

<b>To:</b>	University Advisory Group (UAG)
<b>From:</b>	The Ako Aotearoa Board
<b>Topic:</b>	Submission response to Phase One of consultation: questions considering the role of universities in New Zealand and the shape of the sector

<b>1</b>	<b>What should be the primary functions of universities for a contemporary world and how are these functions activated?</b>
<p>Universities make knowledge available to all members of a society in ways that honour human dignity and freedom and help to develop a critical consciousness. Universities provide graduates for professions and roles that are essential for society. They play a major role in enabling social and economic mobility and knowledge transfer. Research-led teaching differentiates universities from other tertiary organisations. Teaching and the importance of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) in a university context is key to knowledge exchange within our society and uplifting societal outcomes.</p> <p>Universities play a key role in helping students to have an in-depth understanding of the world, gathering traditions of knowledge together and considering how these apply in the present and future. In a world where social media often controls headlines and opinions, it is even more important that students are encouraged through excellent teaching to think critically and to draw on evidence-based knowledge. Universities must also be 'fit for purpose' in a fast-changing and adaptive world and acknowledge. Being leading on and responsive to global issues such as climate change and sustainability challenges, and what this means for excellent teaching and learning in universities is an ongoing responsibility.</p> <p>Supporting learners and their employment pathways needs to be alert to the benefits of transferability between universities and other education providers to provide pathways for both learners and teachers. For learners, there is potential for more fluidity and learner mobility, where credits can be transferred across providers. This speaks to the possibility of portability and easier navigation across the whole of the tertiary education sector providing seamless and uncomplicated access to further education. Co-location to be able to offer people choices, physical teaching spaces and times are flexible and fit with the life of our students. Create learning pathways that can seamlessly cross sectors and still provide successful learner outcomes.</p> <p>The importance of the teaching/education mission of the university for today's society is in danger of being diminished in the university's arrangements as the pursuit of other academic and administrative goals and practices drift upwards in priority. It is important to ensure a continued focus on good teaching pedagogy. Ako Aotearoa recognises exceptional teaching through its annual Te Whatu Kairangi Awards, and it is pleasing to see that Universities and other tertiary education organisations with a strong focus on quality teaching continue to have award winners each year.</p> <p>Excellent and equitable education is the goal for all universities. This is an ongoing need for excellent, well prepared and trained teachers who are able to proactively prepare and teach without bias in ways that meet the needs of learners with diverse backgrounds. Universities should be places in our communities where multicultural communities feel safe to be and where racism is challenged so that it can help eradicate it from society.</p> <p>Excellent and equitable teaching is a priority for universities to fully activate these primary functions and exceptional and equitable learner outcomes must remain the ultimate goal.</p>	

