied effectively and reflect good practice in maintaining quality. (TR 2, TR 3) 	<p><i>A successful audit of Massey University (Audit Visit in September 2003) and a report which is authoritative, rigorous, fair and perceptive, and which contains recommendations that support and enhance the university's own proposed plans for improvement of the quality of their core activities, outputs and outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>Assistance in the preparation of the audit of the University of Auckland (Audit Visit in July 2004).</i></p>
2.2	Widen the activities of the Unit to include wider patterns of audit activity in response to requests by universities.	<i>Responses to initiatives and requests from universities for assistance in specific projects.</i>
2.3	Work with universities to ensure an understanding of the topic for Cycle 3 audits, and respond to requests for assistance and information from universities in preparation for Cycle 3 audits.	<i>Positive interactions with universities which result in a better understanding of audit which will lead to a positive audit process which adds value to the universities.</i>
2.4	Ensure auditors employed by the Unit for Cycle 3 are properly trained and prepared for audit and are appropriately appraised at the end of each audit so as to assist the Unit enhance the quality and usefulness of audit.	<i>Auditor meetings resulting in the better-prepared auditors, and the formulation of improved audit processes.</i>

- 2.5 Work with universities post-audit:
- to gain feedback on audit processes and products,
 - to gain an understanding of the ways the universities are able to integrate the audit recommendations into their own programmes of quality improvement.

Improvements by the Unit to its audit processes and procedures arising from feedback, as measured by the ability of universities to integrate the audit recommendations which enhance the quality of the universities core activities, outputs and outcomes.

Objective 3 *International benchmarking of activities*

To have ensured involvement of qualified international personnel in appropriate activities of the Unit, and to have examined, adopted, promulgated and reported on international good practice that is used and useful.

	Proposed activities for 2003	Indicators
3.1	Maintain a Register of Auditors that contains auditors who are recognised internationally for their competence as auditors.	<i>International auditing activities of those on the Register of Auditors.</i>
3.2	Employ presenters at workshops and seminars who are recognised internationally for their work in the field.	<i>Participants and facilitators have international reputation and experience.</i>

Objective 4 *Communication*

To have produced publications, commentaries, media releases and other materials which communicate in a timely and effective manner to relevant New Zealand organisations and agencies and the Unit's communities of interest with respect to ensuring and demonstrating the academic quality of New Zealand universities.

	Proposed activities for 2003	Indicators
4.1	Determine the purpose, audience and distribution of the various types of communication and publication, and consider consolidating certain communications.	<i>Positive feedback from readers of Unit publications.</i>

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| 4.2 | Invite universities and stakeholders to contribute to publications so that communication is <i>among</i> Unit and others rather than from the Unit <i>to</i> others. | <i>Reinstate a new-style 'Good practice digest' that draws on contributors from a variety of educational and quality assurance/audit contexts.</i> |
| 4.3 | Survey those to whom communications are sent to verify the relevance, usefulness and effectiveness of communication. | <i>Positive feedback with respect to relevance, usefulness and effectiveness</i> |
| 4.4 | Publish, and distribute as widely as possible, monographs that report findings based on New Zealand experiences and research including current practices and programmes that have enhanced outputs and outcomes. | <i>Publications produced by the Unit</i> |

Objective 5 *Quality policies and practices*

To have contributed to the development of policies and practices in quality assurance in education, nationally and internationally.

	Proposed activities for 2003	Indicators
5.1	Carry out consulting and such contract work as is compatible with the Unit's audit role. (TR 8)	<i>Reports that add value to the organisation that requests the work.</i>
5.2	Contribute papers to conferences and submit articles to publishers that contribute to the development of policies and practices in quality assurance in education.	<i>Papers presented to conferences and articles published.</i>

Objective 6 *Networking with New Zealand and international quality and educational agencies*

To have consolidated networking links with other tertiary-level quality, quality audit and educational agencies operating nationally and internationally, and thereby improved the quality of work undertaken by the Unit in support of New Zealand universities and tertiary education more generally in meeting valid and useful objectives.

	Proposed activities for 2003	Indicators
6.1	Advise the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) on quality assurance matters and measurable improvement. (TR 6)	<i>New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee/Unit liaison meetings. Ongoing consultation with the Executive Director of the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee.</i>
6.2	Interact with other national and international agencies and organisations in relation to the sharing of good practice and other matters of quality assurance in education. (TR 7)	<i>Leadership roles in jointly-administered activities</i>
6.3	Develop effective working relationships in New Zealand with education and quality assurance agencies – in particular: * Ministry of Education * Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) * New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee's Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) * New Zealand University Students Association * New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) * New Zealand Qualifications Authority Academic Assurance and Audit Unit (AAA) * New Zealand Polytechnics Programmes Committee (NZPPC) * Colleges of Education Accreditation Committee (CEAC). * Office of the Controller and Auditor General (OAG)	<i>Involvement and leadership in the work of meetings and working parties established by these agencies. Ongoing liaison meetings with the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors committee, the NZVCC Committee on University Academic Programmes, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority's Approvals, Accreditation and Audit section, the New Zealand Polytechnics Programmes Committee and the Colleges of Education Accreditation Committee so as to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, and to enhance the Unit's processes.</i>

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| 6.4 | Develop effective working relationships with non-university tertiary providers where to do so is of benefit to both the Unit and the provider. | <i>Projects undertaken by the Unit with or for non-university providers.</i> |
| 6.5 | Develop effective working relationships internationally with education and quality assurance agencies – in particular:
* Australian Universities Quality Agency
* International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
* Asia Pacific Sub-Network of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies | <i>Participate in the work of meetings and working parties.
Leadership role in the Asia Pacific Sub-Network of INQAAHE.
Participate in the bid for the 2005 INQAAHE conference to be held in Wellington.</i> |
| 6.6 | Develop strong working relationships with professional organisations and business communities, especially those for whom higher quality university education is essential. | <i>Meetings with representatives of business and professional organisations.</i> |

12 March 2003

APPENDIX

Terms of Reference and Critical Success Factors as recorded in the AAU Plan 1998-2004

Terms of Reference

- TR 1 *Review institutional systems for monitoring and enhancing academic quality and standards to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving their stated aims and objectives.*
- TR 2 *Comment on the extent to which procedures in place in individual institutions are applied effectively.*
- TR 3 *Comment on the extent to which procedures in place in individual institutions reflect good practice in maintaining quality.*
- TR 4 *Identify, devise, disseminate and commend to universities good practice in regard to the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards at national level.*
- TR 5 *Assist the university sector to improve its educational quality.*
- TR 6 *Advise the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors Committee on quality assurance matters.*
- TR 7 *Interact with other national and international agencies and organisations in relation to matters of quality assurance in education.*
- TR 8 *Carry out such contract work as is compatible with its audit role.*