

Response to University Advisory Group Phase 3

Ako Aotearoa

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Nā āheitanga ā-mātauranga,
ko angitū ā-ākonga
Building educational capability
for learner success

Ako
AOTEAROA

Response to University Advisory Group – Phase 3

This submission is from Ako Aotearoa, the [National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence](#). We are committed to supporting Aotearoa's tertiary teachers, trainers and educators be the best they can be to achieve learner success. We are a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-led organisation and are guided by [our values](#) of pūmautanga, māramatanga, whakamanatanga, awhitanga and whanaungatanga.

This submission responds to question 1: Efficiencies and Prioritisation.

Quality teaching can significantly improve university efficiencies. Effective teaching focuses on meaningful learner success. Increasing learner success will increase the university revenue as engaged learners are more likely to continue their study and complete courses.

Quality teaching builds a university's reputation. Successful learners feel good about themselves and that helps build their self-esteem. These students are more likely to recommend university study to others, which builds the institutions overall reputation and can lead to increased enrolments.

Student feedback improves teaching practice

The student voice is a key part of quality teaching. Quality teaching needs feedback loops so students can impact teaching. Feedback is needed from students with a range of cultural backgrounds, as well as those who are disabled and neurodivergent. The current systems of course evaluation need improvement. While universities have systems to collect student feedback, further work is required to embed the findings into teaching practice. The opportunity is that by listening and acting on the student voice, universities can improve student satisfaction, wellbeing and success. The use of student feedback in teaching practices will create continuous improvement cycles and other efficiencies.

Ako Aotearoa resources support educators working with TES priority groups

The Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) provides a good overview of quality teaching that focuses on having learners at the centre and provides barrier free access. The TES highlight the need for universities to improve outcomes for diverse learners including Māori, Pacific and neurodiverse learners. Ako Aotearoa has extensive

resources and initiatives that support learner retention and completions particularly for TES priority learners.

Continued investment needed for educator PLD

Research demonstrates that teacher quality is one of the primary factors in learner success. We cannot stress enough that universities need to ensure teachers can access continuous professional learning development (PLD) opportunities and have support in designing their individual professional learning pathway. Investing in teacher development will enhance teaching quality and impact learner success.

Understanding benefits of technology

Technology will continue to be a driver for change. The investment in digital learning platforms, interactive tools, data analytics and artificial intelligence will continue. Better understanding as to why universities use technology will help realise the benefits, such as: enhanced accessibility, personalised learning, increased engagement, efficient administration, and improved collaboration and communication.

Wider access to funding

Programmes such as the Accelerating Learner Success Fund (Tūwhitia) are currently limited to a small number of TEOs. Expanding access wider will allow the benefits to cascade to others. This type of funding (or co-funding), with targeted co-investments in learner success initiatives, will help to ensure successful learner transitions and course and qualification completions. Other initiatives such as sector-wide communities of practice can lead to efficiencies by driving improvements collectively and reducing duplication of efforts.

Feedback from industry needs improvement to ensure the graduates are job ready. While there are some excellent practices in this area, they are unevenly distributed.

Investing in PLD ensures that teachers are using current teaching approaches and technologies that lead to higher quality teaching. The impact of artificial intelligence is going to be a significant opportunity for teachers to improve student success. Data analytics has the potential to provide information for informed decisions about teaching practices and student support. Part of the PLD for AI

integration into effective teaching would need effective resources for their use including those on ethical AI practice.

Conclusion – focus on quality teaching

In conclusion, a focus on quality teaching to raise learner success is the key to improve university efficiencies. Effective teaching not only enhances student engagement and retention, thereby increasing university revenue, but also builds the institution's reputation through positive student experiences and recommendations. Incorporating diverse student feedback is essential for refining teaching practices and improving student satisfaction and outcomes. The Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) emphasises the importance of learner-centred approaches and improving outcomes for diverse groups.

Continuous PLD for teachers is crucial for maintaining high teaching standards. Expanding funding programs like the Accelerating Learner Success Fund (Tūwhitia) can further support these initiatives. Overall, strategic investments in teaching quality, technology, and inclusive practices are key to achieving sustainable efficiency and success in the university system.

John Milne

On behalf of Helen Lomax, Director

Ako Aotearoa