5	<p><b>How research-intensive do New Zealand universities have to be? Do they need to be research intensive in all subjects?</b></p>
<p>It is critical that teaching is informed by research. The scholarship of teaching <u>and learning (SoTL)</u>, the practice and praxis of researching one’s own teaching, should be a fundamental part of a teaching intensive entity. With changes to Performance Based Research Funding (PBRF) in progress it is essential that funding that supports ‘research teaching’ is still available in the new system. Teaching is arguably the biggest task that universities do, yet there is hardly any funding for pedagogical research. The connection with teaching of the PBRF funds or its replacement should not be lost. In the past PBRF was both a research and teaching fund. Research facilities and activities that would support advanced qualifications and learning were provided by universities and other tertiary organisations teaching these qualifications for the benefit of learners. In this way the PBRF was both a research and a teaching fund.</p>	
6	<p><b>What is the appropriate mix of offerings in teaching, research, and knowledge transfer across the system to meet economic, environmental, and social challenges?</b></p>
<p>Teaching will always be at the core. No students = no university. There needs to be a balance to ensure teaching can remain excellent and equitable for all learners. Every university should find a balance with its offerings, so teaching prioritised to achieve high quality and equitable learner outcomes.</p> <p>For research we need to be more responsive to and engaging of our diverse communities to understand the economic, environmental, iwi, health, education, housing community and social challenges they face. Listening to and understanding what community needs are in terms of teaching, research and knowledge transfer activities is key to an inclusive society.</p> <p>Universities need to remain at the cutting edge of innovation. They need to be aware of the significance of subjects such as those within humanities and other disciplines have for society. Universities are institutions of society and humanity, not just institutions of the economy. They should speak to the fundamental issues of society rather than just the fundamental issues of the commercial economy and that will support (or not support) a cohesive, thriving, and equitable society.</p> <p>Excellent teaching is essential to knowledge transfer. The greatest knowledge transfer that occurs in universities and tertiary organisations is the knowledge that is shifted into society and the economy with and through the graduates. This is far greater than the knowledge transfer from the commercialisation of university research and hits all aspects of concern, economic, environmental and societal. Again, this underpins the importance of the teaching function of the universities and the need for this to be recognised in funding and through other incentives.</p>	
8	<p><b>How to ensure universities play their role in advancing all segments of New Zealand society without compromising on the goals of excellence?</b></p>
<p>Educational provision needs to remain open and accessible for all communities and students across the social and economic spectrum. This is part of who we are as New Zealanders, yet we have still not achieved equitable access and success within the communities that we serve. Excellence should not be perceived as particular sector groups in society accessing university. There is no tradeoff between excellence and equity and these two concepts are not mutually exclusive. To ensure excellence there must be equity. It is important that universities support excellent and equitable teaching and learning practices that in turn produce excellent and equitable learner outcomes. Universities can and should strive for both excellence and equity through access to education and this can benefit teaching and learning across the entire tertiary sector and enhance the parity of esteem.</p> <p>Through teaching, universities can advance an equity, access, and excellence agenda. This can be supported by Ako Aotearoa who can coordinate and leverage this across the whole tertiary sector, and</p>	

drive cross-fertilisation of pedagogies from the non-university sector to the university sector and vice versa, improving teacher professional development. Models of funding must change to acknowledge the 'value add' of a tertiary organisation. Funding drives the behaviour of universities and therefore impacts structures and processes within. Funding has huge implications to teaching and learning pedagogy and the value placed on this.

**9 What is the appropriate size for the domestic student body in the New Zealand universities?**

Universities should not limit who can enroll and attend their institution and choice should be key. We have an opportunity to broaden and become more inclusive, rather than less. Not everyone wants or needs to go to university, therefore universities must work to remain attractive and relevant, and serve a purpose. University is just one part of a suite of options for taura and we need to acknowledge the value that other tertiary institutions bring and challenge the societal view that universities are better.

Mana Motuhake is an important concept here. Having agency and the right to go to any university or other tertiary organisation. Limitations create elitism. Taura should have choice and that includes all forms of tertiary education, irrespective of their previous academic pathways/activities/achievements. We have generations of discrimination that mean outcomes for Māori have not been appropriate or proportional.

The appropriate size is one that maximizes learning opportunities for all students by having a more integrated set of institutions and organizations where opportunities for learning can flow through. If open access was affected, there would be massive implications for the socioeconomic status of our citizens and growth of the New Zealand economy. We can't afford to have fewer people with higher education in this country.

**11 How well are the universities complying with the requirements in the Education and Training Act 2020 with regards to the Treaty/Te Tiriti?**

Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsiveness and capability is an incredibly important requirement and across the sector we could be doing much better to provide a capable workforce that can help the tertiary sector deliver on giving effect to Te Tiriti. Universities must improve equitable outcomes for Māori students and produce more Māori graduates which will have a direct impact on their socioeconomic status and quality of life, and therefore of New Zealand society.

There is some work started on how universities are honouring Te Tiriti and articulating and demonstrating Te Tiriti principles within their institutions, for example, Te Tiriti policies that inform practices and processes and becoming a Te Tiriti led organisation. We have an opportunity to develop what our baseline expectation as a nation should be, by developing a national University statement on how institutes and organisations can honour and give expression to Te Tiriti through teaching and learning and Māori learner success.

Ako Aotearoa continues to play an important role in professional learning and development on Te Tiriti obligations and how to give effect to these in tertiary education organisations. The opportunity now exists to look at this at an organisation and sector-wide level. This will require consultation with iwi, hapū and communities and much broader conversations about how we can lift as a sector in and around our Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations.